

Present Desalination Costs in the United States

	Plant size (mgd)	Overall cost (1985 dollars/1,000 gal.)
Brackish water:		
Reverse osmosis . . .	1	1.67
	3	1.41
	5	1.33
	10	1.23
	25	1.21
Electrodialysis (reversing).	1	1.72
	5	1.47
	10	1.37
	25	1.26
Seawater		
Distillation		
Multi-stage flash .	1 ^a	9.73
	5 ^a	6.78
	10 ^a	6.50
	25 ^a	6.10 ^b
Multiple-effect . . .	1	8.31
	5 ^a	5.70
	10 ^a	5.36
	25 ^a	5.36 ^b
Reverse osmosis . . .	0.01	13.42
	0.1	9.88
	1	7.40
	3	6.64
	5 ^a	6.36
	10 ^a	6.03 ^c
	25 ^a	5.96 ^d

theoretical costs since no plants of this size are operating in the United States
^aapproximated from Reed (57).
^bextrapolated cost

SOURCE: United Nations, "The Use of Nonconventional Water Resources in Developing Countries," (77); adopted from Reed, S.A., "Desalting Seawater and Brackish Water: 1981 Cost Update," (57).