

# THE PROFESSOR'S PIPE SWEETENING TREATMENT

by  
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Many people have asked me to make available a step-by-step set of instructions for my method of sweetening up a pipe. It is in response to my friends that I compose this short treatise. While the content is serious, I just could not keep my tongue out of my cheek from time to time. Don't let my self-indulgent humor distract you. It is just another way I can thoroughly enjoy writing. BEWARE! This pipe treatment really works and may result in the finest smoke you ever had from your pipes.



It is pleasing to know that so many fellow briar friars are interested in my method so here it is, including some of the variations my colleagues have tried and found successful. In 45 years of pipe smoking and collecting, I have found no better treatment for rejuvenating a tired pipe. The first smoke after the Professor's Pipe Sweetening Treatment is an extreme joy known by few, to date.

To begin, tobacco contains oils. When combustion occurs, some of these oils are released and are deposited on the inside of the bowl in the existing cake of the pipe. In time, these oils mix with oxygen and turn rancid which is one reason for a tired, bitter, or even sour taste of a pipe. It is the accumulation of these rancid oils that prevents a pipe from delivering a sweet, flavorful smoke. These oils can be dissolved and removed with the Professor's Pipe Sweetening Treatment and restore that "faithful friend" to the delicious, mouth watering, nut-like sweetness of a well seasoned pipe.

## Step 1

The first step requires certain materials. You need a box of non-iodized salt easily found in any supermarket and a quantity of pure alcohol of the kind found in the varied stocks of your friendly neighborhood liquor store. One familiar brand name is Everclear. I suggest you have a clean rag, facial tissues, or paper towels handy to wipe up any errant alcohol lest it dull the bowl



finish. If you are reckless you may dull the finish of your wife's new coffee table and if your wife sees it, the alcohol will dull the finish on your bandages. Remember the salt and the alcohol are to be administered to your pipe so it will smell good, lower your blood pressure, and taste sweet. If you consume the salt and alcohol, you will smell bad, raise your blood pressure, and experience the benefits of an exquisite hangover. And when you are sober, your pipe will still taste like you are smoking a well aged, cube cut, gnu manure.

## **Step 2**

The second step involves preparing the pipe. Empty any dottle remaining in the bowl. Some people prefer to remove the stem and insert a pipe cleaner in the shank during the process. Others leave the stem in place. Find a location where the pipe may be set in a semi-upright position to prevent the salt and alcohol from spilling over the top of the bowl or running out the shank.

## **Step 3**

Fill the bowl of the pipe with salt all the way to the top. Others, as stated above, insert a pipe cleaner in the shank to prevent salt from entering.

## **Step 4**

After filling the bowl with salt, it's time to add the alcohol. This may be done in several ways. One method entails using an eyedropper placing 8 to 10 drops of alcohol on the salt. A second way involves slowly pouring in alcohol, allowing it to rise to the top of the salt filled bowl. A third way has the salt placed in the bowl in a series of 3 to 5 layers with a few drops of alcohol added to each layer. And a fourth method requires filling the bowl about half way with alcohol and then topping it off to the brim with salt. Again, I suggest you try each method and choose the one you like best. They are all variations on the same theme which is to achieve a desired admixture with which to entice the gods of sweetness to again reside in the chambers of your pipe, to put it succinctly. My preference is to fill the bowl with salt and then the alcohol. A fellow pipe collector claims he uses baking soda in place of salt and gets fine results. Explore.

## **Step 5**

This step is always the most difficult part for me because it requires doing nothing. The

time necessary for the salt and alcohol potion to do its magic varies from 8 hours to a week depending on the humidity index in your area. My preference is for the alcohol to evaporate completely so generally wait for one week. Others find that total evaporation isn't necessary. Experiment and see which produces the best results for you. Of course, the more alcohol is added the longer it takes to evaporate. In my experience, I have found that the alcohol in a bowl full of salt will dry in about one week and result in as much sweetness and good taste as any of the other methods.

## Step 6

After waiting the chosen time interval, it is time to remove the salt and any remaining spirits of alcohol. Take a pipe tool and poke through the hard brown/black crust which has formed in the bowl. The darkening results as the rancid tars and oils are drawn out of the cake and into the salt by some mysterious osmotic process. (I hope one of my fellow briar friars with a chemistry background will "take up the cause" and explain this mystery to us "ignernt" folks.)

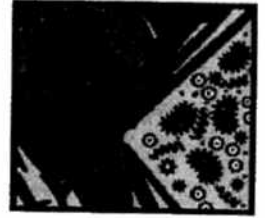


I have found that thicker cakes produce darker salt. I do not recommend removing the cake that you and your tongue have worked so hard to build. The cake is a product of a cooperative effort between person (puffing) and nature (tobacco) providing protection against burnout. It also reduces tongue bite and is a significant factor in producing a sweet and mild smoke. May herpes and a scabby pox descend on those who remove the entire cake from a well-seasoned bowl! Those villainous characters lay wood and tongue open to the ravages of fire and brimstone until new protection is rebuilt and a new tongue found for the transplant. May dirty yellow toenails sprout on the tongues of "cake removers" until they repent and mend their ways.

Next, remove the salt from the bowl by pouring, scraping, brushing, blowing, or by throwing it over your left shoulder for good luck (you may end up in the hospital if your spouse is standing behind you, though). But, by all means, **don't draw on the pipe** before removing all of the discolored salt. I had a friend who described a stew of toad droppings, camel spit, roach lips, cow patties, maggot eyes and horsefly butts as potentially more savory than the revolting, bitter emetic of salt, nicotine, tar and stale alcohol aged blended with the essence of rancid tobacco oils. Gag.....

Run a pipe cleaner through the stem several times to remove any last grains of salt. Salt often lurks in the cave-like darkness of the stem hoping to ambush unsuspecting taste buds as you comfortably sit back and draw your first long

anticipated puff of angel's breath. So, avoid a spontaneous imitation of a blow gun artist with your pipe as the dart. If this happens, you will swear on a stack of the Pope's Holiest Bibles, that you felt the inner parts of your bottom touch the back of your tongue as you gag. When composure is regained, be certain all the salt has been evacuated and replace the stem if it was removed.



### Step 7

Assuming you have followed the steps listed above pretty much in order, allowing for one or two variations of style, your pipe is ready to smoke. Fill it with your favorite tobacco and prepare yourself for an exciting, pleasurable smoking experience.

The intent of this article is to please as many of my pipe smokers as possible. Taking advantage of the loving care and aging that you invested in your pipe is important so patience is needed while the salt treatment does its job. Abe Lincoln said that age was only a matter of the mind. I really appreciated it when he told me that.

I hope many briar friars find the Professor's Pipe Sweetening Treatment very pleasing and that all adventurous devotees of the pipe and herb who try it will find unexpected enjoyment and a renewed friendship with a favorite pipe. I wish good puffing to all of my fellow briar friars.



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