Different ways to evaporate brine

Brine can come from two sources:

**Sea Water**
Methods of collecting sea water vary between estuaries, salt marshes, sandy foreshores or rocky coasts.

**Inland Brine**
In inland areas where rock salt deposits lie close enough to the surface, rain water can percolate through the ground dissolving the salt which can re-appear on the surface as brine springs. The earliest areas of inland salt production in the UK are in Cheshire and at Droitwich.

Two Processes - both use the term ‘pan’:

**Salinas**
Large, shallow, man-made open ponds to collect sea water for solar evaporation. The sun and wind evaporate the sea water until it is concentrated enough for salt to crystallise.

**Open Pans**
The use of a fire to heat brine in man-made containers known as pans. The sea water or inland brine may be boiled directly, or be concentrated first.

Four Traditional methods:

**Solar Evaporation**
The use of sun and wind to evaporate water from sea water to crystallise the salt without the use of artificial heat. A similar process to those used in the salinas of France, Spain and Portugal.

**Direct Boiling**
The use of fuel to heat brine in open pans directly from the sea, or brine spring, without first concentrating it.

**Pre-concentration**
Various methods of concentrating seawater before boiling, thus saving on fuel. ‘Partial solar’ used sun and wind in open ponds; ‘sleeching’ used the salt-enriched crust on tidal silts.

**Salt-on-Salt**
A process of adding dirty salt, or rock salt, to weak brine or sea water to bring it to saturation levels that can be re-crystallised to make salt by the open pan process.

Artisan Salt Making in the UK Today
There are a small number of companies producing sea salt in the UK today. Each makes a distinctive salt crystal but use just as diverse techniques as salt producers from the past.

- **Halen Môn, Anglesey Sea Salt**
  Halen Môn draws its sea water through mussel beds in the Menai Straits.
  [www.halenmon.co.uk](http://www.halenmon.co.uk)

- **Cornish Sea Salt**
  Cornish Sea Salt is made from Atlantic sea water drawn from off the Lizard peninsular.
  [www.cornishseasalt.co.uk](http://www.cornishseasalt.co.uk)

- **Maldon Sea Salt**
  Maldon Sea Salt draws sea water from the Blackwater Estuary, Maldon, Essex. In 2012 the Osborne family celebrated 130 years of salt making at Maldon.
  [www.maldonsalt.co.uk](http://www.maldonsalt.co.uk)

Photographs by Andrew Fielding