

# Visit Estonia



*The cheapest and most  
interesting country  
in Europe*



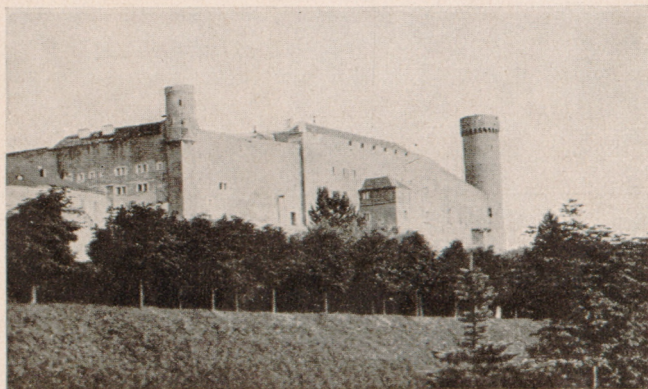
Tallinn, the capital of Estonia — View from sea.

## Estonia: Geography and Population.

The Estonian Republic is situated on the east coast of the Baltic sea. The frontiers of the country, which stretch from  $57^{\circ} 27'$  to  $59^{\circ} 42'$  north latitude and  $21^{\circ} 46'$  to  $28^{\circ} 21'$  eastern longitude, are bounded by the Gulf of Finland on the north, the Soviet Union and lake Peipsi on the east, the Latvian Republic on the south and the Baltic sea with the Gulf of Riga on the west. The area of the country is 47,558.7 sq. km., including 818 islands with a total area of 4,167.15 sq. km. and 1512 lakes with an area of 2,328.37 sq. km. Thus the country's size considerably exceeds that of Holland, Switzerland and Denmark.

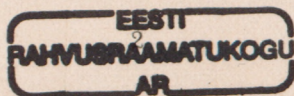
According to the census of 1934 the population of Estonia was 1,126,410 or 24.6 per sq. km. Of these 87.7% are Estonians, 8.2% Russians, 1.7% Germans, 2.5% belonging to other nationalities. The Russians mainly inhabit the rural communes along the Russian frontier, while the Germans are mainly urban. Some of the islands and peninsulae along the west coast are inhabited by Swedes.

**History.** As far as can be ascertained, Estonians have been inhabitants of their country since the beginning of the Christian era.



Tallinn — The Castle (built in the first quarter of the 13th century).

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**Tallinn — The Sea Gate with the «Stout Margaret» tower.**

They lived for many centuries as a free and independent people, in spite of several incursions of



**Tallinn — The Town Hall.**

hostile tribes from the west, east and south. Communication was mainly maintained with the west.



**Tallinn — The House of Parliament.**



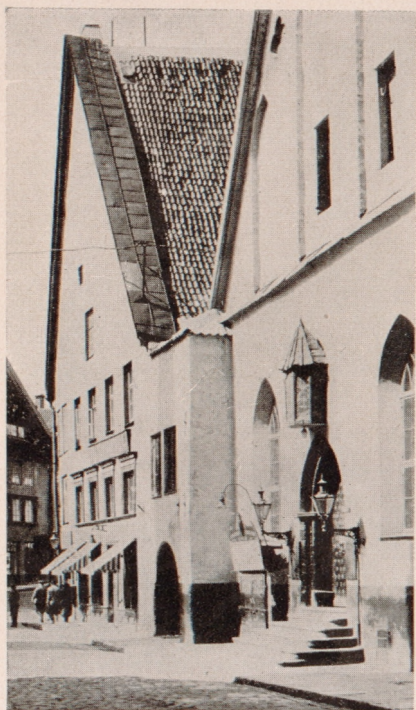
**Tallinn — The towers of the Viru Gate.**

While there are almost no traces of Russian influence, western, particularly Gothic influence is rather pronounced. The country was divided into provinces, each under an elected chieftain, who commanded the armed forces during warlike expeditions. In the beginning of the 13th century A. D. the country was united under a single chieftain: Nevertheless it did not succeed in maintaining its freedom when exposed to joint attacks of the Danes and the German Order of Knights. A fierce resistance was offered and not until the middle of the 14th century did the victors succeed in conquering the country. In 1346 Denmark sold her share to the German Order who thus remained the sole master of the land. After the disruption of the Order northern Estonia in 1561 and southern Estonia in 1625 became Swedish provinces, until occupied by the Russians under Peter the Great in the course of Great Northern War (1710).

