SAL de MENORCA

SALINAS DE
LA CONCEPCIÓN
1853





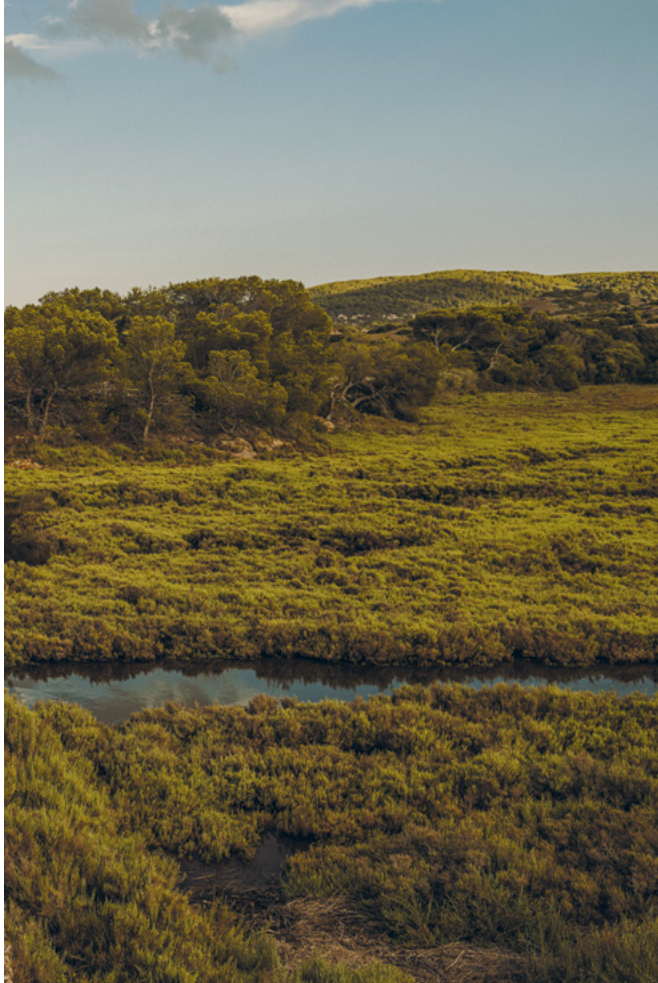














ORIGIN AND HISTORY

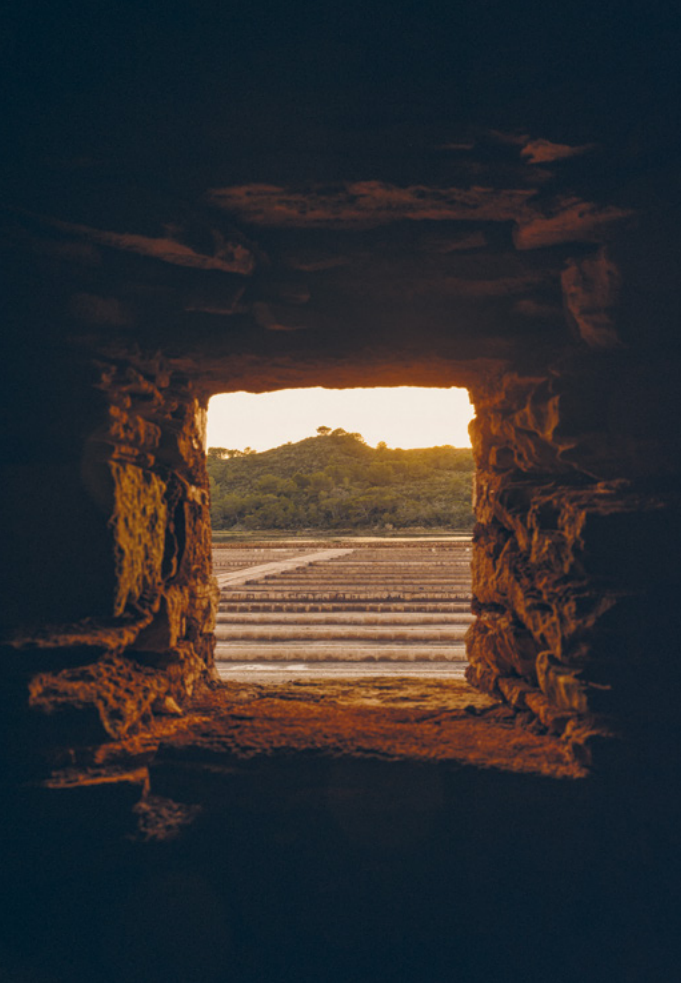
Geological Profile 18
A bit of history 20
A UNESCO Reserve 22
Originally, cocon salt 24
The Saltworks of Menorca 26
The Saltworks of La Concepción 28

