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Not All Salt Is the Same: 8 Unique Salts, Their Origins, Flavors, and Best Uses

By bestfolkmedicine · 29/06/2026 · 6 min read



Walk into any specialty food shop and you may find pink salt, black salt, blue salt, flaky sea salt, smoked salt, and crystal salts from places you have never visited.

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They may look dramatically different, but here is the truth: most culinary salts are still primarily sodium chloride. Their real differences are usually found in texture, crystal size, moisture, trace

minerals, origin, and the way they transform food.

That does not mean every salt belongs in every dish.

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A delicate finishing salt can elevate tomatoes, chocolate, or grilled fish. A sulfurous black salt can make plant-based recipes taste more “eggy.” A coarse mineral salt may be beautiful over roasted vegetables but frustrating in baking.

This guide breaks down some of the world’s most interesting salts—and how to use them wisely.

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First: Is One Salt Actually Healthier Than Another?

Specialty salts may contain tiny amounts of minerals, but they should not be treated as a major source of nutrition. Himalayan pink salt, for example, contains trace minerals, yet its sodium content remains substantial and the mineral amounts in normal culinary servings are very small.

The most important health consideration is still total sodium intake—not whether the crystals are white, pink, black, or blue. The World Health Organization recommends adults consume less than 2,000 mg of sodium per day, equivalent to under 5 grams of salt.

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Also remember: many specialty salts are not iodized. Iodine is essential for thyroid hormone production, so people who mainly use gourmet salts should make sure they obtain iodine through iodized salt, food sources, or professional guidance when appropriate.

The best salt is not necessarily the rarest one. It is the one you use intentionally, in an amount that supports your overall diet.

1. Himalayan Pink Salt

Origin: Khewra, Pakistan

Color: Soft pink to rose

Flavor: Mild, clean, slightly mineral-like

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Himalayan pink salt is one of the most recognizable specialty salts in the world. Its pink shade comes from trace minerals, especially iron compounds.

Use it as an everyday table or cooking salt when you enjoy its mild flavor and attractive color. Fine-ground Himalayan salt works well in soups, marinades, roasted vegetables, and homemade seasoning blends. Coarser crystals are better as a finishing touch.

One thing to know: pink salt is still salt. It is not a free pass to use more sodium simply because it is marketed as “natural.”

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2. Fleur de Sel

Origin: Guérande, France
Color: Soft white to pale gray
Flavor: Delicate, clean, slightly briny
Texture: Light, moist, fragile flakes

Fleur de sel means “flower of salt.” It is traditionally harvested from the delicate crystals that rise to the surface of salt ponds under specific weather conditions.

This is a finishing salt, not a bulk cooking salt.

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Sprinkle it over sliced tomatoes, grilled fish, avocado toast, roasted vegetables, dark chocolate, caramel desserts, or even fresh fruit. Its delicate crystals dissolve quickly and create little bursts of flavor.

Using fleur de sel in pasta water would be like wearing silk gloves to wash dishes—possible, but not the best use of something special.

3. Celtic Sea Salt

Origin: Brittany, France
Color: Grayish-green
Flavor: Briny, earthy, mineral-forward

Texture: Slightly moist

Celtic sea salt is often gray because of the clay-lined salt ponds where it is traditionally harvested. It has a moist texture and a stronger oceanic character than standard table salt.

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It is excellent for soups, broths, stews, roasted potatoes, grains, and savory sauces. Its slightly damp texture makes it less convenient in some grinders, but it brings a rustic, old-world feel to cooking.

Use it because you enjoy the flavor—not because you expect it to replace a balanced diet or electrolyte strategy.

4. Black Lava Salt

Origin: Often associated with Hawaii

Color: Black

Flavor: Mildly smoky or mineral-like, depending on the product

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Black lava salt gets its deep color from activated charcoal added to sea salt. It is visually dramatic and works best as a finishing salt.

Try it over eggs, grilled seafood, creamy dips, white sauces, goat cheese, roasted cauliflower, or pale-colored vegetables where the contrast stands out.

It is more about presentation than nutrition. A small pinch can make a simple plate look restaurant-worthy.

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5. Persian Blue Salt

Origin: Iran

Color: Pale blue crystals

Flavor: Clean, crisp, slightly sweet-salty

Texture: Crunchy

Persian blue salt is one of the most striking salts in the world. Its blue appearance comes from mineral structures in the salt crystals, not artificial coloring.

Because it is rare and visually beautiful, it is best used sparingly as a finishing salt. Add it to grilled vegetables, seafood, salads, butter boards, cheese plates, or even desserts with dark chocolate.

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The crunch is part of the experience, so do not dissolve it into a pot of soup where nobody will notice it.

6. Murray River Salt

Origin: Australia

Color: Peach to apricot

Flavor: Mild and delicate

Texture: Soft flakes

Murray River salt is known for its beautiful pink-peach color and feather-light flakes. It has a gentle flavor and dissolves easily, making it ideal for finishing dishes without overwhelming them.

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It works beautifully on grilled meat, roasted squash, eggs, salads, focaccia, fresh tomatoes, and chocolate desserts.

This is one of the best salts for people who want elegance without aggressive saltiness.

7. Kala Namak

Origin: India and South Asia

Color: Dark purple, gray, or black

Flavor: Sulfurous, savory, “eggy”

Also known as: Indian black salt

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Kala namak is completely different from black lava salt.

Its signature sulfur aroma makes it popular in South Asian cuisine and plant-based cooking. It can give tofu scramble, vegan omelets, chickpea salads, vegan mayonnaise, and roasted vegetables a distinctive egg-like flavor.

Use it lightly. A little goes a long way.

Kala namak is not usually the salt you reach for over a simple salad. It is a flavor tool—especially useful when you want depth, sulfurous notes, and a savory twist.

8. Bolivian Rose Salt

Origin: Bolivia

Color: Pale rose to pink

Flavor: Mild, slightly mineral

Texture: Usually coarse crystals

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Bolivian rose salt is another beautiful pink salt often used as a finishing salt. It can add color and crunch to grilled vegetables, seafood, salads, roasted roots, and cheese boards.

Because coarse crystals can taste saltier in individual bites, sprinkle it with a light hand. It is perfect for meals where texture matters just as much as flavor.

The Smartest Way to Use Different Salts

You do not need eight jars of salt in your kitchen. But having two or three can make cooking more interesting.

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A simple salt setup could look like this:

For everyday cooking: iodized table salt or a reliable fine sea salt.

For finishing savory foods: fleur de sel, Celtic sea salt, or Murray River salt.

For special recipes: kala namak for plant-based dishes, black lava salt for visual contrast, or Persian blue salt for a memorable finishing touch.

The biggest upgrade is not buying the most expensive salt. It is learning when to use each one.

The Bottom Line

Salt can make food more satisfying, more aromatic, and more memorable. It can highlight sweetness in fruit, sharpen the flavor of vegetables, deepen soups, and transform a simple meal into something special.

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But colorful salt is still salt.

Enjoy the texture. Appreciate the origin. Experiment with flavor. Use specialty salts to make meals feel more intentional.

And remember: the healthiest approach is not to fear salt or romanticize it—it is to use it with awareness.

Too much sodium can raise blood pressure and contribute to cardiovascular risk, while much of the sodium in modern diets comes from packaged and restaurant foods rather than the pinch you add at home.

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