

What's in *your* salt?

Thousands of years ago the Vedic Rishis (enlightened sages or seers of ancient India), from which all Ayurvedic knowledge and wisdom was derived, identified and confirmed the existence of six tastes. Lavana, or salty taste is an important one, very commonly used, but the least understood. It contains a unique combination of both soma and agni, or in SVA terms, its properties are primarily nurturing (soma) and transformation (agni).

According to the SVA or Shaka Vansya Ayurveda lineage, the entire universe, nature, as well as our physiology thrives on prana, our life force. Prana's three components; soma, agni, and marut are vibrational energies that occur in our natural environment. Soma is characterized as nurturing energy that carries lunar energy vibrations. Soma provides our bodies with stability, aids in lubrication, and supports optimum absorption of what we eat and drink. Agni aides in the transformation process including digestions (of both food and emotions), and carries the vibrational energies of the sun. Marut is associated with the air and space elements, and supports all movement in nature.

Ayurveda places great importance on the six rasas or the six tastes as they have a profound effect on the way we digest our food as well as how they affect our internal organs. Balancing the six tastes in our diets is a key principle for optimum health and wellness. The six rasa / tastes are:

1. Sweet – madhur
2. Sour – amla
3. Salty – lavana
4. Pungent – katu
5. Bitter – tikta
6. Astringent – kashaya

The salty (lavana) taste encompasses all foods that have a healthy salty taste to them. Today, salt often refers only to sodium chloride (NaCl.), yet salt is so much more than that. Based partly on observing the qualities of the salty taste, the Vedic Rishis understood that in addition to improving the flavor of foods, healthy and clean salt aids digestion and circulation, lubricates the stomach lining, enhances absorption, and helps open up blocked channels. The rishis also recognized that in excess or with improper use, the salty taste will cause imbalances. The rishis observed that salt

exhibits the gunas or qualities of heaviness (guru), unctuousness (snaihika), and warmth (ushna).

Benefits of proper salt usage:

The Charak Samhita¹, the main Ayurvedic text and sutras of holistic medicine contains the laws of nature and guiding medical principles. This life manual provides us with beautiful verses of the actions of the salty taste on our body including:

Sanskrit Term	Benefit of the Salt Taste
Pacana	Supports digestion
Kledana	Lubricates stomach lining
Dipana	Supports the digestive agni or flame, which helps digest food
Chedana	A drilling and disintegrating effect on heavy food or ama
Bhedana	Dismantles heavy materials in food, ama, and high kledaka kapha in the digestive system. Kledaka kapha is the subdosha of kapha Dosha that governs the protective secretions which line mucous membranes.
Stiksna	Breaks barriers of high kapha and ama
Saro	Encourages free flowing movements
Vikasya	Fast traveling food carrier throughout the physical body
Vataharah	Vata pacifying
Stambhaba	Enhances absorption
Sanghatavidhamanah	Heals and rejuvenates
Margan visodhayati	Clears and detoxifies the physical channels in the body

¹ Ca.Suthrasthana, ch.26,v.43(#)

Sarvasariravayanavan mrdukaroti	Keeps molecules of the body and skin soft
Rocayatyaharam	Makes the food tastier
Aharayogi	Combines food faster

Effects of Too Much Salt Use:

The Charak Samhita² as documented by the vedic rishis also provides us with awareness about the misuse or overuse of salt. The following table lists complications and health problems that may be caused by excess or misuse of the salty taste.

Sanskrit Term	Effect of Excess Salt
Pittam Kopayati:	Aggravates pitta dosha
Raktam Vardhayati	Increases blood tissue with a pathological limit
Tarsayati	Increases thirst
Murcchayati	Causes a person to pass out
Tapayati:	Creates thermogenesis (excess heat) with a pathological limit
Darayati	Ruptures tissues
Kusnati Mamsani:	Causes toxins and deficiency in the muscle tissues (mamsa dhatu)
Pragalayati Kusthani	Aggravates chronic skin diseases
Visam Vardhayati	Increases ama vishra
Sophan Sphotayati	Causes blisters, abscesses and inflammation
Dantamscyavayati:	Causes gum inflammation
Pumstvamupahanti:	Long-term excessive use may cause impotence

² Ca.Suthrasthana, ch.26,v.43(#)

Indriyanyuparunaddhi	Creates problems with the coordination between mind and senses
Valipalitakhalityamapadayati:	Premature aging, premature thinning of hair and skin, and baldness

What is Soma Salt?