5 C's

1. Conservation 36
2. Culture 42
3. Community 46
4. Circularity 48
5. Commerce 50

SALTS

Fleur de Sel and Sea Salt 65
5 Differences 73
7 Benefits of Our Salts 78
Delicious Recipes 83



ORIGIN AND HISTORY

GEOLOGICAL PROFILE

The island of Menorca is clearly divided between the north and the south.

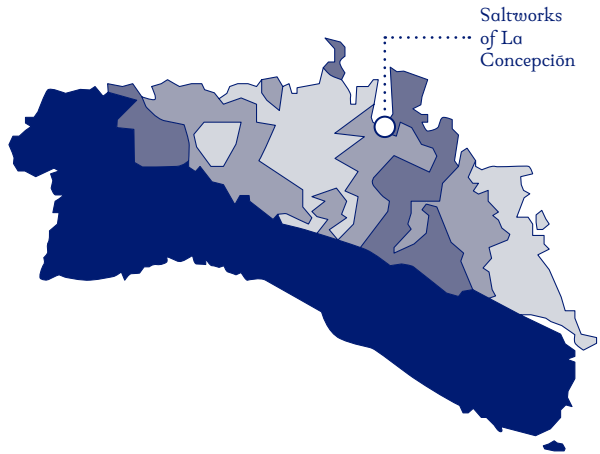
THE NORTH

Ancient rock formations dating from the Paleozoic era (over 300 million years ago). Primarily composed of shale, quartzite, and sandstone, forming an irregular relief with dark and reddish colors due to the presence of ferruginous rocks and red clays. More exposed to the northern winds (the Tramontana), which shape the steep coastline with rugged coves and darker sand beaches (Cala Pregonda, Cala Pilar).

THE SOUTH

Formed of limestone and marl deposited during the Miocene (about 20 million years ago). Spectacular white cliffs with numerous caves and gorges carved by water. Characterized by white sand beaches and coves with turquoise waters (Macarella, Turqueta).

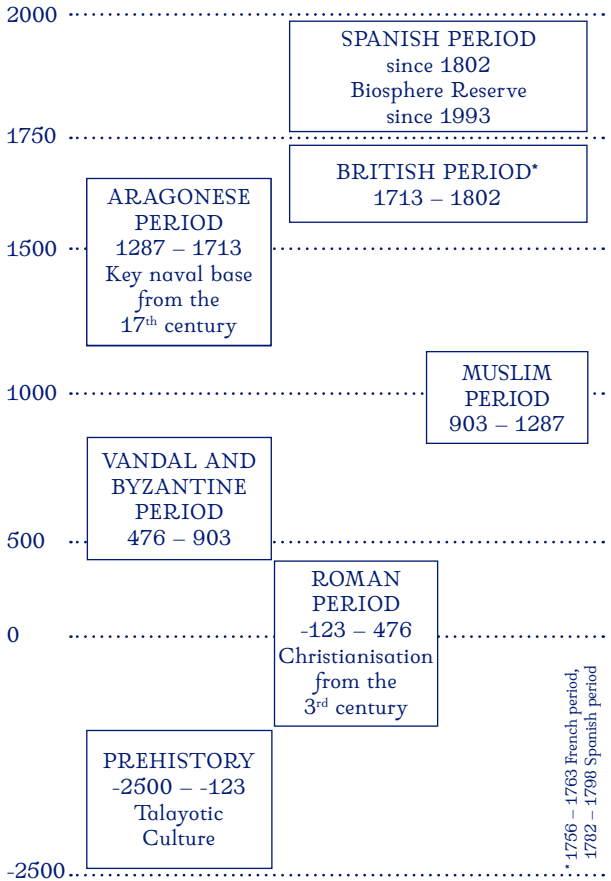
Geological Map of Menorca



PHASES OF THE HISTORY OF MENORCA

Menorca has a rich and eventful history, swinging between periods of autonomy, foreign conquests, and various influences (Muslim, Spanish, British, and French).