After the downfall of the Russian monarchy the Estonians were offered an opportunity, readily seized, to restore their national independence. Diet met in Tallinn on July 14th 1917, the council of which, in spite of the violent measures adopted by Russian bolshevists, proclaimed on February 24th 1918 the



**Tallinn — Town-walls and towers.**



**Tallinn — The House of Exchange  
(formerly the House of the Great  
Guild).**

independent democratic Republic of Estonia. The activities of the Provisional Government were at first temporarily suspended owing to a military occupation by Germany, the object of which was to reduce the country to the status of a duchy in personal union with the Crown of Prussia. On November 11th 1918 the Estonian Provisional Government was once more in control. This time the land was threatened by a Red Russian army, seeking to reconquer the country since the Soviet Govern-

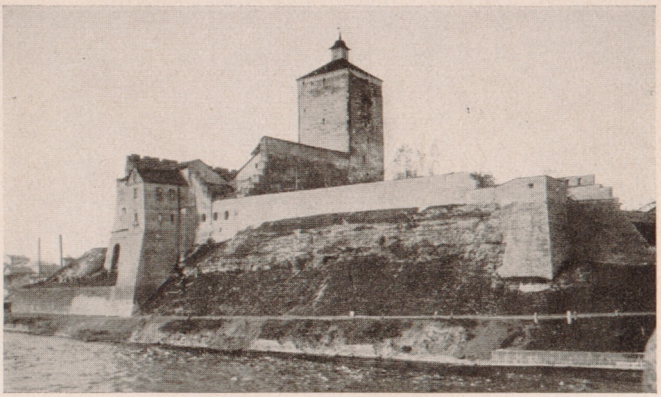
ment only recognized national selfdetermination under the auspices of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat. After a sanguinary war the Estonian army, at first supported by some Finish volunteers and a British squadron succeeded in securing the national frontiers. A peace treaty with Soviet Russia was signed in Tartu on the 2nd February 1920, Russia agreeing to forego all her claims.

Thus the Estonian people regained their independence after a foreign domination which lasted for nearly seven centuries. With the advent of freedom the task of rebuilding a national state was taken in hand with energy and deliberation.

This was mainly brought about by practicing of stern economy and attention to culture, securing for Estonia a honourable position among the nations of the world.

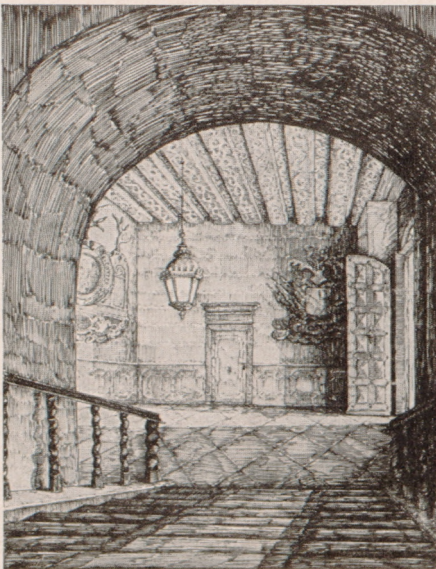


**Tallinn — The Lutheran church of  
St. Olai with old houses in Lai tänav.**



Narva — The Castle of Herman.

**Travel routes to Estonia.** Estonia may be reached from the United Kingdom by land, sea and air. There is a weekly passenger steamer service between London and Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. There is also passenger service by boat between Tallinn and Steitin four times a week, one weekly boat to Stockholm and six boats a week to Helsingfors. Tallinn may be reached from London by boat and train via Dover, Ostend, Brussels, Berlin and Riga within 60 hours, Dover, Calais, Brussels, Berlin and Riga within 53 hours, via Harwich, Hook of Holland, Berlin and Riga within 57 hours, via Harwich, Flushing, Berlin and Riga within 54 hours. Tallinn may be reached from Paris within 47 hours, Amsterdam 45 hours, Brussels 51 hours, Berlin 33 hours and Riga 12.5 hours. It is linked up with the main European air lines, being situated on the air routes Tallinn-Helsingfors-Stockholm, Tallinn-Riga-Warsaw and Tallinn-Riga-Berlin. There are two airplanes daily on the former and one airplane daily (during the fine season) on the latter lines.



