

Bryan Schaaf:

Right here on The Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand. Bryan Schaaf in studio, joining me as always in the inner sanctum of the world headquarters of premium beef Certified Angus Beef, chef Tony Biggs, meat scientist Diana Clark. How you doing guys?

Diana Clark:

Excellent.

Tony Biggs:

Outstanding.

Bryan Schaaf:

Fantastic.

Diana Clark:

How are you doing?

Bryan Schaaf:

I am good. I wish for a change that I was not that good, because then I could say I'm a little salty today. Yes. So all ridiculous puns aside the topic of today, honestly, I mean, who doesn't... I mean, salt, right? It's one of those things that it is a veritable rabbit hole to venture down, obviously with both of what you guys do, meat science, culinary, you both have a lot of experience utilizing salt in different applications, preservation, flavoring, revealing flavor. Guys, let's talk about salt today. Salt is one of those things...

Bryan Schaaf:

I did a little bit of my homework. I don't just drink the coffee. It's been around since 6,000 BC, right? People in what is modern day Romania used to boil water from a hot spring to extract salts. Right? But there's this idea, and I heard this a long time ago, and it was the idea somebody once told me that salt doesn't necessarily add flavor as much as it reveals flavor.

Diana Clark:

I could see that.

Tony Biggs:

I love that, yeah.

Diana Clark:

I could see that.

Tony Biggs:

Exactly. It reveals flavor.

Bryan Schaaf:

Well, I mean, so talk to me. In your daily routines, how do you utilize salt? Because it's not just for cooking.

Diana Clark:

Well from a meat standpoint, I mean, salt's really been used primarily for preservation in past. So it's not... I really wouldn't say that its main function nowadays is for preservation, but it used to be just used at a high level to dehydrate it, essentially remove as much moisture as possible to inhibit any microbial growth from happening, you think of jerky and stuff. They actually have recipes back from Caesar Augustus of people putting salt on things and making different brines and stuff to use, which is kind of cool and I want to look that up. They have one where they've actually cured it with honey and I'm very curious on how they did that.

Diana Clark:

But just thinking about salt today, I mean, salt is used essentially to enhance a lot of flavor and specifically when you're looking at your value added products, salt's used more for that binding effect in meat. So if you think about your proteins, they're really globular in shape, so imagine that you have a three year old that just drew scribbles all on a page, that's kind of like your proteins all put together, and you add salt and it starts to unfold those proteins, and they open up, and the chlorine items can actually go... Ions can actually go on and bind to those proteins and it causes the water to be able to bind to the fat that you add in, and be able to bind to the protein, and creates that meat emulsion or the stickiness of the batter. And so that holds everything together and gives you that nice shape and formation.

Diana Clark:

So it's really fantastic, especially when you're thinking about those value added products, your sausages, your salamis, or anything like that. And then when you look at it just simply from adding salt to different items like you would for steaks and stuff, like you said, it enhances the flavors. So if you actually look at how your taste receptors work, sodium binds to those receptors to open them up and take in more flavors. So it really does simply enhance your overall palette by adding salt to things.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. Well said, salt it's one of those things, salt is not necessarily salt, right? I mean, there's road salt. There's lots of processed salts.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Things that maybe you shouldn't necessarily consume. Although, I will admit to when I'm salting my driveway, I'm like, "Oh, I wonder what that's like?" [crosstalk 00:04:08]. It is salty. Right? There are lots of different buckets that you can drop salt into and I want to talk about the different types. And let's go ahead and start with the one that is of course everywhere, kosher salt, right? Tony Biggs, tell me about kosher salt.

Tony Biggs:

Well, hey, listen, salt as Diana kind of explained it beautifully there. A lot of chefs primary go-to is the kosher salt because it doesn't have any iodine and also the anti clumping agent that's usually added to salt, like iodized salt. So kosher salt we use for all our meats at Certified Angus Beef. It sticks to the meat very, very well, and it's very easy to crumble, and very easy to use, and the taste is just amazing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Excellent. Do you have a... Of course, if you look at all the flavored salts that are out there right now, and it's amazing if you get on Amazon and do a search, those are all kosher salts, right? They're just enhanced with something, right?