Today, it strives to preserve its unique identity, marked by an exceptional historical heritage and unspoilt nature.



UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The entire island of Menorca, along with its surrounding marine area, has been designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since October 8, 1993. Menorca is committed to conserving biological diversity, promoting sustainable economic development such as organic farming, responsible tourism, and sustainable fishing practices.



ORIGINALLY, COCON SALT

Since ancient times, cocon salt was a type of salt harvested by hand from the rocky crevices of the coastline, naturally formed by the evaporation of seawater due to the sun and wind. This salt was primarily used for preserving fish and meats, as well as for daily household use. With the development of saltworks in the 18th and 19th centuries, the harvesting of cocon salt gradually lost its importance.



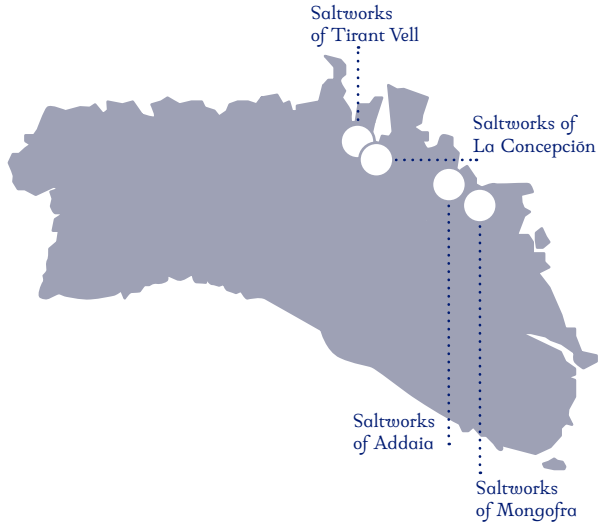


THE SALTWORKS OF MENORCA

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Menorca had four main saltworks, all located in the northern part of the island:

- → Saltworks of La Concepción, also known as Salines Noves, located in Fornells.
- → Saltworks of Tirant Vell, also called Ses Salines Velles, also in Fornells.
- → Saltworks of Addaia, near the port of Addaia.
- → Saltworks of Mongofra, near the port of Addaia.

Salt production continued until the 20th century, when the importation of salt from other major production areas, both Spanish and foreign, led to the gradual decline in production on the island. Of these four, La Concepción is the only saltworks still in operation today.



THE SALTWORKS OF LA CONCEPCIÓN

The Salort family from Alaior, owners of a vast estate since 1614, redirected part of the estate in 1853 towards salt production.

The first salt harvest took place in the summer of 1854. The name 'La Concepción' probably derives from the proclamation by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854, of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary (the papal bull Ineffabilis Deus).

Production continued until 1984. In 2020, the saltworks underwent careful restoration, and salt production resumed.



Map of La Concepción (XIXth century)





5 C's



The Best family, owners of the La Concepción estate and concessionaires of the saltworks, apply what they call the '5 C's' to the projects they undertake.

Their approach aims to integrate 5 aspects of responsible activity for clients, the community, and the environment:

CONSERVATION
CULTURE
COMMUNITY
CIRCULARITY
COMMERCE

1. CONSERVATION

The saltworks, which were almost derelict, underwent extensive restoration between 2020 and 2022.

Only two natural materials were used: clay and marēs, the typical limestone of Menorca.

No less than 4 kilometers of marēs stone were laid by hand. All the clay came from La Concepciōn.









The walls, facing the bay, that separate the salt-works from the sea, must be perfectly watertight. They were rebuilt by hand with stones and marēs.



The 210-meter-long pier was used to distribute the salt by boat.

2. CULTURE

The method of harvesting salt at La Concepción is a time-honoured tradition, and it is listed in the catalog of traditional trades of Menorca.

Until the 2000s, only sea salt was harvested. The basins were drained at the end of the summer, and the salt was loaded onto horse-drawn carts. The salt was then transported by road or by boat from the end of the pier.





Sea salt harvesting in 1960 and 1975

Salt has been used for thousands of years for a variety of purposes: to dry food for preservation (meat, fish, and butter), to transport it, as currency (salt was used as salary in the Roman Empire), as a tax (the gabelle in France), and even for the construction of houses in ancient Egypt.



Table created in 2025 by Roxane Lahidji using sea salt and clay from La Concepción.

