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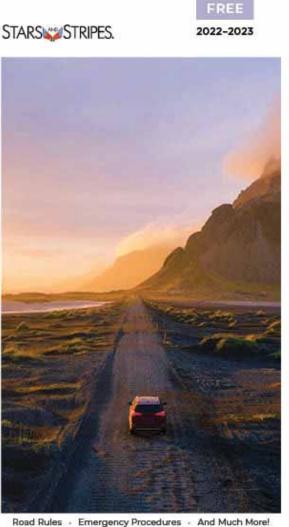
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ugust Events

t is the last full month of the summer season and Germany is filled with events to help you celebrate that fact. Whether you want to soak up the fun in the sun or cool down inside, there is something for everyone. As always, make sure you are up-to-date on the local area's regulations before traveling.

Open Air Filmfest August 11 to 15, Weiterstadt



This film festival began in 1977 with only three spectators and has grown to a five-day event where audiences can marvel at films that have been submitted from dozens of countries around the world.

Culinary World Tour: American BBQ August 19, Cologne



If you are craving some of the great BBQ foods from America, this is the event for you. Sail down the Rhine for this four-hour event, and savor the flavors of "genuine American specialties" such as steaks, burgers, spareribs, chicken, grilled corn on the cob and baked beans. For the full "American" experience, the DJ will play "made in America" country western, rock and pop music.

Potsdam Palace Night August 19 & 20, Potsdam



© SPSG/HANS BACH

Enjoy music, dancing, theater performances and spectacular lights as you relive the "bygone pomp and glory" of former Prussian kings in the parks and palaces of Sanssouci. The night ends with a fireworks show at midnight on both Saturday and Sunday.

Heimat und Weinfest / Homeland and Wine Festival August 25 to 29, Cochem



Take in the beauty of the Moselle Promenade as you sip Rieslings and sparkling wines. There will be two stages of music for your listening pleasure and a grand parade taking place through the alleys and streets of Cochem on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.

Beethovenfest / Beethoven Festival August 25 to September 17, Bonn



Since 1845, Bonn has celebrated one of its most famous sons, Ludwig van Beethoven, through this world-renowned music festival. Revel in over 60 concerts taking place at 25 venues celebrating both classical and contemporary music.

Nürnberger Volkfest / Nuremberg Fall Folk Festival August 26 to September 11, Nuremberg



Come enjoy one of the 10 largest folk festivals in all of Germany that has been around since 1826. There will be attractions, shops, sweet and savory foods, games and raffles at this family-friendly event.

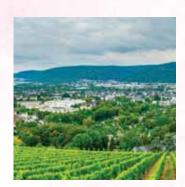
Lange Nacht Der Museen / Long Night of Museums August 27, Berlin



©IBIFEN84/123RF.COM

Sip a cocktail under a dinosaur, gaze in amazement at acrobatics and watch "courtly dances" in a castle. Between 70 and 80 museums across Berlin participate in this event, with some offering events for children and Englishlanguage tours.

Saar Riesling Summer August 27 to 28, Trier



Eighteen top wineries from the Saar region present their best wines in beautiful locations across this weekend. Each station also features guest winemakers from other parts of Germany and abroad. Everyone from novice to sommelier is welcome.