Narva — The Entrance hall of one of the old houses.



Narva — The portal of one of the old houses.

## Hotels and Restaurants.

The cost of living in Estonia is the lowest in Europe. One cannot expect the degree of luxury and comfort as provided by the best European hotels, but one may rely on obtaining a clean and respectable room very cheaply. There are hotels in all towns. Single rooms cost Kr. 2—7 ( $\frac{2}{3}$  to  $\frac{7}{6}$ ), double rooms Kr. 3.50—10 ( $\frac{4}{-}$  to  $\frac{11}{-}$ ). Private baths may be had in some of the Tallinn hotels. The cuisine of the best hotels and restaurants has an excellent reputation. The food is healthy, as only fresh produce are used, adulteration being unknown in Estonia as a food exporting country. Prices are very cheap, as even the best restaurants serve good lunches at Kr. 1.20 ( $\frac{1}{6}$ ) and dinners at Kr. 2.50 ( $\frac{3}{-}$ ).



Narva — The Castle, built by the Russian Czar Ivan III.

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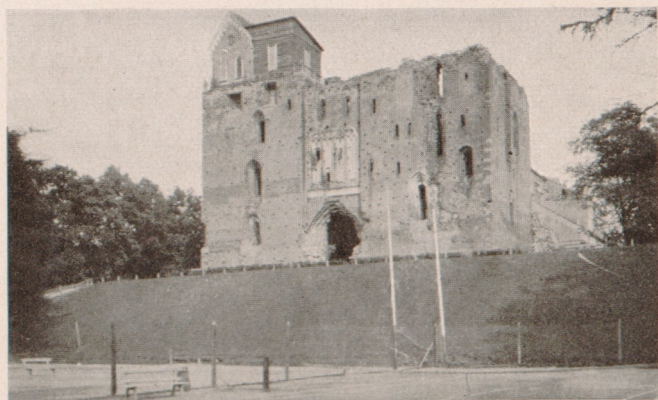


**Narva — The waterfall.**

## Mediaeval towns full of his- torical buildings.

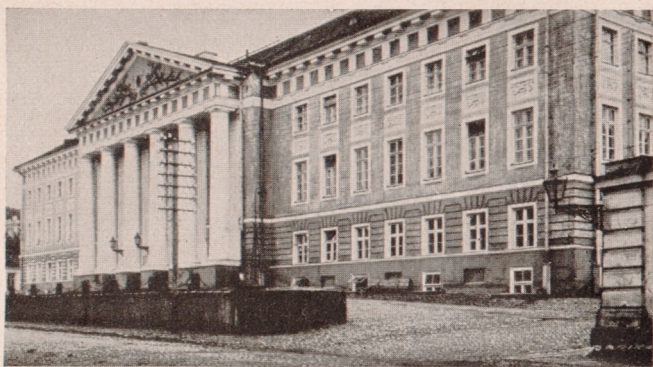
Estonia is known as a country of quaint old towns. Of these Tallinn was founded in 1219 by King Valdemar II of Denmark on the site of an ancient Estonian fortress. In 1248 the town secured municipal rights. It has been held successively by Danes, Germans, Swedes and Russians, each of whom has added something of its characteristics. Three churches, the castle, a number of houses, a part of the town walls and towers date back to the oldest period, that of Danish domination. The German Order, which held the town since 1346 added the Town Hall, the greater part of the town walls and towers and a great number of dwellings. The bastions surrounding the Old Town are a mark of the Swedish period. About two-thirds of the old town walls and of the towers continue to exist in a good state of preservation.

