



 XUNTA
DE GALICIA.

 Xacobeo 21-22

Vigo



a walk of
history and life

Vigo



VIGO, KNOWN AS THE OLIVE CITY, IS THE MOST POPULATED CITY IN GALICIA. LOCATED TO THE SOUTH OF THE RÍAS BAIXAS, IT HAS A MILD, TEMPERATE CLIMATE AND A SEAFARING PAST THAT HAS MADE IT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT FISHING PORTS IN EUROPE. THIS SEAFARING INHERITANCE HAS GIVEN US AN OLD QUARTER OF TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE, WHICH CONTRASTS WITH THE STATELY SPLENDOUR OF THE 19TH CENTURY OR THE MODERNIST AND ECLECTIC ARCHITECTURAL AVANT-GARDES PRESENT IN ITS MOST EMBLEMATIC BUILDINGS. BEACHES, PAZOS (TRADITIONAL GALICIAN COUNTRY HOUSES), PARKS, MUSEUMS AND THE NEARBY CIES ISLANDS COMPLETE ITS TOURIST ATTRACTIONS.

Essentials

Praza da Pedra and
Colegiata de Santa Maria

A



Cesteiros street

B



Praza da Constituição

C



Mirador del Olivo

D



Porta do Sol and El Sireno

E



Teatro García Barbón

F



The route



- 1 Rúa Cánovas del Castillo
- 2 A Laxe Shopping Center
- 3 Praza da Pedra
- 4 Praza de Almeida
- 5 Rúa Méndez Núñez
- 6 Rúa dos Cesteiros
- 7 Praza da Constitución
- 8 Rúa dos Sombreiraos
- 9 Porta do Sol
- 10 Rúa Elduayen
- 11 Paseo de Alfonso XII
- 12 Rúa Ferrería
- 13 Subida ao Castelo
- 14 Rúa San Sebastián
- 15 Rúa do Pracer
- 16 Rúa Abeleira Menéndez
- 17 Praza da Princesa
- 18 Rúa Joaquín Yáñez
- 19 Rúa Fermín Penzol
- 20 Rúa Carral
- 21 Rúa Cánovas del Castillo
- 22 Rúa Baixada á Fonte
- 23 A Pescadería
- 24 Rúa Teófilo Llorente
- 25 Praza de la Ribeira do Berbés



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Our route begins at **rúa Cánovas del Castillo** ①, opposite the MARITIME TERMINAL, a place reminiscent of the thousands of Galician emigrants who left for America; of that past, only the silent testimony of Ramón Conde remains, his Monumento al Emigrante (Monument to the Emigrant), which today welcomes the many cruise passengers who disembark every year to visit the city.

Located in the maritime terminal, just above the transatlantic dock, is the *Albatros Cafeteria-Restaurant*, which offers unbeatable views of the Vigo estuary while giving us the

possibility to enjoy a delicious meal or have a coffee, an apéritif, a drink...

The **A Laxe Shopping Centre** ② provides easy access to the Berbés neighbourhood. From its terraces, we can enjoy a beautiful panoramic view over the harbour. Vigo offers a wide range of port facilities, such as the fishing, goods, passenger and sport docks as well as shipyards. There is also the passenger terminal, which is used to transport passengers between the different towns located along the Vigo estuary and, during holiday periods, to the spectacular Cies Islands, which form part of the Atlantic Islands National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage candidate.

Between the passenger terminal and the marina, we find EL NADADOR (The Swimmer),



FACING El Nadador

BELOW Monumento al Emigrante

by the prestigious sculptor Francisco Leiro; it is a bronze sculptural ensemble made up of several pieces that seem to be partially buried in the pavement.

From the A Laxe Shopping Centre we can access the **Pedra 3** and **Igrexa** squares, both meeting places for guilds and councillors in the 16th and 17th centuries, where decisions were made and disputes were settled. Due to Vigo's deep ties with America, the walls of the buildings located on the lookout point bear inscriptions with the dates and names of the founding of several American cities. Moreover, it should be remembered that the first regular line with this continent were the steamers that arrived in Vigo from Liverpool and continued to Havana.

The tradition of Vigo's quality produce and magnificent cuisine is represented, among others, by the *Mosquito Restaurant*, which has been open since 1930 as a seafood tavern. Today, completely refurbished, it is still a reference point for excellent local cuisine. Writers such as Torrente Ballester, Josep Pla, Edgar Neville and Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, actors such as Pepe Isbert, Vicen-

te Parra and José Bódalo, and filmmakers such as Peter Ustinov have all dined in this famous establishment.