PI AN AHFAD

Ed Sheeran - Live in Concert September 10 to 12, Munich

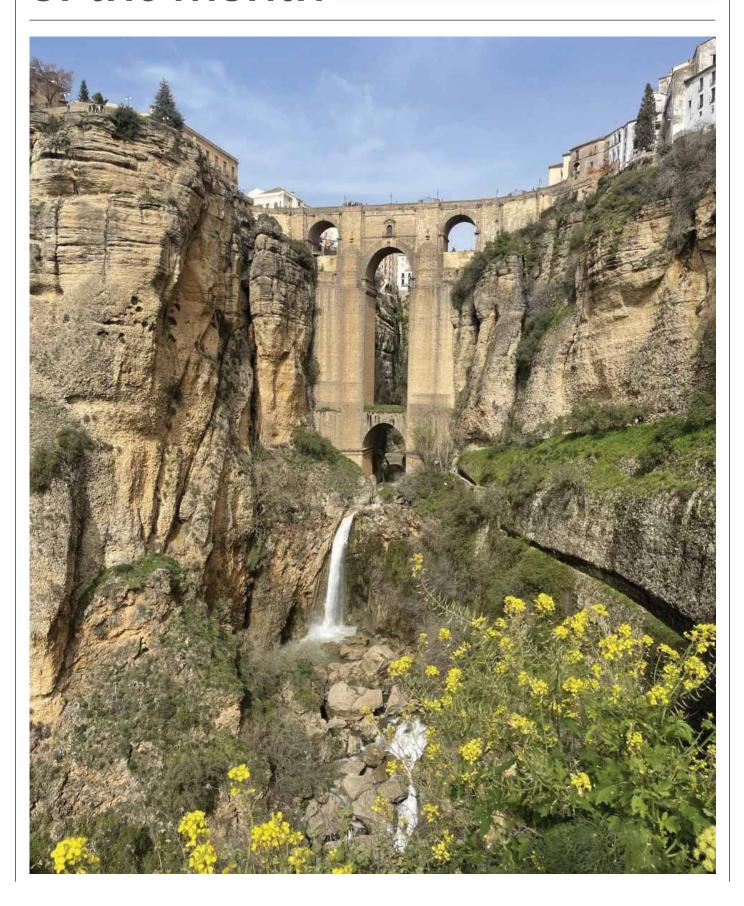
If you love pop music and live events, there are three chances for "Thinking Out Loud" and seeing this popular crooner play some of his greatest hits and newer music.

PHOTO of the month

This photo was taken in the Spanish city of Ronda, located in the Malaga province of southern Spain. The Puente Nuevo bridge crosses the dramatic El Tajo gorge, separating the new town and the old town, which dates back to Moorish rule. The city of Ronda is also known as the birthplace of bullfighting.

Photo by Laura Welsh.

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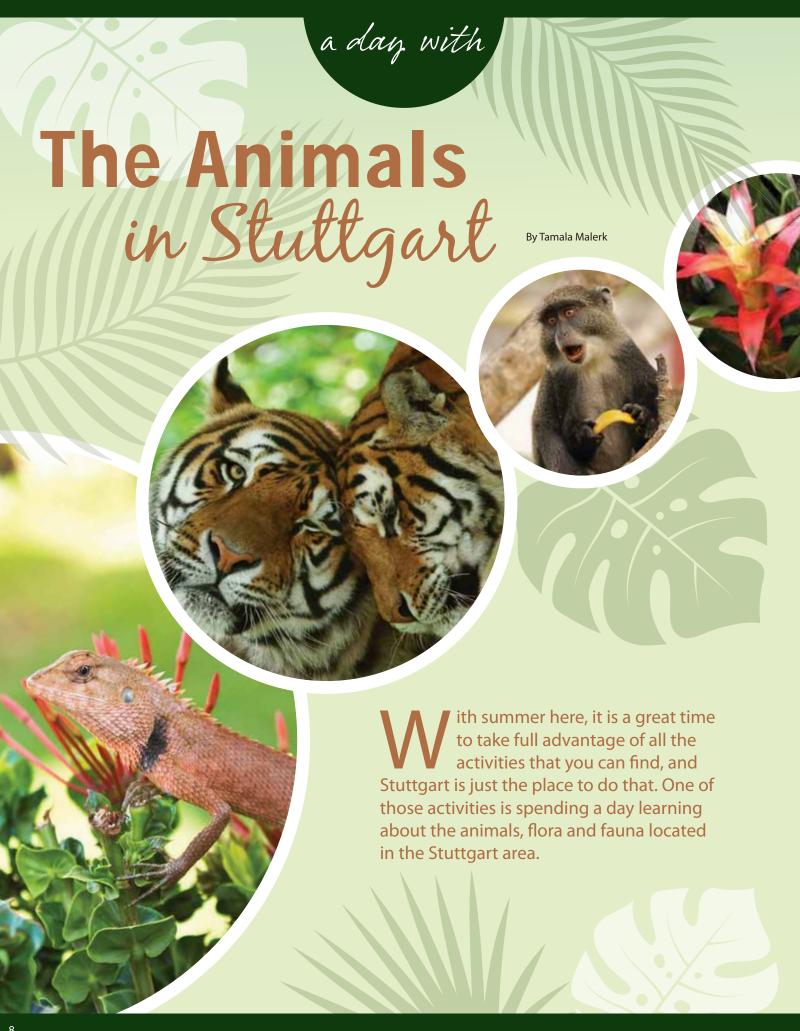