3. COMMUNITY

The mission of the La Concepciõn saltworks is to be the guardians of salt for future generations. This salt is intended for the Menorcan community, and for those who visit the saltworks and purchase their products.

To raise awareness of the saltworks, they are open to visitors. Additionally, a 45-minute documentary about the history of the transformation of the La Concepciõn saltworks was produced for television, as well as a book in Catalan about the history of salt in Menorca (published by Triangle), and a children's book titled Kaleu e Hima, dos cigüeñuelas (published by GOB).

Together with the island community, the GOB has created nesting spaces and migratory stopovers for birds.



4. CIRCULARITY

The La Concepción saltworks apply the strictest sustainability and ecology standards. The paper used is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

No plastic is used throughout the entire salt extraction process. No fossil fuel energy is used for salt harvesting, as it is all done by hand.

The saltworks are certified with the 'Biosphere Reserve' label.

The La Concepción saltworks are a nature reserve, home to a wide variety of plants (such as samphire and socarrell) and birds (such as black-winged stilts and flamingos).

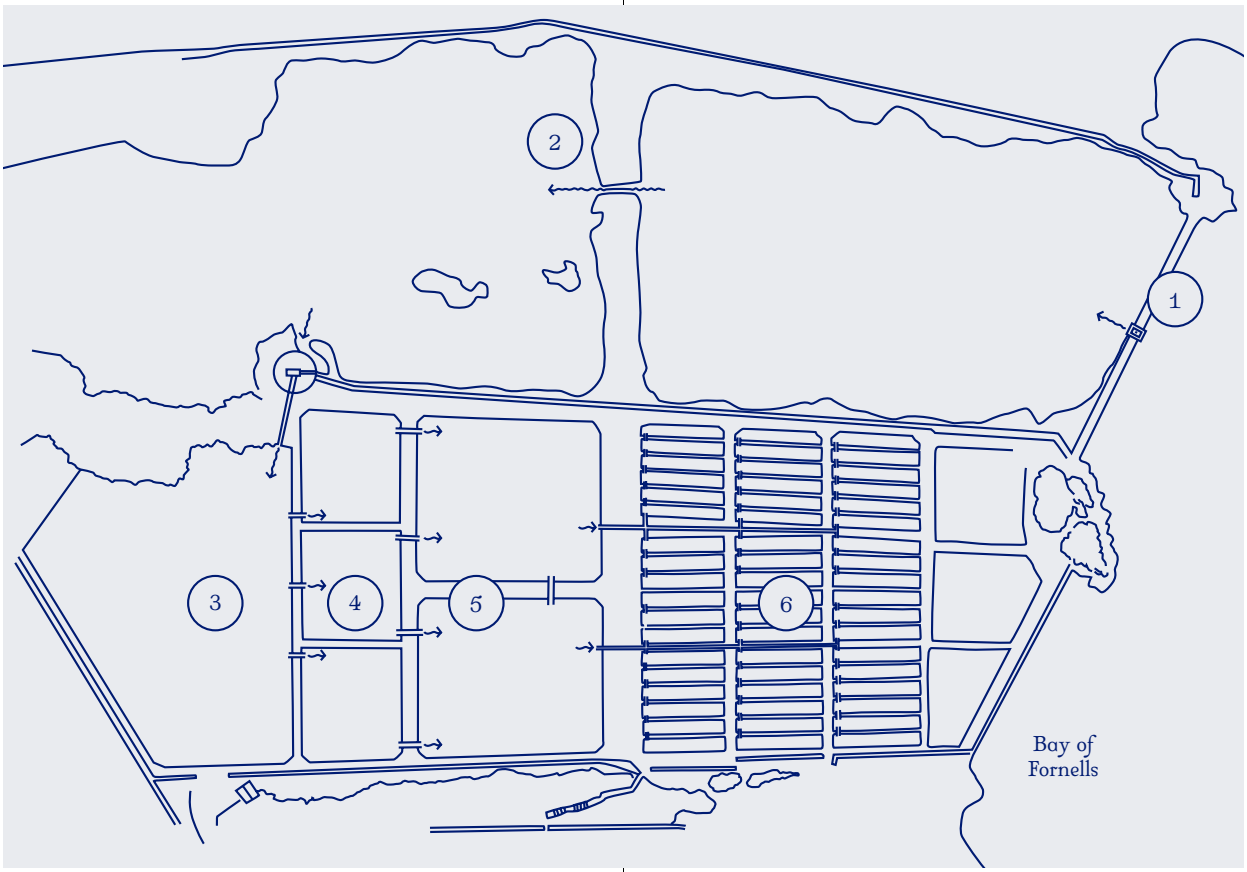


5. COMMERCE

See diagram on pages 52-53

1. → Seawater is pumped from the bay of Fornells to the saltworks. The evaporation process then begins to reveal the salt.
2. → The water passes through a series of basins, evaporators, or salt pans, where it reaches a concentration of 70 grams of dissolved salt per liter of water (9.5 Baumier degrees) in the final evaporator. The average concentration of salt in seawater is 30 grams per liter.
3. → The water is raised through a short open channel that fills this final evaporator, located in the southern part of the saltworks. A concentration of 100 grams of dissolved salt per liter of water (13.5° Bē) is reached. The evaporators in these two phases cover an area of 3 hectares.

4. → The gravity filling of the first three heaters is done by manually operated valves that regulate the flow. The water will reach 120 grams of dissolved salt per liter of water (16.0° Bē).
5. → The last two heaters are used to supply water, called 'brine' as needed for the final evaporation process. The concentration is increased to reach 180 grams of dissolved salt per liter of water, approximately equivalent to 22° Bē.
6. → In the final phase, the water remains still in the crystallizers or 'eyelets' until it reaches a brine concentration of 250 grams of dissolved salt per liter of water, equivalent to 28° Bē.


2
1
3
4
5
6
Bay of
Fornells



The fleur de sel is collected in 54 'eyelets' each covering 90 m^2 (approximately 4,860 m^2 of crystallization surface).