Another interesting mediaeval town is Narva, situated in the north-east corner of the country on both banks of the river bearing the same name. Its foundation also dates back to the 13th century. The western bank of the river is dominated by the Castle of Herman, erected by the German knights from 1535 to 1549. It is faced on the opposite bank by a



**Tartu — The ruins of the Roman-Catholic cathedral.**





**Tartu — The main building of the University.**

fortress built by the Russian Czar Ivan III in 1492, now likewise situated on Estonian territory. Both are well preserved. As an outpost against Russia, Narva has been the scene of almost incessant fighting between Estonians, Danes, Germans and Swedes on one side and Russians on the other. As a result, the town has often been reduced to ruins and the walls and fortified towers of the older period have been demolished. One may still see, however, the bastions and other marks of the Great Northern War. Narva possesses a church built in the beginning of the 14th century and another built in the 17th century. Most of the buildings in the centre of the town are baroque contemporaries of the English Restoration. They have spacious entrance halls and ornate portals, which give the town the aspect of a museum, captivating the attention of all visitors. Higher up the river there are rapids and an impressive waterfall, the height of which is from 3.5 to 7 meters. They are flanked by three large textile mills.

By taking from Tallinn the broad-gauge line leading to the south-east, the interesting town of Tartu is reached after a few hours journey, 191 km from the capital. It was established by the German Order of Knights in 1224, replacing, too, an ancient Estonian stronghold. Nothing save the site of the



**Petseri — The principal churches of the monastery.**



**Petseri — Walls and towers of the monastery.**

old fortifications has been preserved, crowned by the imposing ruins of a fast Gothic cathedral. A university was established here by the Swedish King Gustavus Adolphus, which is still an important seat of learning. The river Emajõgi, which passes through the town, issues from lake Wirtsjärvi and flows into lake Peipsi, being one of the longest Estonian rivers.

The town of Petseri, in the extreme south-east corner of the country, is of the greatest interest, containing, as it does, a most unique Greek-Catholic monastery. The place is 279 km. by rail from Tallinn and belonged formerly to the Pskov province. The inhabitants are largely setud (an Estonian border tribe, exposed for many centuries to strong Russian influence) and Russians, both on a much lower cultural level than the rest of the country's population. The contrast between East and West is everywhere on view. The monastery itself



**The Monastery of Petseri — An altar in a cave.**



**Estonian sea-coast.**

is situated in a deep ravine and exists since the Middle Ages. Its powerfull walls and towers on the slopes of the ravine were added in 1558 to 1565. A peculiar characteristic of this important religious centre is its principal church, dug into a slope of firm sandstone. The same slope also contains a labyrinth of caves, into which 5000 monks have been buried. An untold quantity of valuable ikons, ecclesiastical robes and objects of rite, many of which were presented in the course of centuries by the Russian Czars, are still shown at the monastery's treasury. There are at present 36 monks, nearly lost on the vast site, recognizing the authority of the Estonian Greek-Catholic Metropolitan.

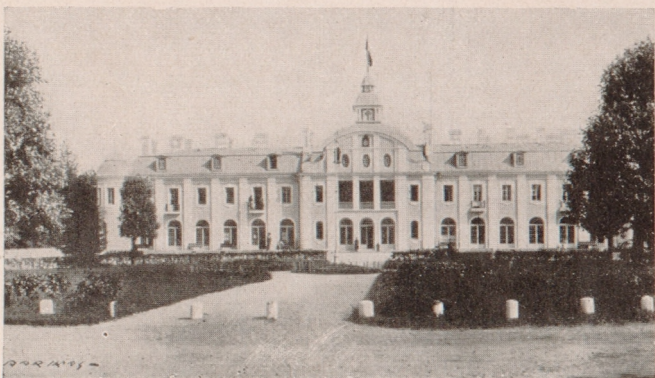
There are several other towns worth seeing and a large number of mediaeval reminiscences, ruins of ancient castles etc.

## Landscape and Sea-Coast.

The Estonian landscape is varied. In the north it is a forest-covered plain interspersed with meadows and fields and cut by several rivers, some of which are partly subterranean before reaching the Gulf of Finland. Only two ranges of hills cross this plain. The south and south-east is, on the other hand, rich in moraine landscapes, where hills, mostly forest-covered, are



**Narva-Jõesuu — The bathing-beach.**



**Narva-Jõesuu — The Casino (Kurhaus).**

divided by deep primeval valleys, often containing chains of picturesque lakes.

