

# HEALING SEAS

From halotherapy to thalassotherapy, what makes salt and seaweed so restorative?

By **Kristin Vukovic**

During the summers when I visit Croatia, my grandparents' homeland, the first thing I crave is a swim in the Adriatic Sea. The crystal-clear water is rejuvenating, and instantly washes away any lingering stresses from my hectic New York City life. Last year, I floated in a fresh seawater pool at Hotel Excelsior in Dubrovnik, which is perched on a cliff overlooking the sea. I emerged feeling refreshed and whole again. People have practiced thalassotherapy—the medical use of seawater and sea products as a form of therapy—for centuries. But what exactly makes the sea so healing?

“Mineral salts comprise approximately six percent of the body's composition and serve as essential components in enzymatic processes,” says Charlene Florian, chief creative officer of Kerstin Florian. “Magnesium, for example, is involved in 800 enzymatic processes—and 70 to 80 percent of people in North America are deficient. Bathing in sea salts and seaweed and incorporating good quality salt in moderation in our diet is a recommended and healthy lifestyle practice.”

Whether wet or dry, salt is one of the most effective ways to renew our bodies. I had the opportunity to experience Breathe Salt Room's Dry Salt Therapy in NYC, which takes place in a room tiled with pink-toned Himalayan salt bricks and salt pebbles that evoke walking on a sandy beach. The holistic

treatment, often referred to as halotherapy, involves relaxing on a lounger and breathing in micro-fine salt particles emitted by a diffuser, which detoxify the skin and lungs.

The Scottish skincare line, ishga, sources nutrient-rich and sustainably harvested seaweed from the pristine shores of the Hebrides Islands off the northwestern coast of Scotland. Gaelic for water, ishga infuses healing spring water with a potent extract of Hebridean seaweed, which contains a variety of vitamins, minerals, trace elements and amino acids. “The seaweed extracts use a unique process which maintains the high levels of polyphenols, natural antioxidants that are found in Hebridean seaweed,” says Malcolm Macrae, who oversees product development at ishga skincare in Stornoway, Scotland. “These antioxidants have been shown in scientific tests to have antiaging and antiwrinkle properties, and provide protection against environmental damage to the skin by neutralizing free radicals.”

In neighboring Ireland, Voya hand-harvests the organic seaweed used in its products. “Seaweed naturally cleanses and purifies your skin, helping to improve its suppleness and elasticity. All seaweeds contain algal polyphenols and carotenoids, which have been proven to fight the major causes of disease and aging,” says Michelle Kelthy, Spa Director, The Ritz-Carlton, Naples, FL.

ishga sustainably hand-harvests seaweed from the pristine waters around the islands of the Scottish Outer Hebrides.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ISHGA

*Here are some of our favorite ways to use salt and seaweed products at home.*



**KERSTIN FLORIAN MINERAL WELLNESS SOAK** Sourced from South Africa, these hand-harvested salts from an underground seawater lake contain over 60 natural minerals and trace elements that help to nourish and rebalance the body. The salts have a high concentration of colloidal silver, which is antibacterial and antiviral, and provide a purifying wellness treatment that relieves aching muscles and joints. [kerstinflorian.com](http://kerstinflorian.com)



## SEA FLORA POTENT SEAWEED SERUM

The owner of Sea Flora, Diane Bernard, is known as “the Seaweed Lady,” for her commitment to sustainably harvesting more than 10 varieties of seaweed from the outer coast of Vancouver Island, B.C. The Potent Seaweed Serum is packed with antioxidant-rich organic seaweed, to firm and tone the skin and refine pores, along with rosehip oil, to soothe inflammation. [sea-flora.com](http://sea-flora.com)

## EO FRENCH LAVENDER NATURAL BATH SALT SOAK

Relaxing lavender essential oils are combined with EO's signature blend of certified organic Himalayan pink salts and California sea salts. Himalayan salts detoxify and stimulate skin, and California sea salts—which are rich in calcium, potassium and magnesium—restore balance and soothe the body, mind and spirit. [eoproducts.com](http://eoproducts.com)



**ISHGA EXFOLIATING FACE MASK** New to the U.S. market, the organic Scottish skincare brand ishga uses pure high-quality *ascophyllum nodosum* seaweed powder combined with natural Hebridean seawater in its Exfoliating Face

Mask. Packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and trace elements, fine seaweed grains gently exfoliate and remove dead skin cells, leaving your skin revitalized. [ishgaorganicskincare.com](http://ishgaorganicskincare.com)



**OSEA BODY EXFOLIATION SET** Slough into spring with this exfoliating and hydrating duo, formulated from 100 percent natural derived ingredients, which is sure to leave you with glowing, silky-smooth skin. Salts of the Earth scrub contains pink *gigartina skottsbergii* algae, which stimulates cell regeneration; salt from around the world, including Dead Sea salt; and organic shea butter. The firming and toning Anti-Aging Body Balm is loaded with hand-harvested marine extracts from Patagonia in a coconut oil base. [oseamalibu.com](http://oseamalibu.com)

## THALGO MICRONIZED MARINE ALGAE

Thanks to an infusion of trace elements and vitamins, this power-packed soak will leave you feeling revitalized. Due to their high iodine content, *laminaria* and *fucus* algae contribute to detoxification, fat loss and increased circulation. Calcium- and magnesium-rich lithothamnion algae help to de-stress and remineralize the body. [thalgousa.com](http://thalgousa.com)



## PHYTOMER ROSÉE SOIN RADIANCE REPLENISHING OIL

Formulated with marine and plant oils, this new face serum quickly penetrates skin, leaving a lovely rose scent. D-Tox (*phaeodactylum tricornutum*) microalgae oil, sourced from France's coastal waters, eliminates free radicals and toxins while providing a glowing complexion. Gorse oil, extracted from a seaside shrub rich in phytosterols, rehydrates skin. [phytomerusa.com](http://phytomerusa.com)

**VOYA PEARLESQUE** This recent addition to The Dry Skin Facial Range combines the restorative and therapeutic properties of *laminaria digitata* seaweed with carefully selected natural active ingredients and essential oils. The ultra-nourishing facial moisturizer, which contains over 80 percent organic ingredients, illuminates the complexion. Rose of Jericho—a desert plant known for its highly adaptive moisture retention complex—and algae extract work to boost hydration levels and strengthen the skin's cellular structure while reducing sensitivity. [voya.ie](http://voya.ie)

