

SINGLE DOCUMENT

'Achill Island Sea Salt'

EC No: [for EU use only]

PGI () PDO (X)

1. NAME(S)

'Achill Island Sea Salt'

2. MEMBER STATE OR THIRD COUNTRY

Ireland

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT OR FOODSTUFF

3.1. Type of product

Class 2.6. Salt

3.2. Description of product to which the name in (1) applies

'Achill Island Sea Salt' is the name given to the sea salt produced from the waters around Achill Island, Co. Mayo, Ireland. 'Achill Island Sea Salt' has a soft flaky texture, is crystalline white in appearance, with a concentrated salty taste and contains neither additives nor preservatives. Its soft flaky texture allows the salt to break down easily and melt into food, thus rapidly enhancing its flavour.

Certificate of Analysis for 'Achill Island Sea Salt' is within +/- 20% of the table below:

'Achill Island Sea Salt' Analysis		
Element		Mg/kg
As	Arsenic	<0.01
B	Boron	6.9
Cd	Cadmium	<0.040
Ca	Calcium	682
Cr	Chromium	<0.20
Co	Cobalt	<0.050

Cu	Copper	<0.10
Fe	Iron	1.3
Pb	Lead	<0.050
Mg	Magnesium	5690
Mn	Manganese	<0.10
Ni	Nickel	<0.20
K	Potassium	3000
Se	Selenium	<5.0
Na	Sodium	364000
Zn	Zinc	0.86

3.3. Feed (for products of animal origin only) and raw materials (for processed products only)

Naturally harvested sea salt from the Atlantic Ocean

3.4. Specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographical area

All processes of harvesting, evaporation, crystallisation and drying are carried out in the designated area, under controlled and monitored conditions to ensure that a consistent and high-quality end product is achieved.

Production processes include:

- Pumping of sea water from a specified collection point into a vacuum tanker
- Transportation of collected sea water to the production facility
- Filtering of sea water using a custom designed filtration system
- Evaporation of sea water in a closed pressurised system
- Crystallisation of the concentrated brine solution in an open crystallisation pan
- Harvesting of the sea salt flakes is carried out by hand
- Drying of the sea salt flakes in a temperature controlled drying system

'Achill Island Sea Salt' is produced from pure seawater; at no stage in the production process is additional sea salt or rock salt added.

3.5. Specific rules concerning slicing, grating, packaging, etc. of the product the registered name refers to:

N/A

3.6. Specific rules concerning labelling of the product the registered name refers to:

N/A

4. Concise definition of the geographical area

Achill Island is Ireland's largest island, located off the West coast of County Mayo. The Island is 140 square kilometres with a coastline of 128km with coordinates of 53° 57' 50.0724" N and 10° 0' 10.9116" W.

The island measures 20kms East to West, 18kms North to South and is connected by a bridge to the mainland at the South-East of the Island known as Achill Sound. The Sound varies in width from about 270 meters at the South to about 6km at the North.

5. LINK WITH THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA

Achill Island is surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, which has the highest salinity level (3.5%) of all five ocean basins. The waters that surround Achill Island have consistently been rated Grade A Shellfish Quality by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority. Due to its rural location, these waters are not affected by large cities or heavy industries. The area where the water is collected on the moderately sheltered northern shore is ideal due to the superior quality and consistency of the sea water.

The sea water used for producing '*Achill Island Sea Salt*' is collected on the Northern side of the island at the valley pier coordinates 54°01' 21.3" (North), 9°57'50.9" (West).

Tidal currents are relatively low and close to the shore but increase dramatically offshore as the flows in Achill Sound reach speeds of up to ca. 7 metres per second. The major force driving water circulation and water exchange of the coastal waters is the tide. Tidal flows along the coast ride from a southerly direction and flush through Achill sound to the north of the island. The extent and velocity of the tidal flow is influenced by the tidal cycle, varying between tidal spring and neap tides (Aqua-Fact, 2003). This tidal flow acts to provide a balance of trace minerals which contribute to the mineral content and subsequently the distinctive salty flavour of '*Achill Island Sea Salt*'.

'*Achill Island Sea Salt*' contains no additives or preservatives, and the method of production allows for the retention of over 20 trace elements that are naturally present in the sea water. '*Achill Island Sea Salt*' is characteristic of its origin in taste and appearance, it is affected by the purity of the sea water which has been rated Grade A

for shellfish quality by the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority, the mineral content as well as the method of production applied. The mineral content of the sea water contributes to the '*Achill Island Sea Salt*' demonstrably distinctive texture and concentrated salty taste. '*Achill Island Sea Salt*' has a naturally clean crystalline white appearance. The irregular shape and various sizes of the salt flakes and soft texture is due to the sea salt harvesting process in which the sea water is slowly evaporated over heat, allowing for the crystallisation of the sea salt flakes. This process is carried out by trained salt makers who ensure that the salt is produced to the highest quality using their knowledge of the correct time and temperatures to give the salt its unique shape and texture. Furthermore, the panning off of the sea salt flakes requires care and skill to ensure the texture of the flakes are maintained. Each member of staff undergoes training to ensure the correct texture, size and shape salt flakes are achieved. This is learnt as part of a training programme, which includes practical demonstrations of how the sea salt should be panned off, and correct temperature and time control, which are central to achieving the desired sea salt flakes. Examples of correct and incorrect flake texture and size are also demonstrated to staff throughout the training process. All staff follow the standard operating procedures, to ensure consistent quality in all measures is achieved.

Historically, sea salt harvesting and production on Achill Island was carried out until the late 1800s, evidence of this is in the MacKenzie, Maritime Survey of Ireland 1776 and on 'Bald's Map of Achill Island 1809' in which 'Salt Point' and 'Salt Pans' are clearly marked in Polranny at Achill Sound. It is believed that salt production ceased in the early 19th century for a variety of reasons, mainly a combination of food shortages and the wide availability of cheaper industrially produced salt.

For generations the sea was the lifeblood of the Achill Island community. The abundant fishing waters sustained the local community, providing them with a livelihood and a way of life. Salt, as a natural preservative, was a vital ingredient to the fishing industry by providing a means of preservation, storage and consumption.

Reference to publication of the specification

LINK: <https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/100780/7edb4c2b-0763-4bb7-bb9d-5051d5cefb8b.pdf#page=null>