

View of salt-making fields along the coast south of Nha Trang

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This landscape shows salt fields along the coast south of Nha Trang. Sea water is evaporating in the background fields, while salt is nearly ready for harvest in the front field.

This type of salt production is a low-cost technology that is known and used in shallow coastal regions throughout Southeast Asia. Sea water enters the fields at high tide. The fields are edged with roughly three-foot high mud dykes, which retain sea water after the tide recedes. Over a period of sunny days, the water evaporates leaving the dry, white salt powder to be collected for sale.

In tropical regions, salt is an especially necessary and highly prized addition to people's diet, as it helps retain body fluids in the heat. Traditionally salt was traded to interior groups from the coasts or, in some regions, it could be mined from salt layers found within inland mountains.



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