



Good Salt vs “Bad” Salt

What You Need to Know

You’ll notice that a lot of Ground Leaf recipes call for salt, and sometimes a fairly generous amount. There are so many mixed opinions in the nutrition field about salt, so let’s clear up some of the confusion.

First, not all salts are created equal (1), as you’ve probably guessed if you’ve stood in the salt section of your health food grocer, scratching your head at the vast selection, colors, and appearances. Some are pink. Some are grey. Some are in a powder, and others come in big chunks, like rock salt crystals, as well as in much larger chunks, like...well, lamps.

There are many holistic uses for salts. The large pieces that glow with a lightbulb inside are often used in healing spaces to “ground and clear energy.” It’s said that the negative salt ions released by heating can boost blood flow, improve sleep, increase levels of serotonin in the brain, and calm allergy or asthma symptoms (2). There are also many varieties used to bathe, soak, and cleanse. This article, however, is about the kind you eat...you know, the kind that can take a dish from “meh” all the way to “woah” with a couple sprinkles.

The biggest differences between table salt and the more natural (and expensive) versions are the way they’re processed, and the effect they have on your body. (3)

Table Salt

Table salt (which is mostly sodium chloride) is heavily processed to remove minerals, and generally contains additives which prevent clumping and increase shelf life. Because the processing strips the minerals, it’s common practice to artificially add iodine back into table salt, which was part of an initiative in the 1920’s to counter a widespread problem of iodine deficiency. Table salt (which is very high in sodium) is what experts are generally referring to when they suggest cutting back on salt, as too much of that tasty white stuff can make you bloated, sluggish, foggy, and even lead to serious cardiovascular problems down the line.

Himalayan Pink Salt

Himalayan pink salt is hand-mined in the Himalayan mountains, and is naturally rich in essential minerals. In terms of health benefits, the need for a balance of electrolytes cannot be

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overstated. Maintaining the right balance of electrolytes and minerals helps your body's blood chemistry, muscle action and pretty much every other physiological process. (4) Himalayan pink salt has 80+ minerals and elements which can regulate water content, keep you hydrated, maintain proper organ function, and much more. This is the preferred salt of Ground Leaf and is used in all of the recipes on this site.

Celtic Sea Salt

Celtic sea salt, as its name suggests, is mined from the sea with extra care to preserve its life-giving nutrients. Sea salt, just like Himalayan pink salt, can help to alkalize your body, balance blood sugars, improve brain function, and regulate sleep cycles.

Now that you know what kind of salt is called for in Ground Leaf recipes, let's dive into the three main benefits of real salt - a life (and food) enhancing kitchen essential.

1.A flavor enhancer

Ground Leaf recipes are all whole food, plant-based, and fresh; herbs and spices are a big part of what makes the dishes so robust and interesting. Salt amplifies the flavor of the herbs and spices, and really brings out the subtleties of grains, vegetables, and legumes so you can get a taste of their natural essence. You know you've used too much salt when the salt outweighs the natural flavor of the food...but don't worry, we've taken care of that for you with specific measurements and instructions. And if you're concerned about too much salt in your cooking, start with a little amount and add as necessary; you can always add more but you can't take it out once it's in there.

2.An essential mineral

Now that you understand the importance of minerals necessary function within your body, by replacing your processed table salt with a high quality natural version, you're improving your ability to receive invaluable nutrition. This really can't be overstated.

3.A preservative

Before packaging and refrigeration came along, salt was one of the very first methods of preserving food. Because bacteria and fungi (micro-organisms that can spoil food) need humidity to multiply, salt acts as a preservative by making the environment too dry to support

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harmful molds or bacteria. Basically, salt works by drying and absorbing the water from food.

(6) Vegetables like cabbage, pickles, and runner beans are all preserved in this way, and you can look forward to some great recipes that will show you how you can use high quality salt to naturally preserve your food, prevent spoiling, and of course enhance the flavor.

When you hear all the experts telling you to cut back on salt, keep in mind that they are absolutely right! Too much sodium can be extremely dangerous, and is so readily available in processed, packaged foods that you've got to keep your eye out for it. However, switching to a whole food, plant-based diet will help immediately cut back your intake of the "bad" salts, thereby minimizing your risk of a host of dangerous diseases. (7)

Natural salt is a healthful addition to your diet in moderate doses, so don't be afraid when you see added salt in the delicious Ground Leaf recipes!

Resources:

- 1) <http://www.100daysofrealfood.com/2013/07/22/sodium-essential-salt/>
- 2) <http://wellnessmama.com/23569/himalayan-salt-lamp-benefits/>
- 3) <http://organics.org/table-salt-vs-himalayan-sea-salt-whats-the-difference/>
- 4) <https://medlineplus.gov/fluidandelectrolytebalance.html>
- 5) <https://draxe.com/10-benefits-celtic-sea-salt-himalayan-salt/>
- 6) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK50952/>
- 7) http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/strategies-for-cutting-back-on-salt