An interesting feature of the north coast is the steep limestone bank, often dropping 50 meters or more into the sea. This bank is responsible for the formation of a number of beautiful waterfalls, an impressive sight during the melting period. The actual coast beneath the bank is lined with pure white sand, usually very fine and particularly agreeable for bathers. There are several bathing resorts on the north and west coast. The most important of these in the north is Narva-Jõesuu, on the shore of the Gulf of Finland west of town Narva. Its famous beach, one of the finest in Europe, has a length of six miles and is known for its peculiarly clean, fine and firm sand. A beautiful pine forest forms the background of the bathing beach, containing restful summer residences and a comfortable Casino (Kurhaus). Among the health resorts Haapsalu and Pärnu on the west coast and Kuressaare on the island of Saaremaa must be mentioned on the account of their radioactive curative mud, very effective in the treatment of rheumatism of all kinds and in all stages of development, womens' diseases, scrofulous maladies of the bones and joints, chronic diseases of the lungs, sciatica, treatment



**Pärnu — The bathing-beach.**



**Pärnu — The Casino.**

after surgical operations etc. These resorts were often visited by Russian Czars and other members of the Imperial family.

## Hunting, Fishing and Sports.

Owing to the abundance and sitze of forests, boǵs, lakes and rivers Estonia may be said to be a hunter's paradise. There are hares, foxes, many varieties of fowl, roes and a limited number of bears, now and then of wolves intruding from Russia, lynxes and staǵs. Water birds are particularly well represented in the shallow Matsalu Bay, where there are millions of them. Rich baǵs of swans, wild duck and ǵeese are fetched each spring and autumn.

Lakes and rivers in the interior are equally well stocked with fish. Leaving perch, pike, pream, lavaret, perch-pike and eel out of account, trout and salmon are found in quantities in the rapids of the various rivers flowing into the Gulf of Finland. Salmon up to 40 lbs. is often captured on spinningǵ.

Nor need those interested in amateur athletics be discouraged. All towns have tennis-courts and football fields, the latter often forming a part of well



**Fishing — A 36 lb. salmon caught by the Mayor of Tallinn.**



**Haapsalu — The ruins of the mediaeval castle.**

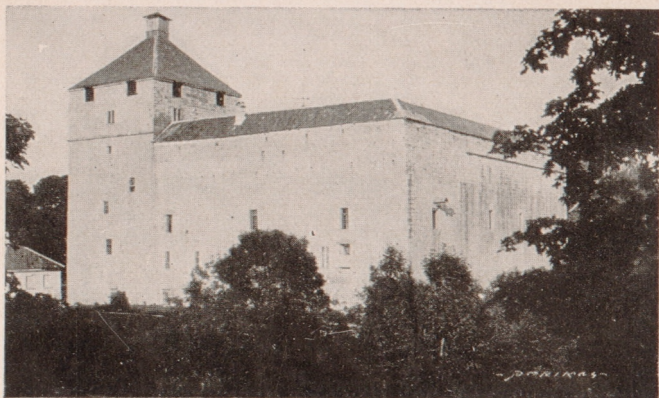
equipped stadiums with provisions for most American athletic games. Winter sports, particularly skiing and skating are extremely popular, the former being especially favored by the configuration of the landscape. During the winter hockey is taking the place of football and competes with figure-skating as a means of attracting crowds of onlookers.

## Railways, Omnibuses, Taxicabs.

The movement of trains is well regulated and exact. There are two daily express trains between Tallinn and Riga. They include 2nd and 3rd class day cars, a dining car and 1st, 2nd and 3rd class sleeping cars, all very clean and spacious. Passport and custom control at the frontier takes place in the cars. The same characteristics apply to provincial trains. The fares are at present the cheapest in Europe, mainly because home oil, distilled from oil shale, is used by the engines. As the roads are broad and well-kept, bus-cars are very popular and their lines lead to all parts of the country. Taxies of all modern makes are obtained in all towns and townships. The fare is 30 cents (4d.) per km in a four-seater and 45 cents (6d.) in a six-seater, while special terms are arranged for longer trips.



**Tallinn — The railway station.**



Kuressaare — The castle.

