

11 EXOTIC & EASY ESCAPES P. 18

(AND SURPRISING NONSTOP FLIGHTS)

10 TRUE
HAWAIIAN
RESORTS
P. 56

Islands®

Enthusiast Travel Since 1981

THE TRUTH ABOUT HAWAII

GREEN BEACHES, NUTLESS PALMS, OFF-LIMITS ISLANDS,
AND WHY YOU SHOULDN'T JUST SAY "ALOHA" P. 30

+

MOVE TO
BELIZE
No Plan,
No Problem
P. 70

PHILIPPINES
BEYOND
MANILA
P. 26



FINEST CRYSTALS

BY BRITTANY SHOOT



WHERE: THE NORTH SEA
THE FIND: A WARM SPOT

The wooden hut is thick with humidity. I didn't expect this off the northeastern coast of Denmark — the hut or the humidity. But here I stand on a dirt floor, a heavy industrial shovel in my hands, digging through a pile of culinary diamonds. I pause to pull something out of my hair. It's a chunk of one of Denmark's most delicious gems: salt.

Don't get me wrong. I love visiting my Danish in-laws. They're huggable. They're also within traveling distance of Læsø ("lay-sue"), this tiny island in the North Sea where the most amazing salt known to man is made — dare I say, the main reason I've come to Denmark.

Back in California my husband, Andreas, and I can buy Hawaiian black lava salt or pink Himalayan salt. But instead we call Andreas' parents and ask them to send another bag from Læsø Salt Works.

"Very special," Andreas' mother said over dinner a few years ago, dropping a pinch of the salt onto her boiled potatoes. "Powerful. Crunchy. Just use a little."

That night I was hooked. Goodbye, Morton. Nice knowing you, Diamond.

When Andreas asked before this trip if there was anywhere I'd like to go, I said I wanted to take a ferry ride into the sea and decamp on this dash of an island.

"The salt," I said, making myself crystal clear. "I want to see where it's made."

When we land at the dock on Læsø, Poul Christensen reaches out to help us onto dry land. Poul is the salt master responsible for the salt revival on Læsø, and his calloused hands tell me it's not an easy job.

In the Middle Ages, the island's arid summers and briny groundwater made it a salt-making capital. But the ancient salt makers felled the trees to keep fires burning. To curb erosion, the king outlawed salt making. Then, in the 1980s, Poul decided to bring back the industry that once made Læsø a travel destination and provided jobs.

"Young people were bored, getting into trouble." And then a line I'd never heard: "Salt would give them a purpose."

Poul went to Germany to toil over iron pans and relearn the ancient craft, right down to designing the hut (though the sacks of salt selling for \$30 a pound in the gift shop must be a new touch).

When I tell Poul that I want a taste of the work involved, he quickly hands me the shovel and instructs me to scoop a pile of salt into large wooden buckets. Less than five minutes pass before my arms ache and sweat starts rolling down my cheeks.

"You OK?" Poul asks. "Here."

Graciously, he takes my shovel and hands me a nugget of salt. I know it doesn't sound as refreshing as Gatorade. To me, though, it's crystalline gold. But yeah, I could use a glass of water too.

60 SECONDS IN ICELAND: islands.com

MY DANISH IN-LAWS ARE WITHIN TRAVELING DISTANCE OF THIS TINY ISLAND IN THE NORTH SEA WHERE THE MOST AMAZING SALT IS MADE — DARE I SAY, THE **MAIN REASON I'VE COME TO DENMARK.**