Soma salt is a cooling rock salt, as the name “soma” suggests. Soma salt is a high grade salt extracted from the Himalayas in the historic land of Sindh. Soma salt undergoes a proprietary purification process, a technique that has been passed down in the Shaka Vansya Ayurvedic lineage. Salt that originate from the Himalayas develop as large rock and cluster deposits that contain agni (heating) minerals such as lead, sulphur, zinc, cadmium etc. The SVA salt purification process removes the agni metals and minerals producing an end result that is balanced, cooling and nurturing. Organic materials are used during the cleaning process, and no anti-caking agents or free-flowing agents are added.

In comparison to many other edible salts that are heating in nature, Soma salt is cooling as it carries lunar (cooling) soma intelligence thus providing a more nurturing effect on the body. Soma salt provides a more subtle salty taste, which draws out the flavor in foods without dominating them.

The Charak Samhita lists eight edible and beneficial kinds of salt coming from the Himalayas. It names the best among them as Soma Lavan, or Soma salt. This cooling variety of salt is said to give numerous benefits. Soma salt is described in Chapter 27, Verse 300 as: rochanam (tasty), deepanam (increasing the digestive fire, which supports all seven tissues), vrishyam (supporting shukra dhatu, or reproductive tissue), chakchushya (supporting the longevity of the eyes by cooling the liver), avidahi cha (not creating a digestive imbalance due to excess heating quality, and not causing retention of toxins as other salts do), tridoshagnam (pacifying all three doshas and having a somewhat sweet taste), lavanottamam (the best of all salts).

Soma salt also contains very little iodine. Iodine is a chemical element essential for the production of thyroid hormones that regular growth and metabolism. There is often a misconception that salt should be fortified with iodine to support the body. However, there are many foods that are naturally high in iodine such as; dried seaweed, fish, potato peel, milk, shrimp, turkey, navy beans, and eggs.³ These natural sources are more bioavailable, which means the iodine can be absorbed and used by the body

³ Linus Pauling Institute. Micronutrient information center, Article on Iodine.

more intelligently without the risk of overdose⁴ or deficiency.^{5 6} NOTE: Please consult your Physician if you are low in iodine or have an iodine-related disease.

Soma salt also contains very little sodium chloride, whereas most table salt is over 95% sodium chloride. Sodium chloride has a heating effect on the body, which may cause various doshic imbalances.

A Salt Mineral Analysis: SVA vs. Standard Himalayan Salt:

Below is a spectral analysis of SVA Soma salt, which has gone through a purification process to remove heating minerals and metals, compared to a typical Himalayan salt.

The results below show the content per 100 g of each product.

Mineral / Metal	SVA Soma Salt	Standard Himalayan Salt
HEATING		
Aluminum	Not detected (ND)	0.661 parts per million (ppm)
Sodium	16,800 milligrams per 100 grams	382,610 milligrams (382.61 g/kg)
Iron	1.1 milligrams per 100 grams	38.9 ppm
Zinc	ND	2.38 ppm
Copper	ND	0.56 ppm
Phosphorus	ND	0.10 ppm
Barium	ND	1.96 ppm
Tin	ND	0.01 ppm
Arsenic	Below LOD - limit of detection	0.10 ppm
Cadmium	Below LOD - limit of detection	0.01 ppm
Lead	Below LOD - limit of detection	0.10 ppm
Mercury	Below LOD - limit of detection	0.03 ppm
COOLING		
Magnesium	102 milligrams per 100 grams	160 milligrams (0.16 g/kg)
Calcium	361 milligrams per 100 grams	4,050 milligrams (4.05 g/kg)
Potassium	1600 milligrams per 100 grams	350 milligrams per 1 kg or 1000 g

⁴ Iodine Excess and Hyperthyroidism. Elio Roti and Ettore Degli Uberti and. Thyroid. May 2001.

⁵ Too Much Versus Too Little: The Implications of Current Iodine Intake in the United States. Kelly Lee M.S., R.D., Robert Bradley M.S., R.D., Johanna Dwyer D.Sc., R.D., Stephanie L. Lee M.D., Ph.D. 2009.

⁶ Correction of iodine deficiency: benefits and possible side effects. F. Delange. European Journal of Endocrinology. 2002.