Tony Biggs:

Enhanced with something, right. One of the great salts that are out there is the Maldon salt. It's a very snowflake type of thin salt. A lot of the chefs use in cooking and finishing. You've heard that term finishing where you're just going to just put a little bit, you're going to grab your cobra arm and... You know who I'm talking about here now, right? Salt Bae. He has made salt... I mean, if you think about it, he has made salt famous in the last couple of years.

Diana Clark:

He really has.

Tony Biggs:

And he just, he takes his sunglasses, puts them on in front of the guests, takes the cobra arm, and just sprinkles a little bit on your meat, and everybody's going berserk.

Diana Clark:

Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs:

So salt is everywhere. I mean, just amazing. The salt I really loved before, growing up, was used by a Japanese wrestler called Mr. Fuji. Okay? And he would enter the ring, throw the salt. I'm not sure if it was kosher or sea salt, and he would throw that into the opponents face to distract him, and then he would win the match. So if you go back to YouTube and you can see these great happenings of Mr. Fuji.

Diana Clark:

That seems a little unfair to me. I'm just saying that's a little salty, right?

Bryan Schaaf:

That does make you a little salty.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah, but he was great. Salt has been around for ages it, according to Leonardo da Vinci's painting of The Last Supper as you can see here, there is, next to Judas there is a [crosstalk 00:06:40].

Diana Clark:

Isn't that awesome?

Tony Biggs:

A salt shaker that has been the turned over.

Diana Clark:

Don't spill the salt shaker.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah. Don't spill the salt shaker. It's bad luck.

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

Right? And so-

Diana Clark:

I think we all know what happened.

Tony Biggs:

So you really look at that, you can see that in black and white here, the salt shaker, and I was amazed because I never knew that before.

Diana Clark:

Neither did I until you showed me that photo, but it's there.

Tony Biggs:

It's there, right? I mean, Bryan brought up rock salt. I mean, salt has been used for everything.

Diana Clark:

Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs:

From your driveway to ice cream, we scream, we all scream for ice cream [crosstalk 00:07:17].

Diana Clark:

I was just going to say that.

Tony Biggs:

Right?

Diana Clark:

We've had to use driveway salt for our ice cream maker a few times.

Tony Biggs:

You've had to use it, right?

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

Exactly. And then of course, salt crusted fish. Okay?

Diana Clark:

Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs:

To make a very salt crust, you bake the fish, you take it out at 135 degrees, you crack that open, and you've got this beautiful aroma, this saltiness of the fish. It's just gorgeous. But one of my favorites is a salted rim cocktail glass. Okay? So that's kind of cool too. All right?

Bryan Schaaf:

I mean, is there any other way to do a margarita? I mean...

Tony Biggs:

There's not, especially... I'm not a big fan of these flavored salts, but there's a lime salt. I mean, it's a-

Diana Clark:

Oh, yeah.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah. I mean, okay. I can get on board with that.

Diana Clark:

Yeah, that one's pretty good, on chips too.

Tony Biggs:

The pink Himalayan salt is quite nice. That's usually from Pakistan or the Himalayan region. Diana can tell you that a lot of folks that we deal with they'll build a cooler that's kind of... Their walls are built with Himalayan salt. Why?

Diana Clark:

Well, the Himalayan salt, the main reason why they have salt in their coolers, so if you're thinking about a dry aged cooler is really just to remove moisture. The pink Himalayan salt, I think just makes it look

fancier, to be honest. You could use any type of salt block that you'd want to use and it's still going to pull out moisture, but it does look pretty neat to have those.

Tony Biggs:

It's kind of cool. [crosstalk 00:08:48].

Diana Clark:

Pink Himalayan salts. Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

They're beautiful, but to be clear from a strictly scientific standpoint, there's no leaching salt that happens, right?

Diana Clark:

No. The salt's pulling in water [crosstalk 00:08:58].

Bryan Schaaf:

You're not putting salt into the meat.