The work of the salt worker involves manually raising the wooden gates to allow the water to flow from one basin to the next.



In the late afternoon, the fleur de sel crystallizes on the surface of the salt pans. It is then delicately harvested by hand. For sea salt, two to three harvests are made each summer.



Evaporation occurs due to the heat of the sun and a constant wind during the salt harvesting period, from June to September.



The salt is collected in wicker baskets to allow the water to drain overnight.



It is then spread out on drying tables where the wind and sun dry it.



The fleur de sel from La Concepción is an example of sustainable production: it is produced and dried using only the wind and the sun, and harvested without the use of machinery, fossil fuels or electricity.





SALTS



FLEUR DE SEL AND SEA SALT

Fleur de sel is harvested by hand every day at the saltworks. We grow Menorcan herbs on-site and smoke the fleur de sel in our own smoke-houses. Sea salt is harvested twice a year during the summer.

Fleur de sel–natural
(150 g)



Fleur de sel–spicy
(125 g)



Fleur de sel–Menorcan herbs
(125 g)



Fleur de sel–smoked
(125 g)



Assortment of fleur de sel
(150 g and 125 g)



Assortment of fleur de sel
(10 g)



Sea salt
(1 kg)







5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FLEUR DE SEL AND SEA SALT

	SEA SALT	FLEUR DE SEL
1. HARVESTING METHOD	Crystallises at the bottom of the basins and is then collected by scraping after complete evaporation of the water.	Forms on the surface of the evaporation ponds under the effect of sun and wind. Harvested delicately by hand using a wooden rake (lousse). If not collected by the end of the day, it sinks and mixes with coarse salt. Fleur de sel represents only 5 to 10% of the total sea salt produced.
2. GRAIN SIZE AND TEXTURE	Coarser, denser and more irregular. Can be ground in a salt mill.	Finer, lighter and crispier, with fragile crystals that melt quickly on the tongue.
3. MINERAL COMPOSITION	Richer in sodium chloride, with a stronger, saltier flavour.	Contains more magnesium, calcium and potassium, giving it a more subtle and refined taste.
4. FLAVOUR AND CULINARY USE	Better suited for cooking and curing, as its crystals dissolve well in water and withstand high temperatures.	More delicate and complex in flavour, ideal as a finishing touch to enhance grilled meats, fish, vegetables, and even desserts.
5. DRYING PROCESS	Dried and sometimes ground to achieve a uniform grain size.	Naturally sun-dried with no processing. It remains slightly moist.



7 BENEFITS OF OUR SALTS

1.

RICH IN MINERALS

Industrial salt contains 99.9% sodium chloride, whereas fleur de sel contains only 95%, and is supplemented with minerals and trace elements (magnesium, potassium, calcium, and iron).