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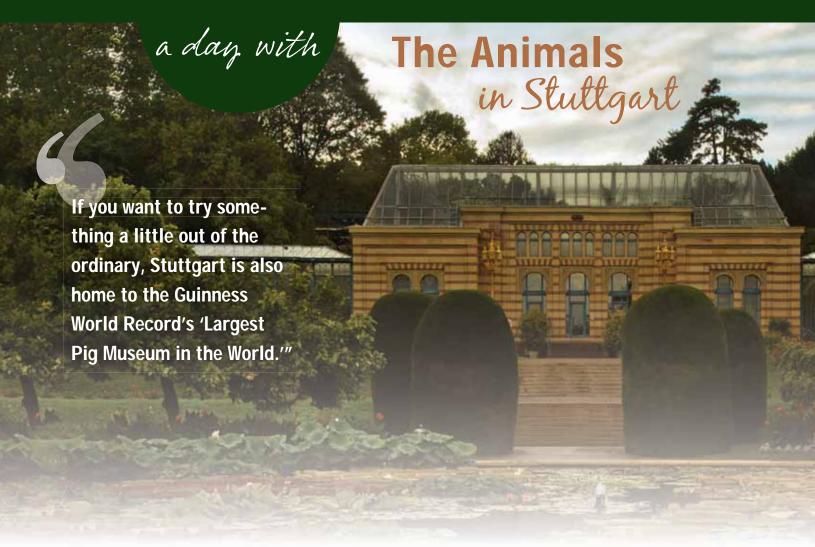
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Wilhelma Zoo and Botanical Garden

Meet the cutest animals and see some of the most beautiful plants and flowers at the Wilhelma Zoo and Botanical Garden. With both indoor and outdoor exhibits, this is a great place to explore rain or shine. Converted from former King Wilhelm I's private residence, this popular attraction has 8,500 plant species, over 11,000 animals and 1,200 different species of animals, meaning this zoo has some of the greatest variety of animal species in the world. I recommend starting outdoors in the morning and then moving to the indoor exhibits as the day gets warmer. You can enjoy watching the big cats in their outdoor exhibits and then chill with the giraffes and other African mammals and birds in the Giraffe House. The greenhouses for the plants mimic tropical and other environments that would be found in the wild. I must admit that out of all of the plants and animals that I spent hours viewing, the sloth was my favorite.

Things to Keep in Mind

Check the website or call the zoo for the most up-to-date information. There is a parking lot on-site at the zoo with around 800 spaces. There are discounted tickets for groups, students and families available. Wilhelma Zoo and Botanical Garden sees more than one million visitors per year, so make sure to reserve your tickets online in advance.

Schweine Museum

If you want to try something a little out of the ordinary, Stuttgart is also home to the Guinness World Record's "Largest Pig Museum in the World." The Schweine Museum, or pig museum, is located inside the old administrative building of Stuttgarter Schlachthof. There is a restaurant on-site where you can savor delicious pork dishes and beer and view the exhibits and sculptures in the beer garden. With 27 rooms spread across two floors, you can take in all things Schweine with over 50,000 exhibits. Here you can see pigs in all forms: cork, wood, ceramic, plush, on a briefcase, tie, painting or a cup. There is even a safe filled with over 700 piggy banks. There is fun to be had by the whole family at the museum, and the website even offers a virtual tour so you can learn a little about the pigs before you get there.

Things to Keep in Mind

At less than six euros for a standard adult ticket and three euros or less for children 14 and under, this is a frugal way to spend a fun day. In addition to standard admission, your child can celebrate their birthday with a guided tour and birthday party at the museum. During school holidays, the museum offers special guided tours geared towards children.