Diana Clark:

Yeah. You're not going to get any extra flavors because you had that salt in there. Yeah, it's just pulling the moisture in.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. It's funny, you think about the application of salt, I grew up on a dairy farm and we would square bale hay, and I mean like the smaller square bales where you had to literally handle every single one of them twice, you weren't trucking them around on the back of tractors. Right? Technology is a beautiful thing for anybody on a farm today, but when you would put hay or straw in the barn, and it was a little wet, my dad always had a cachet of Morton salt and he would salt each layer because you needed to draw out that moisture. Otherwise, that moisture would get so hot, you'd burn the barn down.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Diana Clark:

Very dangerous actually.

Bryan Schaaf:

It's amazing, but the other use, you brought up pink Himalayan salt, is have you seen the blocks of it that you cook on?

Tony Biggs:

Yes. Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

I mean, that, to me makes great sense. Right?

Tony Biggs:

Sure.

Diana Clark:

I agree with that.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. [crosstalk 00:09:58].

Diana Clark:

That would definitely get flavor in there.

Tony Biggs:

We've done that, it's been beautiful. Exactly.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. But-

Tony Biggs:

The one salt I wouldn't recommend is, when I lived in Jordan, I was able to go to Lot's cave, and if you know anything about biblical studies, what happened at Lot's cave, I won't go into it all, but the wife of Lot was turned into a pillar of salt.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

So don't want that kind of salt [crosstalk 00:10:22].

Diana Clark:

Yeah, I wouldn't want that salt.

Tony Biggs:

I don't want that kind of salt.

Diana Clark:

No, no. There's bad blood there.

Bryan Schaaf:

Right. [crosstalk 00:10:28] Right. Talk to me about, and this is a question I just generally have, kosher salt you see everywhere, I have it, but you also see things labeled sea salt. What is the difference between kosher salt and sea salt? We'll get into the iodized stuff later on, but what are the differences? Obviously the shape is a little different, but why would you choose one over the other? Why aren't they universal?

Tony Biggs:

Well, the kosher salt again, it's a little bit more refined, easier to use, and it doesn't have the iodine, neither does the sea salt, so if you look at the Maldon salt, which is the snowflake very flat type of salt, that has amazing flavor. And a lot of my friends, a lot of high-end chefs that I know use the Maldon salt, because it just has a different texture and it's a really good for finishing as well. So there's two kind of applications for both of those, one kind of finishing, and then one for daily use.

Diana Clark:

Something that's kind of cool too with sea salt, so if you've ever heard of nitrites, we use them a lot in curing meat to help preserve pink color, and prevent that warmed over flavor, and it helps with microbial growth as well. Well, before a lot of times the sea salt is all they used to use to salt meat. They didn't have this purified salt or anything like that, so the nitrates were added in there accidentally. And then finally, when we got to the process of cleaning some of these salts out and just purifying them a bit more, we realized that we're taking components out of that salt that were naturally found in it, the nitrates being one of them that helped with some of those colors.

Diana Clark:

Because if you just add salt now to some meats or your sausages to preserve them, a lot of times you cook your sausage ahead of time and then you'll reheat them. So you're going to get that warmed over flavor, and they look really brown or grayish in color, but when you add that nitrite into it, it's going to have still that bright pink color, it's going to look fresh, retain more moisture, and again, help prevent a lot of microbial growth too. So there's a lot of kind of neat functions with that. Sea salt just kind of was brought on and now it's going to be going back to being used again. So yeah, it's cool to think about.

Tony Biggs:

You've seen the sea salt caramel cookies.

Diana Clark:

Oh, yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yep.

Tony Biggs:

And caramels and brownies.

Diana Clark:

I didn't even think about that.

Tony Biggs:

You think sea salt has really been put on the forefront.

Diana Clark:

It really has.

Tony Biggs:

It's just amazing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Now, you know the downside of using sea salt? Fish poop. Just saying.

Diana Clark:

They can't get that stuff out of there. [crosstalk 00:13:00].

Bryan Schaaf:

For my salt mine from somewhere, but... You touched on it already, Diana, but talk to us about curing salts and pickling salts. What makes them different or what are those reasons that you'd want to use those in place of traditional sea salts?