## Information and Guides. The Estonian

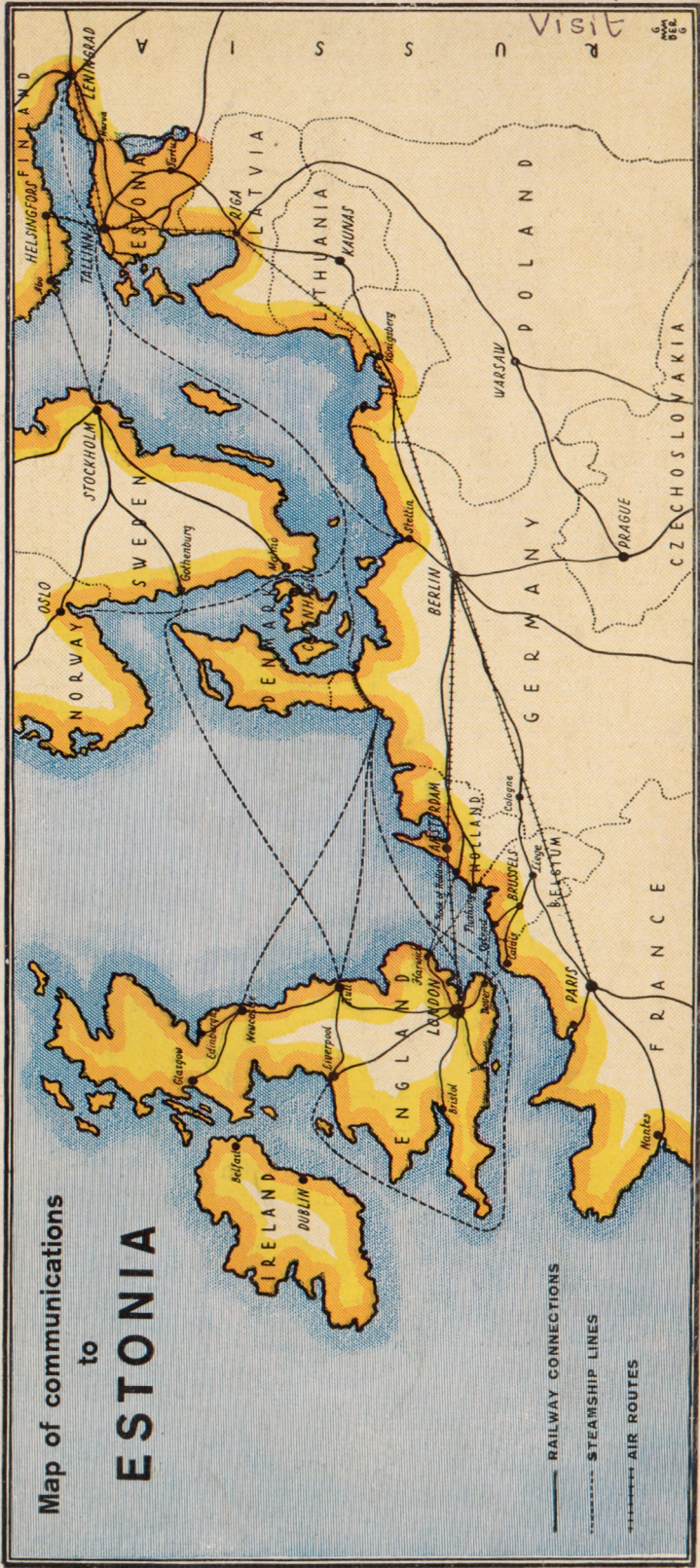
Touring Club, controlled by the Central Office for Tourism in Estonia, maintains bureaus and agencies with competent guides and gives reliable information in all towns throughout Estonia. The guides, both male and female, are specially trained, have a good speaking knowledge of more important foreign languages and are provided with special certificates, signed by the representatives of the Ministry of Communications and of the Central Office for Tourism in Estonia.

Tickets to all parts of the world, reservations for sleeping cars and hotels are provided by the offices of the Estonian Travellers Agency Ltd. in Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu and by the local office of the International Sleeping Car Company — Thomas Cook in Tallinn.

All information regarding travel and sojourn in Estonia can be obtained at the **Central Office for Tourism in Estonia** and the **Estonian Touring Club**, both in **Tallinn, Vene tänav 30.**



Rakvere — The ruins of the mediaeval castle.



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