2.

CHEMICAL ADDITIVES

Unlike refined salts, it contains no chemical additives, such as anti-caking agents, nitrates, or pesticides.

3.

PLASTICS

We use microparticle filters that significantly remove plastics from the water. We do not use any plastic in the harvesting, drying, or packaging processes.

4.

TEXTURE AND FLAVOUR

Fleur de sel dissolves quickly upon contact with food, allowing it to penetrate the dishes it seasons and imparting a unique flavor and texture. Due to its high magnesium content, its flavor is milder and less aggressive.

5.

HYDRATION

Fleur de sel and sea salt help the body stay hydrated and retain fluids longer than refined salt, due to the many nutrients, particularly potassium and sodium.

6.
WELL-BEING

They improve digestion by activating the salivary enzyme amylase, which breaks down carbohydrates. The natural presence of magnesium helps reduce blood pressure and improves muscle and nerve function. They also contribute to the production of hydrochloric acid, which is necessary for the digestion of proteins in the stomach.

7.
ENVIRONNEMENT

Unlike industrial salts, our fleur de sel and sea salt are hand-harvested, without any processing or additives. They do not use any fossil fuel energy, unlike rock or mineral salt, which must be extracted using machines.





5 DELICIOUS RECIPES

SALMOREJO
WITH MENORCAN HERB
FLEUR DE SEL

SCRAMBLED EGGS
WITH MENORCAN FLEUR DE SEL
AND SAMPHIRE

MENORCAN FISH CARPACCIO
WITH CAPERS
AND FLEUR DE SEL

WHOLE FISH IN A CRUST
OF VIRGIN MENORCAN
SEA SALT

DARK CHOCOLATE MOUSSE
WITH SPICY
FLEUR DE SEL

SALMOREJO WITH MENORCAN HERB FLEUR DE SEL

Serves 4

Preparation
15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg ripe tomatoes
- 50 g stale bread
- 175 ml extra virgin olive oil
- 4 tablespoons sherry vinegar
- Menorcan herb fleur de sel
- To serve: 2 hard-boiled eggs and 50 g diced Iberian ham



This Andalusian recipe, reimagined with a Menorcan twist, is incredibly flavourful. The quality of each ingredient makes all the difference.

1. → PEEL THE TOMATOES Score a cross on the bottom of each tomato, immerse them in boiling water for 30 seconds, then transfer to iced water. Remove the skins and blend until smooth.

2. → SOAK THE BREAD Tear the stale bread into pieces and add to the blended tomatoes. Let it soak for 10 minutes.

3. → INCORPORATE THE OIL While blending, slowly drizzle in the olive oil to emulsify. Adjust the texture with a little water if necessary. Add the vinegar.

4. → SEASON Add a pinch of Menorcan herb fleur de sel and mix well. Chill for at least 2 hours before serving.

5. → SERVE Serve well chilled, garnished with crumbled hard-boiled eggs and diced Iberian ham. Add a final pinch of Menorcan herb fleur de sel just before enjoying to enhance the flavours.

SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH MENORCAN FLEUR DE SEL AND SAMPHIRE

Serves 2

Preparation
10 minutes

Cooking
10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- → 4 fresh eggs
- → A small handful of fresh samphire
- → 10 g unsalted butter
- → 1 tbsp crème fraîche
- → Menorcan fleur de sel
- → Freshly ground black pepper
- → A drizzle of olive oil for finishing



This recipe wonderfully balances the softness of the eggs, the subtle iodine flavour of the samphire, and the delicate touch of fleur de sel.

1. → PREPARE THE SAMPHIRE
Rinse the samphire in cold water and drain. If they are young and tender, leave them whole. Otherwise, remove any tough, fibrous parts. Sauté the samphire for 30 seconds in a pan with a knob of butter, then set aside.

2. → COOK THE SCRAMBLED EGGS
Crack the eggs into a bowl and beat them with a fork. Melt the butter in a pan over very low heat. Pour in the eggs and cook slowly, stirring continuously with a wooden spatula. When the eggs begin to thicken, add a spoonful of crème fraîche for extra creaminess. Continue stirring until you achieve a creamy and homogeneous texture.