Diana Clark:

So a lot of times you want to use them because they are more purified and they dissolve a bit more easily, and you get rid of some of those ions in there that can create oxidized meat. So it helps remove some of those things, and then you know you're working with a more controlled substance because if you have some other things in there, for example, there was a time where I worked at another company and we're using actually sodium, not sodium chloride, potassium chloride and when we would add phosphate into it, because phosphate helps increase the binding, it helps add more moisture, they would actually chelate out so you'd have some potassium, and that phosphate coming together, and then they wouldn't functionally work in the meat batter anymore.

Diana Clark:

So if you have some salt that has some extra things in it and it's not that purified, it's going to cause those to be able to react and bind to other stuff. You have to remember, this is the science part of meat science, there's still a lot of chemistry in there that's involved with things binding to each other and reacting to each other. So that's why you kind of want to have more of that clean salt to go into your formulation so they dissolve more easily and then they're more functional actually in the meat batter itself.

Bryan Schaaf:

Outstanding. It's important to know. I mean, salt is one of those things it's.... The difference between salt and sugar, I always like to think is you don't really need sugar, right? But you need salt to live. It's like water. Right?

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it works, becomes electrolytes, which bind stuff in your blood. Right? That's as technical as I get, but it's necessary to have some level of salts going on. Because of salt consumption, and it's something that everybody has to have, that's where iodized salt really kind of came into the picture, right? They were... The powers that be decided to utilize salt as a way to give us something that our bodies were lacking? Correct?

Diana Clark:

Yeah. They needed it too. Yeah, for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. I mean, yeah. Tell us a little bit about that process. Iodized salt obviously has iodine, which a lot of people were deficient and so it-

Tony Biggs:

Yeah, back in the 60s.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

I can remember my grandmother, "Oh, we need iodized salt." That was the big thing. It wasn't, I'm showing my age now I hate to say that, but it's not like we have all these... Right now, we have all these different salts. So I can remember my grandmother, "Oh yeah, you have to have iodized salt. You have to have iodized salt." So I think the powers that be, like Bryan said, I think there was a consensus that Americans needed more iodine in their diet. I have high blood pressure and I think folks that are worried about their blood pressure should watch their salt content. So the Himalayan or the rock salt is... The sea salt is probably the best and table salt really is kind of the one that you should watch out as far as blood pressure goes.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Well, I mean talk... But even from beyond a health aspect, iodized salt in cooking, not necessarily something that you're looking for as a chef, right?

Tony Biggs:

Well, people still use it. It's a matter of education and that's why we're on here, educating folks, and hopefully we have a lot of listeners too, hey, kosher or sea salt? Right?

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

So every time we go out on the road, Diana and I go on the road, we preach the kosher salt because quite frankly it sticks to our proteins better and it has just an amazing flavor.

Diana Clark:

It really is a difference. Before I started working here, we'd never bought kosher salt. I didn't even think about it. Why do we need to buy all these different kinds of salts? But then you try it, I mean, it creates a better crust on there and even just visually you can see it when you're putting it on the meat so much better so you know exactly how much you're putting on. I feel like when you just use that table salt, you add it on, you have no idea what you just put on there. [crosstalk 00:17:21].

Tony Biggs:

You have no idea. You're right. Yeah.

Diana Clark:

And so you could even have little salt, or too much salt, and it just makes it really variable, which I think this just makes it way more consistent.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah, absolutely. But you have to be careful with the kosher salt too, because if you use too much, it's got such an-

Diana Clark:

Yeah it does.

Tony Biggs:

Unbelievable flavor and I've had to even train my wife how to use it because it's not like the table salt we normally buy in a grocery store.

Diana Clark:

It's true.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. Well, and I'll tell you what, on that note since we're talking about different quantities of salt that you are supposed to use and there's recommended daily amounts and whatnot, and you can of course look that up on the Google anytime you want. But one of the things, and this is near and dear to my heart, and it was the first thing I thought of when you said, "Hey, let's do an episode about salt." I want to talk about my dear friend monosodium glutamate, which of course it's been maligned, right? It used to be really popular in lots of foods and then people started getting sick, getting headaches, and it kind of became a journey to get it taken off of menus. And I think as time has progressed, as science has kind

of come back through, it's been discovered MSG isn't the devil that it had been played out to be, Diana. Right?