As the chart above indicates, Soma Salt has less Sodium and more potassium which are highly desirable results. On the other hand, it is lower in calcium, magnesium, zinc, and copper, as these elements are lost during the aluminum purification process – research has confirmed that aluminum is a highly toxic element unfit for human consumption.

Using Soma Salt:

Below are just a few ways to use Soma salt.

- **Cooking:** Sauté Soma salt with other spices in ghee before adding your vegetables or protein. Mix Soma salt with Mum's Masala, lime juice and some olive oil for a delicious dip or drizzle on salad as a healthy dressing.
- **Baking:** Soma salt enhances the taste of sugar and aids in the proper absorption of the sweet taste. Please do not use Soma salt with milk or cream.
- **Sprinkling on food:** Simply sprinkle Soma salt to taste over your food.
- **Improve appetite:** Sprinkle a little Soma salt on a slice of ginger, add a squeeze of lime and eat. This will help un-cloud the kledaka kapha subdosha and increase the appetite.
- **Addressing salt cravings:** Sprinkle a little Soma salt on a slice of lime and suck on it. Note: this should not follow a tequila shot!
- **Addressing dehydration:** There are a number of SVA rehydration drink recipes to balance doshas and support the digestion system. Rehydration drink recipes can be found at: http://www.chandika.com/downloads/SVA-Summer-Protocol_Vaidya-Mishra_Aug2010.pdf

Recipes using Soma Salt:

The SVA Cooking team has prepared a multitude of tasty recipes using Soma salt. Happy browsing and cooking!

<http://www.vaidyamishra.com/pages/Videos.html>

<http://www.chandika.com/pages/Recipes.html>

Customer Testimonials:

There are thousands of happy users of Soma salt and here are a few of their testimonials:

Food Enhanced with Soma Salt (Posted on chandika.com by Mary McCoy on 23rd Oct 2009) “Soma salt has a 'softer' quality compared to other salts, so there isn't any sharp edge.

Food flavors seem to be enhanced from the inside making them taste fuller, more nourishing and more like the natural ingredient itself. That it helps calm my pitta is an extra bonus.

Great salt! (Posted on chandika.com by Laura - NYC on 2nd Sep 2009): “I have a high pitta constitution that tends to throw off my vata dosha which then makes me crave more salt then that throws off my pitta dosha more and so on! Soma Salt has been a life saver in this sense. It satisfies my vata without aggravating my pitta and putting me in an endless loop of one dosha aggravating the next. Plus I do not retain any toxins with this salt, being a woman, cellulite can be an issue for me! Thank you Vaidya for an amazing product and all the knowledge to help heal us!”

Delicious! (Posted on chandika.com by Greg - WI on 2nd Sep 2009): “Tastes really great. Salty taste but no biting sharpness. lovely after effect feeling. Thanks.”

and some more recent ones:

“I got used to Soma Salt but ran out one day and by the time I got it back I had to use regular table salt. My chronic problems (joint and ankle pain) came back immediately, and I knew it was the salt because I had not changed anything else in my diet or routine. Now I never run out of it!” (SR – SoCal)

“I started to use Soma Salt because I liked its taste, not too sharp yet salty enough. But with time I noticed how it made me feel lighter. Vaidya explains that my body likes to retain water and we know salt retains water. Having Soma Salt has been a boon for me, as I could now consume my salt without running the risk of feeling heavy, bloated, and gaining weight. I love this salt.” Melanie K. (CA)

“While on a trip I had taken precautions to minimize and avoid the use of regular table salt, requesting fresh meals to be made without salt whenever possible. However, on a couple of occasions I had to submit and eat what was available. My body had an immediate response to the regular table salt. My feet became swollen and painful. The doctors could not see/understand anything. After a diet with regular Soma Salt everything is back to normal again. This salt is magical. More people should know about it...”

Raymond M., Canada

References:

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- Iodine Excess and Hyperthyroidism. Elio Roti and Ettore Degli Uberti and. Thyroid. May 2001, 11(5): 493–500. doi:10.1089/105072501300176453. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11396708>
- Linus Pauling Institute, Micronutrient information Center. <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/minerals/iodine/>
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- Chemical Analysis of Natural Himalayan Pink Rock Salt. <http://www.saltnews.com/chemical-analysis-natural-himalayan-pink-salt/>