



Lake Natron: The Blood-Red Soda Lake

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News Context: Recent satellite imagery from early 2026 shows Lake Natron in Tanzania reaching its peak "blood-red" coloration due to high evaporation rates in the East African Rift.

- **The Chemistry:** The lake is extremely alkaline, with a pH as high as 12 (similar to ammonia). This is caused by the runoff of sodium carbonate and other minerals from the nearby volcano, Ol Doinyo Lengai.
- **The Color:** The red hue comes from salt-loving microorganisms called Haloarchaea. These microbes produce red pigments to protect themselves from the intense African sun.
- **The Oasis:** Despite its toxicity to most life, it is the only regular breeding ground for 2.5 million Lesser Flamingos, whose tough skin allows them to stand in the caustic water, protected from predators.