Diana Clark:

Yeah, it's really... I mean, it's naturally found too. It's really not bad and not everyone has effects from it, certain people do, certain people don't. So I don't mind that it's labeled, so people know like, okay, I'm not going to eat that if I don't want to, but in all honesty, I was saying before, we've actually used these for anchors in our sensory study. So a lot of times we do sensory tests where we taste a piece of meat and we'd have to say, okay, on its umami flavor on a scale of zero to 10, what is it? And so when I say anchor, we'd have one thing that would be okay, here's a zero, so absolutely no umami flavor whatsoever. And a 10, we would actually sample MSG, and that would be boom, now that's what you're expecting.

Diana Clark:

I mean, you think of mushrooms. I cook mushrooms simply to add that extra flavor. I mean, that's MSG in there. I mean, that's where it's coming from. So it's, it's kind of... I love it. I do think it's not bad if it's regulated and not a specific regulation, but just know how much you're putting in, because it does have an effect on people. I mean, you think about nitrites, those are definitely regulated on how much can be added in. So just having those different levels, but like you were saying, you can add that, and now you get all this beefy umami flavor from that so you don't need as much salt. So some people that maybe are trying to watch their sodium intake, it's not a bad idea to have something like that in there.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. You're not just drawing out saltiness or adding salty flavor, you're enhancing a little bit of that salty flavor, but it is that all encompassing... The best example I've heard, and it's actually probably the one that really sort of sparked my, okay, we got to make MSG right with the world again, somebody once said, "Go to your local grocery store, buy a bag of Doritos, buy a bag of the off-brand Doritos. Eat them side by side and tell me which one's better. And you'll always choose the Doritos first because the Doritos are made with a little bit of MSG in there." It makes perfect sense. It makes perfect sense.

Diana Clark:

Pulls you in every time.

Bryan Schaaf:

I'm such a fan, yeah. And there are actually a lot of studies that say, if you can handle it and Chef Tony, you said you actually tend to get headaches from it and as somebody who spent a lot of time in Asian cultures, you certainly had plenty of exposure to Asian cuisine using this. Correct?

Tony Biggs:

Yeah. I mean, I think it's the amount that maybe some of these restaurants use. I honestly think there's no like, "Hey, we're just going to enhance this General Big's chicken like this." Right? And so I think sometimes that's why folks go into a Chinese restaurant and say, "Hey, could you like back off the MSG? Although I love your flavors, I want it." You can definitely tell when you have your favorite Chinese restaurant, you can tell by the first bite, if they have it or not, but you still want to eat more, and more,

and more, and that is the sensory thing Diana was talking about where your brain has been taken over. Right?

Diana Clark:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Bryan Schaaf:

Right.

Tony Biggs:

And now I see a lot of our steakhouse partners, now they're coming out and saying, "Hey, chef, what do you think about MSG?" I think they're getting on back on board with the MSG train and there's nothing wrong with it. It's just how you use it and the amount used.

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Diana Clark:

I mean, you look at barbecue competitions now, I feel like that is kind of a staple ingredient that is put in there. And there are definitely times where you've had something like a brisket and you, "Wow. They use a little bit too much of that." I want the beef to speak for a little bit, not just the MSG, but it's definitely coming back. And I think people know, I mean, umami is delicious, that's kind of the goal behind it, so that's why people want to use it. But again, it needs to be used in the right amount for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah. You can definitely use too much. My favorite... One of my favorite, actually we'll say my two favorite applications of it are our pals up at Good Company in Cleveland on their Good Boy burger. The special sauce has a little bit in it.

Tony Biggs:

Okay.

Bryan Schaaf:

And it's like, you can just feel it on the back of your throat.

Diana Clark:

You can feel it. It coats your mouth. [crosstalk 00:22:50].

