**Salt March**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Salt_March.jpg)

The **Salt March**, also known as the **Dandi March** ,was an act of [nonviolent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent) [civil disobedience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_disobedience) in [colonial India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) led by [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mohandas_Karamchand_Gandhi) to produce salt from the seawater in the coastal village of [Dandi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dandi,_Navsari" \o "Dandi, Navsari) (now in [Gujarat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat)), as was the practice of the local populace until British officials introduced taxation on salt production, deemed their sea-salt reclamation activities illegal, and then repeatedly used force to stop it.

The 26-day march lasted from 12 March 1930 to 6 April 1930 as a [direct action](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_action) campaign of [tax resistance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_resistance) and [nonviolent protest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_resistance) against the British salt monopoly. It gained worldwide attention which gave impetus to the [Indian independence movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement) and started the nationwide Civil Disobedience Movement.

[Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) started this march with 78 of his trusted volunteers. The march was over 240 miles. They walked for 24 days 10 miles a day.

The march was the most significant organized challenge to British authority since the [Non-cooperation movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-cooperation_movement) of 1920–22, and directly followed the [Purna Swaraj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purna_Swaraj" \o "Purna Swaraj) declaration of sovereignty and self-rule by the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress) on 26 January 1930.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-1)

Gandhi led the Dandi March from his base, [Sabarmati Ashram](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabarmati_Ashram), 240 miles (384 km) to the coastal village of Dandi, which was at a small town called [Navsari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navsari" \o "Navsari) (now in the state of Gujarat) to produce salt without paying the tax, growing numbers of Indians joined them along the way. When Gandhi broke the salt laws at 6:30 am on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of [civil disobedience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_disobedience) against the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj) [salt laws](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_British_salt_tax_in_India) by millions of Indians.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-2) The campaign had a significant effect on changing world and British attitudes towards Indian sovereignty and self-rule [[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-Johnson,_p._37-3)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-4) and caused large numbers of Indians to join the fight for the first time.

After making salt at Dandi, Gandhi continued southward along the coast, making salt and addressing meetings on the way. The Congress Party planned to stage a satyagraha at the Dharasana Salt Works, 25 miles south of Dandi. However, Gandhi was arrested on the midnight of 4–5 May 1930, just days before the planned action at Dharasana.

The Dandi March and the ensuing [Dharasana Satyagraha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dharasana_Satyagraha" \o "Dharasana Satyagraha) drew worldwide attention to the [Indian independence movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_independence_movement) through extensive newspaper and newsreel coverage. The [satyagraha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyagraha" \o "Satyagraha) against the salt tax continued for almost a year, ending with Gandhi's release from jail and negotiations with [Viceroy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viceroy) [Lord Irwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._F._L._Wood,_1st_Earl_of_Halifax) at the Second [Round Table Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Round_Table_Conference).[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-5) Over 60,000 Indians were jailed as a result of the Salt Satyagraha.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-6) However, it failed to result in major concessions from the British.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-7)

The Salt Satyagraha campaign was based upon Gandhi's principles of non-violent protest called *[satyagraha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Satyagraha" \o "Satyagraha)*, which he loosely translated as "truth-force"."[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-8) Literally, it is formed from the [Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit) words *satya*, "truth", and *agraha*, "insistence". In early 1930 the Indian National Congress chose satyagraha as their main tactic for winning Indian sovereignty and self-rule from British rule and appointed Gandhi to organise the campaign.

Gandhi chose the 1882 British Salt Act as the first target of satyagraha. The Salt March to Dandi, and the beating by British police of hundreds of nonviolent protesters in Dharasana, which received worldwide news coverage, demonstrated the effective use of civil disobedience as a technique for fighting social and political injustice.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-9)

 The satyagraha teachings of Gandhi and the March to Dandi had a significant influence on American activists [Martin Luther King Jr.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.), [James Bevel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Bevel), and others during the [Civil Rights Movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Movement) for civil rights for African Americans and other minority groups in the 1960s.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-King,_p._23-10)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mahatma_&_Sarojini_Naidu_1930.JPG)

[Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) and [Sarojini Naidu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarojini_Naidu" \o "Sarojini Naidu) during the March.

At midnight on 31 December 1929, the [Indian National Congress](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_National_Congress)raised the tricolour [flag of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag_of_India) on the banks of the [Ravi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ravi_River) at [Lahore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lahore). The Indian National Congress, led by [Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) and [Jawaharlal Nehru](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jawaharlal_Nehru), publicly issued the Declaration of sovereignty and self-rule, or [Purna Swaraj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purna_Swaraj" \o "Purna Swaraj), on 26 January 1930.[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-11) (Literally in [Sanskrit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit), *purna*, "complete," *swa*, "self," *raj*, "rule," so therefore "complete self-rule".) The declaration included the readiness to withhold taxes, and the statement:

We believe that it is the inalienable right of the Indian people, as of any other people, to have freedom and to enjoy the fruits of their toil and have the necessities of life, so that they may have full opportunities of growth.

We believe also that if any government deprives a people of these rights and oppresses them the people have a further right to alter it or abolish it. The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually.

We believe therefore, that India must sever the British connection and attain *Purna Swaraji* or complete sovereignty and self-rule.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-12)

The [Congress Working Committee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Congress_Working_Committee) gave Gandhi the responsibility for organising the first act of [civil disobedience](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_disobedience), with Congress itself ready to take charge after Gandhi's expected arrest.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-A_&_DuVall,_p._83-13)

 Gandhi's plan was to begin civil disobedience with a satyagraha aimed at the [British salt tax](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_British_salt_tax_in_India). The 1882 Salt Act gave the British a monopoly on the collection and manufacture of salt, limiting its handling to government salt depots and levying a salt tax.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-14) Violation of the Salt Act was a criminal offence. Even though salt was freely available to those living on the coast (by evaporation of sea water), Indians were forced to buy it from the colonial government.

Choice of salt as protest focus

Initially, Gandhi's choice of the salt tax was met with incredulity by the Working Committee of the Congress,

The British establishment too was not disturbed by these plans of resistance against the salt tax. The [Viceroy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viceroy) himself, [Lord Irwin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Irwin), did not take the threat of a salt protest seriously, writing to London, "At present the prospect of a salt campaign does not keep me awake at night."[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-18)

However, Gandhi had sound reasons for his decision. An item of daily use could resonate more with all classes of citizens than an abstract demand for greater political rights. The salt tax represented 8.2% of the British Raj tax revenue, and hurt the poorest Indians the most significantly.

 Explaining his choice, Gandhi said, "Next to air and water, salt is perhaps the greatest necessity of life." In contrast to the other leaders, the prominent Congress statesman and future [Governor-General of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Governor-General_of_India), [C. Rajagopalachari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Rajagopalachari), understood Gandhi's viewpoint. In a public meeting at [Tuticorin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuticorin" \o "Tuticorin), he said:

Suppose, a people rise in revolt.

They cannot attack the abstract constitution or lead an army against proclamations and statutes...Civil disobedience has to be directed against the salt tax or the land tax or some other particular point — not that; that is our final end, but for the time being it is our aim, and we must shoot straight.[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-gopalgandhi-17)

Gandhi felt that this protest would dramatise Purna Swaraj in a way that was meaningful to every Indian. He also reasoned that it would build unity between Hindus and Muslims by fighting a wrong that touched them equally.[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salt_March#cite_note-A_&_DuVall,_p._83-13)

After the protest gathered steam, the leaders realised the power of salt as a symbol. Nehru remarked about the unprecedented popular response, "it seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released.