The capital city of the state of Baden-Württemberg, Stuttgart offers plenty of things to see, eat and do with friends or the family and I hope you enjoy your day with the animals. ■

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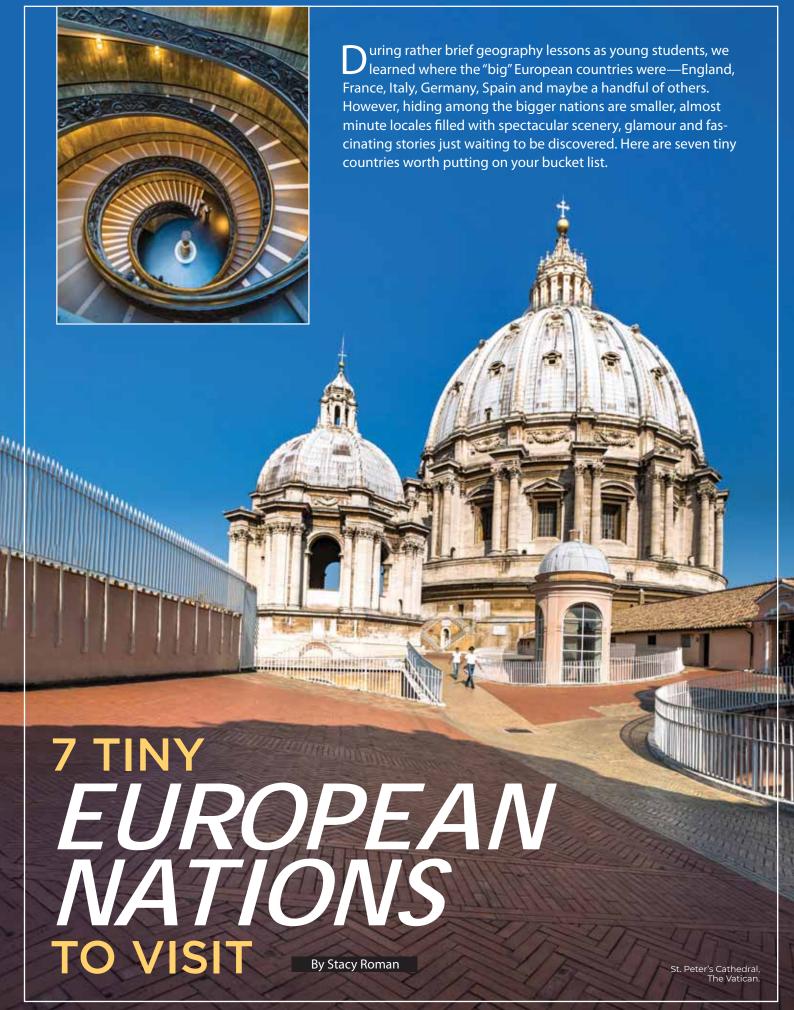
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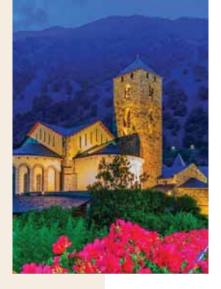
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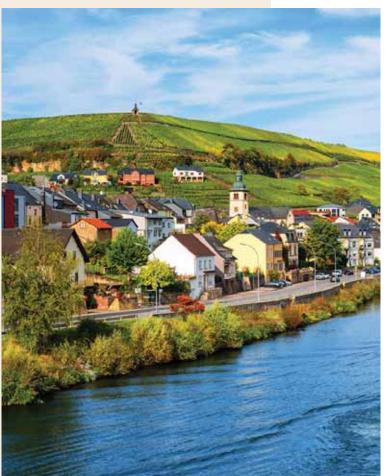


Hiding among the bigger European nations are smaller, almost minute locales filled with spectacular scenery, glamour and fascinating stories just waiting to be discovered.

TOP RIGHT: St. Stephen Cathedral, Andorra.

TOP LEFT: Aerial view of hillside in Liechtenstein.