Bryan Schaaf:

It's that all over goodness. I also love doing, anytime I do, Lord, forgive me I'm mentioning Yardbird on our podcast here, anytime I do like a Nashville hot fried chicken, in the crust of it, I put a little bit of it and it's so good.

Diana Clark:

Well, I mean you need to add some flavor to chicken, right?

Bryan Schaaf:

That's right, chicken needs all the help it can get. Right? A couple other things that I wanted to discuss. We've already touched a little bit on the idea of the putting salt in your dry aging cooler and the fact that it doesn't pull away. How do you guys feel about cooking? Right? There's this idea, and maybe this is less of a chef centric topic, more of a home cook topic, but what is the difference between salting before or salting after? What's going to get you the best results? [crosstalk 00:23:37].

Tony Biggs:

That's a great question. You know why?

Diana Clark:

It is a good question.

Tony Biggs:

I think different cultures... I was in Russia last year and I was doing a meat ideation for some chefs. And I went to season our product, our strips and tomahawks before, so it was in raw state, put my oil on both sides, a little bit of oil, you know how I love about that, and then I seasoned them and they all went, "Whoa." And they called me out like, "No, you season after the steak is cooked."

Diana Clark:

That is crazy.

Tony Biggs:

And I said, "Why? Why do you do that?" "Oh, that's just the way it is." And people are set in their own ways, right? You know that. And I proceeded to do, I said, "Okay, let's do it this way." And I brought kosher salt from America, don't tell anybody I smuggled this over the Russian border, and I bought my own pepper, and because every country I've learned that salt and pepper is totally different.

Diana Clark:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

I mean, you're going to get something that is totally like, what is this? Right? So I proceeded to do it, season the steak naturally raw, and then I cooked one, and I put the seasoning on after. I held up the one with the seasoning after and the seasoning fell off.

Diana Clark:

Exactly. Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

And I proved to them, look at this, this is a cooked steak, the seasoning is still attached, and this one fell off, which one are we going to like? "Oh!" That was kind of an eye opening. So to your question, I think more Americans are taught instinctively to season before you actually put it on the grill or cook something.

Diana Clark:

Yeah, for sure.

Bryan Schaaf:

That is... Yeah. I'm feeling so patriotic right now. Sorry, Russia. But let's talk about that then, you season beforehand, and of course you can finish with, I love when it's finished with those Maldon salts, because they're so thin, it almost looks like they melt.

Tony Biggs:

It's like a snowflake.

Diana Clark:

Yeah, they do kind of melt [crosstalk 00:25:45].

Tony Biggs:

It's amazing.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, so what is happening to the meat with the salt? Is the salt kind of getting inside that meat? What is the whole point of doing it beforehand? We've already, and most people probably experience like, yeah it tastes better. What is happening though?

Diana Clark:

To me, it's actually, it's kind of sticking to the meat, but it's actually pulling some moisture to that surface. So especially if you're going to grill or do something on the cast iron, when you create that Maillard reaction or the browning on the steak, you need water, it's heat, water, protein, and a little bit of sugar. So you need that moisture in there to really create that effect. So then you're going from that state right onto that really hot grill, and you're going to get a great crust on there. That to me is the importance of doing it ahead of time because otherwise afterwards, I mean, you're still going to get some char on there for sure, but it's just not going to be the same amount because once you're out of moisture, you're done. So it's causing more of that moisture to come out for sure.

Tony Biggs:

I remember we did a conference, so here's another little story about that.

Diana Clark:

Oh, gosh.

Tony Biggs:

So this is really good to bring up because what Diana just said is spot on. But the other side of that coin is we were doing this big function, 700 folks-

Diana Clark:

Oh, I have an idea.

Tony Biggs:

And we did a filet mignon, that's what we're going to do. And I just happened to, when you work with other companies and hotels, they have their own way, and I was explaining to somebody we're going to season our steaks tomorrow, not today. Well, I'm not sure where that message got lost and he seasoned the steaks a day before with lots of kosher salt. And I swear, all my guests told me, "Are you sure, this is not corned beef?" So that salt, as you remember, it just permeated into the beef and it was such a bad experience. I mean, it wasn't bad, but it wasn't bad. It wasn't a filet mignon like you would normally take. So it was kind of like a salt brine.

