

The Secret

So what **IS** the simple secret behind this trick? It's **SALT!** (The more I learn about cooking, the more I come to realize that the secret is almost always salt. Except for when the secret is butter.) ;-) Yes, salting your steaks for one hour before cooking them will cause a miraculous transformation! From chewy and tough, to tender and juicy.

But not just ANY salt will do! You need to use a coarse sea salt or **kosher salt**. Coarse salt helps to break down the proteins and muscle fibers in the meat, resulting in maximum tenderness. I'm getting hungry already!

Why Salt?

Salt is an interesting substance that can do a lot of different things to the food we eat. You may well be wondering, "I thought salt dries stuff out?" And you'd be right! When using salt in the kitchen, it's all about the *timing*.

Over a *short* period of time (like an hour or even up to overnight,) a layer of coarse salt on a steak will draw out some of the meat's natural juices. The juices will dissolve the salt, creating a brine. Most of the brine will then be reabsorbed, where it will tenderize and flavor the meat.

If left for a *longer* period of time (like weeks to months,) the salt would slowly pull *all* of the moisture out of the meat, curing and preserving it in the process. Fascinating!

How To Do It

To properly tenderize a steak, lay the steak out on a plate and cover each side with approximately 1 teaspoon of kosher/sea salt before cooking. Use your fingers to gently work the salt granules into the surface, breaking down the fibers of the meat. (For even *more* flavor, add crushed garlic to the salt.)

Let the steak sit with this covering of salt for 45 minutes to an hour. Longer for thicker cuts. After the waiting period, rinse the salt off your steaks under cool running water. Use some paper towels to pat your steaks until they are good and dry, so you can get the delicious, crispy sear you want. If you don't pat them dry, you're basically *steaming* the meat, and steamed meat is bland and less flavorful. Season as desired, then grill until desired doneness.