RIGHT: Moselle River in Luxembourg.



ANDORRA -

Perched in the valleys of the Pyrenees between France and Spain is the alpine nation of Andorra. This small but mighty country is home to the highest capital city in Europe, Andorra la Vella. Ruled jointly by France and Spain for more than 700 years, the official language is Catalan (and also French and Spanish). The jagged peaks lend themselves to excellent winter sports with more than 180 miles of ski slopes. Dense forests are home to fantastic hiking trails in the summer. Only accessible by land, walk across the serene landscape via the Gran Recorrido País trail, or slide your way through three miles of the La Rabassa forest on an alpine coaster.

LIECHTENSTEIN -

Doubly landlocked (meaning it's landlocked and its neighbors are as well) between Austria and Switzerland, Liechtenstein is the fourth smallest country in Europe—measuring 160 square kilometers and having 40,000 inhabitants. With awe-inspiring mountains, it's no wonder Liechtensteiners excel in skiing. Earning 10 Winter Olympic medals, the country has never medaled in the summer games. They share a strong customs union and alliance with Switzerland; however, because of the unmarked border, Swiss troops accidentally invaded the country in 2007. The Liechtenstein government had no idea until it received an apology for the incident. At one point, rapper Snoop Dogg tried to rent the entire country for a music video, whose request was politely declined by the government.

LUXEMBOURG

Coming in at a whopping 999 square miles, Luxembourg is the largest country on this list. The only Grand Duchy in the world, this regal nation is landlocked by France, Germany and Belgium. Home to many European Union (EU) functions, the capital of Luxembourg City sits atop stunning cliffs cut from the Alzette and Pétrusse rivers. 17 kilometers of underground tunnels stretch beneath the city.



Originally built in 1644, the tunnels were used as air raid shelters during World War I and World War II. Venture to the Mullerthal region, also known as Little Switzerland, where visitors can hike through lush forests, view tumbling waterfalls and explore castle ruins.

MALTA -

Once an important trading post dating back to the Phoenicians, Malta is a mere 316 square miles. Just south of Sicily in the Mediterranean, this impressive nation was unfortunately occupied throughout much of its storied history. The former British colony gained independence in 1964, after rebuilding much of its infrastructure that was destroyed by the Germans and Italians during WWII. The country is actually an archipelago comprised of seven islands-Malta, Gozo, Comino and four uninhabited islands. Sunken WWII ships dotting the pristine coastline provide great for adventures for divers. Dating back to 3600 BC, Malta boasts Megalithic Temples, which are some of the oldest man-made structures in the world.

MONACO -

Full of glitz, glamour and plenty of vacationing celebrities, the second-smallest country in the world is situated along the crystalline waters of the Mediterranean. Bordered by France, Monaco is ruled by Prince Albert II, whose mother was Hollywood starlet Grace Kelly. The elegant Place du Casino beckons high-stakes gamblers from around the globe. Adrenaline and racecar enthusiasts revel in the pageantry and excitement of the Monaco Grand Prix each May.

SAN MARINO -

Completely landlocked by Italy and founded on the craggy slopes of Monte Titano is the world's oldest surviving republic. Founded in 310 AD, San Marino is the fifth smallest in the world. During WWII, San Marino stayed neutral despite being surrounded by Italy. Although occupied and invaded several times over, three medieval towers perched on cliffs watch over the nation. Interestingly enough, President Abraham Lincoln was an honorary citizen.

VATICAN CITY -

Last, but certainly not least, is Vatican City. The smallest country in the world in population and size is also one the most visited places in the world. Just a mere .44 square kilometers, the Vatican's population consists of Roman Catholic clergy from around the world. Home to St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel, the entire country is the only one in the world to be designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. Beneath the foundation of the basilica is a complex of catacombs, including what is believed to be the tomb of St. Peter.



CLOCKWISE:

Blue Lagoon, Malta; Cliffside view, Monaco; Crenellated tower, San Marino; St. Peter's Square, Vatican City.