Diana Clark:

Yes.

Tony Biggs:

And it was kind of like making corned beef. So on the other side of that, be careful.

Diana Clark:

Yeah, for sure. On your thinner, on your steak items, you definitely don't want to salt ahead of time, but on your roasts and such, you can add some salt in to help. You're going to cook, if you think about your chuck roll, if we're going to smoke that and shred it, you're going to cook it so far to shred it, that the moisture content isn't as big of a deal, but you want some of that salt to get into the middle of it so you get more flavor throughout, so that's the whole point of doing it ahead of time. But your steaks, yeah you can dry those out pretty good if you let them sit way too long.

Bryan Schaaf:

Or if you just have lots of extra money later on and you decide I'm going to make pastrami out of [crosstalk 00:28:37].

Diana Clark:

Tenderloin.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, the tenderloin.

Diana Clark:

Let's just do it.

Bryan Schaaf:

Oh my gosh. I'm sure it was still good.

Tony Biggs:

It was good, but it was kind of a jolting experience.

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah.

Tony Biggs:

Wow, this is salty.

Bryan Schaaf:

I remember a couple of years ago I was talking to some chef friends, actually we were down on the Texas panhandle and they said, one of the biggest things that I think most people don't know when they eat in restaurants is, or one of the biggest things that people who are trying to replicate that experience at home versus in restaurants is the amount of seasoning.

Diana Clark:

Oh, yes.

Bryan Schaaf:

I mean, by and large people under season because they're... I mean, there's an idea of like, well, I can't consume that much salt, but really how much of it's actually staying on the meat?

Diana Clark:

Yeah, and it's not, to me, the amount you sprinkle on, it's not going to cause that much of a difference in all honesty, but you have to think of the whole surface area. So if you're cooking a tenderloin, yeah that surface area that's touching the grill is small, but think of how thick that steak is. So you have to have enough seasoning to get all the way through and I've been amazed by how much people have under salted their meat. And I've learned that from here, I did not learn that anywhere else, but from watching the chefs, for sure.

Tony Biggs:

Yeah. You're spot on with that. Yeah. I think where chefs go wrong and they don't realize this until somebody points it out to them is, if you're doing a four-course meal, how much salt are you using in that four course meal?

Diana Clark:

Oh, that's a really good point.

Tony Biggs:

Now you've used it in the appetizer, you used it in the salad, you've used it in the bread, depending on butter what you use, and now you've got an entree which could be a protein, a vegetable, and a starch.

You've seasoned all that and now you go to a dessert, which desserts have a little bit of salt in them and that's what enhances the flavor of a nice dessert. And now you take that four course meal, and you add up the salt content of that, [crosstalk 00:30:37] and you're going to be very shocked and surprised what you have.

Diana Clark:

I never thought about that and it just builds on itself too.

Tony Biggs:

Right.

Diana Clark:

That's a really good point.

Bryan Schaaf:

I just want an entire meal, like salt baked, if you could Tony.

Tony Biggs:

Salt baked?

Bryan Schaaf:

Yeah, everything inside that crust. I want to crack it and I want to be like, look, there's the peas, there's the...

Tony Biggs:

The carrots.

Bryan Schaaf:

Is that pudding?

Tony Biggs:

A pot pie. A salt crusted pot pie?

Bryan Schaaf:

We might be on to something. I'll tell you what, on that note, I believe we're going to put a wrap on this one. If this is your first time listening to The Meat Speak podcast, what have you been doing, dude? This is like... We're over the hump of even halfway of season two. So there's a season and a half worth of meat science content out there just waiting to be devoured, but do know you can find it across all of your major podcasting platforms, Google Play, Apple, Spotify, or by visiting certifiedangusbeef.com/podcast. Just feels so good rolling off the tongue, doesn't it? Until next time, I'm Bryan Schaaf, Chef Tony Biggs, meat scientist Diana Clark, we appreciate all of you for listening to The Meat Speak podcast powered by the Certified Angus Beef brand.