3. → SERVE Off the heat, fold the sautéed samphire into the scrambled eggs. Add a pinch of Menorcan fleur de sel and a twist of black pepper. Serve immediately with a drizzle of olive oil.

MENORCAN FISH CARPACCIO WITH CAPERS AND MENORCAN FLEUR DE SEL

Serves 4

Preparation
20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- → 400 g of ultra-fresh Menorcan fish fillet (such as snapper, dentex, amberjack, sea bass, or gilthead bream)
- → 2 tbsp quality capers, drained
- → 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- → 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- → Menorcan fleur de sel
- → Freshly ground black pepper
- → A few leaves of basil or flat-leaf parsley



This recipe highlights the freshness of the fish with the acidity of lemon, the crunch of capers, and the subtlety of Menorcan fleur de sel.

1. → PREPARE THE FISH Place the fish fillet in the freezer for 30 minutes to facilitate slicing ultra-thin pieces with a sharp knife. Arrange the slices flat on a large, chilled plate or platter.

2. → SUBTLE SEASONING Drizzle with lemon juice and olive oil. Sprinkle with drained capers and finely grated lemon zest. Add a pinch of Menorcan fleur de sel and a twist of freshly ground black pepper.

3. → FINISHING TOUCH AND RESTING Let rest for 5 to 10 minutes to allow the flavours to meld. Just before serving, sprinkle with chopped basil or parsley.

WHOLE FISH BAKED IN VIRGIN MENORCAN SEA SALT CRUST

Serves 4

Preparation 20 minutes

Cooking 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole fish weighing 1.2 to 1.5 kg (such as sea bass, snapper, dentex, or gilthead bream)
- 2 kg coarse sea salt and 500 g finely ground Menorcan sea salt
- 4 egg whites
- 1 lemon
- 1 bunch of aromatic herbs (thyme, rosemary, parsley or fennel), 1 bay leaf, lemon zest



The salt crust seals in moisture and cooks the fish to perfection. No excess salt penetrates the flesh, which remains tender and flavourful.

1. → PREPARE THE FISH Preheat the oven to 200°C (fan-assisted). Do not scale the fish, but gut it, rinse under cold water and pat it dry thoroughly. Place lemon slices and aromatic herbs inside the cavity.

2. → PREPARE THE SALT CRUST In a large bowl, mix the coarse sea salt and finely ground Menorcan salt with the beaten egg whites. Add freshly ground black pepper, herbs, and spices.

3. → COAT THE FISH On a baking tray lined with parchment paper, spread a 1 cm thick layer of salt shaped to the size of the fish. Lay the fish on top. Cover completely with the remaining salt, pressing lightly with your hands to seal the crust well around the fish, which should be entirely hidden.

4. → COOK Bake for 25 to 30 minutes (roughly 18 minutes per kilo of fish). The crust should become firm and slightly golden.

5. → SERVE Once out of the oven, let the fish rest for 5 minutes before breaking the crust with the back of a knife. Gently remove the salt pieces and peel off the skin. Serve the fillets with a drizzle of olive oil and a touch of Menorcan fleur de sel to enhance the natural flavour.

DARK CHOCOLATE MOUSSE WITH SPICY FLEUR DE SEL

Serves 4

Preparation
20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- → 200 g dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa)
- → 30 cl double cream
- → 30 g caster sugar
- → 30 g butter
- → 3 pinches of spicy Menorcan fleur de sel
- → 1 teaspoon cocoa powder for garnish



The contrast between the intense, velvety chocolate and the spicy saline touch is absolutely irresistible.

1. → MELT THE CHOCOLATE Break the chocolate into pieces and melt it gently in a bain-marie with the butter. Once melted, remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

2. → ADD THE EGG YOLKS Stir the egg yolks into the melted chocolate one at a time, mixing well. Add a pinch of spicy fleur de sel and stir again.

3. → WHIP THE CREAM Place the cream, bowl, and beaters in the fridge for 30 minutes. Whip the cream at medium speed until firm peaks form.

4. → FOLD GENTLY Stir one third of the whipped cream into the chocolate mixture to loosen it. Then gently fold in the remaining cream using a spatula, lifting the mixture to maintain its lightness. Add 2 pinches of spicy fleur de sel.

5. → SERVE Lightly sprinkle with spicy Menorcan fleur de sel and a little cocoa powder just before serving.












SAL de
MENORC
SALINAS DE
LA CONCEPCIÓN
1853



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