

TASTE OF THE SEA

We're surrounded by sea water, but we buy our salt from the UK and further afield. As you reach for those pricey Maldon crystals, look a little further along the shelf and



you might see an Irish alternative. Aileen and Michael O'Neill have a fish farming business in Castletowbere, Co Cork, producing abalone for the export market, and since last year they have also been making Irish Atlantic sea salt, which is now available in some Superquinn and SuperValu branches and independent food stores.

Although the raw material is free, it's a pricey business turning sea water into boxes of salt crystals ready for the table, hence the retail price of €4.99 for 250g. It takes a week to transform the sea water into flaky, white salt crystals, which are harvested by hand, dried and packaged. "I've been surprised by the level of local interest as I saw it as more of an export product," Aileen says. She has also had interest from the US, Scandinavia and Germany.

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