TO KNOW ABOUT

Grindelwald

By Mary Del Rosario

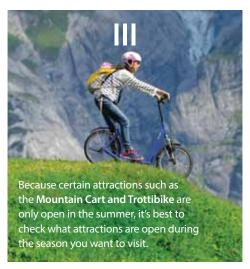
The picture-perfect, quintessential Swiss village of Grindelwald has captured the hearts of everyone who has set foot in this beauty. With nature greeting you at every corner and awe-inspiring views for days, Grindelwald makes the perfect outdoor destination. Here are a few things to know in order to make the most out of your trip.

(1

Grindelwald-First is the mountaintop that dominates Grindelwald. It is one of the most popular mountains in the Jungfrau region, which is located in the Bernese Alps.



the hike from the village itself to First is 11.1 kilometers, round trip.













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TEN

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SOUVENIRS TO GRAB

from Europe's Tiny Nations

By Anna Leigh Bagiackas

ince some of Europe's tiny countries like Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Monaco and Andorra are often associated with wealth and luxury shopping, it is safe to say that finding something to bring home will not be a difficult task when you visit one of them. However, deciding on what to buy and how much to spend are different, and maybe more difficult, questions to answer. Other than unique stamps in your passport, what should you think about bringing home from one of these lesser-known countries? From traditional foods and drinks to apparel and household goods, here are a few ideas to get your shopping started.



Andorra – With its unique mountainous environment and elevation, it's worth it to seek out some of their cured meats, cheeses, preserved jams and chocolate. To compliment these goods, find some Andorran wine, beer or a special liqueur called Ratassia de la Carmeta, made of nuts and hand-collected herbs from the mountains.



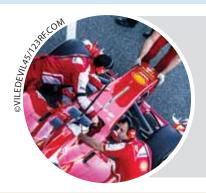
Luxembourg – Unique to Luxembourg are "Peckvillchen," ceramic or glass whistles shaped like birds that are most popular on Easter Monday. These beautifully decorated pieces were a popular tradition until World War I, when their production was stopped. Luckily for us, the whistles can be found around the country, especially if you head to the town of Nospelt for their annual bird festival.



Malta – Keep a look out for "ganutell," or intricately designed pieces, often flowers, made from wire and beads. These pieces became popular in Malta in the 18th century, but then fell out of favor after World War II caused the loss of many pieces. It has taken decades to reinvigorate the practice. Today, artists and historians are trying to bring the practice back of ganutell.



Liechtenstein – Situated between Austria and Switzerland and surrounded by beautiful alps, be sure to visit the capital city of Vaduz. Here you will find the tourist center and the shop Hoi Laden, full of Liechtenstein memorabilia and unique goods. Grab some local chocolate and wine, delicious products you may not be able to find anywhere else.



San Marino – Beautiful ceramics are the thing to look for in this country within Italy. For its size, the number of pottery shops you will come across will surprise you and lead you to add to your own collection of dishware.



Monaco – Do you have any car lovers in your family? Home of the famous Grand Prix Formula One racing event, a trip to Monaco should include a piece of memorabilia from this historic event. This race has been happening annually in Monaco since 1929, and one of the coolest souvenirs might be the vintage race posters that can bring a little Monaco glamor back home.



Vatican City – Being one of the most visited tiny countries, you will have no shortage of souvenir options. If you want to take home a piece of the religious culture of Vatican City, you could grab a holy-water bottle, in addition to the crosses, rosaries or Bibles. You could also snag a beautiful leather piece, since Italy is known for its high-quality leather, or Italian meats and cheeses, vacuumed-packed for safe transport. ■

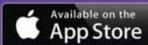
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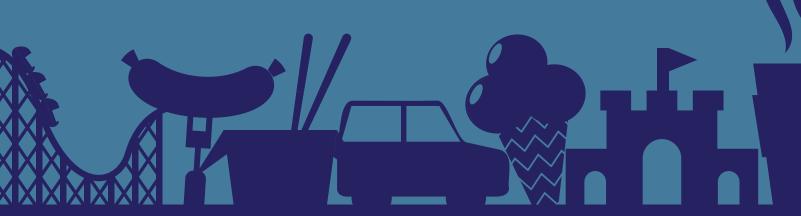




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