The present-day *COLEGIATA DE SANTA MARÍA* (Collegiate Church of Santa María), which today has the status of co-cathedral, was built in 1811 on the site of two earlier churches that no longer exist. It is a simple and well-proportioned building, designed by the architect Melchor de Prado y Mariño, which houses one of the most venerated images in Galicia, the Santo Cristo de la Victoria (The Christ of Victory), patron saint of the city. On the first Sunday of August, it goes out in procession accompanied by tens of thousands of the faithful; in fact, it is the most attended procession in Galicia. On March 28th, 1809, the Napoleonic troops were defeated and expelled from Vigo through the intercession of the Holy Christ, which is why this date is celebrated as the Day of the Reconquest. Every year this event is recreated in the neighbourhood of O Berbés.



BELOW El Mosquito restaurant
FACING, ABOVE Alimentación Rivera

Another historical event that marked the future of Vigo was the landing of the corsair Sir Francis Drake who, at the end of the 16th century, razed O Berbés to the ground and burnt the church and the olive tree located in the atrium; the neighbours managed to save some of the tree's branches, which were then replanted to symbolise the resurgence of the city, hence the nickname *Ciudad Olívica* (Olive City).

THE CENTRO DE INTERPRETACIÓN DEL PARQUE NACIONAL DAS ILLAS ATLÁNTICAS DE GALICIA (The Interpretation Centre of the Galician Atlantic Islands National Park), located in the historic Cambón building on **rúa Palma nº 4**, takes its name from the old furniture shop that for decades was part of the old Palace of the Marqués de Valladares. Today, thanks to modern technology, the site enables us to fully appreciate the wealth and diversity of the natural park.

We continue our walk through the **Praza de Almeida 4** (Almeida square), originally called A Praza Vella (The Old Square) or Praza das Cebolas (Onion Square), as every week a market of agricultural products was held there. In 1894, the current name was given in recognition of Juan Almeida de Sousa y Saa, who took part in the Reconquest of Vigo commanding 40,000 soldiers. In the square, we find two buildings declared historical-artistic monuments, the CASA-TORRE DE PAZOS FIGUEROA and the CASA DE CETA OF ARINES,



considered to be the oldest civil architecture in the city. The marked contrast between the appearance of the medieval defensive tower of the Casa de Ceta and the decorative refinement of the Casa Pazos Figueroa, now a palace, is significant. Today they are the headquarters of the Camões Institute, which is responsible for the dissemination of Portuguese language and culture, the equivalent of the Cervantes Institute in Spain..

Some unique businesses include *Aguatinta*, which specialises in antique engravings, among which a collection dedicated to the Battle of Rande stands out; original editions of cartography and navigation charts; and the oldest active shop in the neighbourhood, the *Julio Rico Hardware Store*, open since 1908. Next to it, on **rúa Méndez Núñez 5** nº 5, we find *Allur India*, a sort of Ali Baba's cave, packed with colours, smells and objects that will transport us to the Far East. A little further up the street, we find *O Gato con*



Joyas, which manufactures jewellery pieces of its own design with natural gems.

If we retrace our steps, we can ascend the winding street called **rúa dos Cesteiros 6**, which owes its name to the artisans who came from the Serra da Estrela, in Portugal, at the beginning of the 20th century; in a few years, it would become one of the most important centres of basket making in Galicia, with up to twenty artisans working at a time. Wickerwork was essential in the fishing ports. The most popular items were baskets for storing and transporting fish, as well as fish traps (traditional fishing equipment).

Today we can find all kinds of objects made of wicker, although there are very few artisans who are keeping the tradition alive, such as *Antonio Suárez* who, in his shop-workshop which specialises in traditional wickerwork, has over 60 years of experience. The street is also enlivened by two of the most traditional taverns in the neighbourhood of O Berbés



that still retain all their seafaring flavour: *Taberna A Pedra* and *Bar El Chavolas*. On the same street, we'll find *A Lareira*. Located in carefully restored premises, it features a centuries-old fireplace and offers gourmet and delicatessen products..

Further on we come to the **Praza da Constitución 7**, which is lined with 19th-century buildings, under whose porches artisans used to sell their wares. In 1896, the FIRST ELECTRIC STREET LIGHT was installed here in Vigo, a replica of which illuminates the old TOWN HALL, built in 1859 and now home to the Casa Galega da Cultura (Galician Centre of Culture). This place is steeped in history, as this is where the great admiral Casto Mén-



ABOVE Aguatinta
BELOW Basket crafter
FACING Rúa dos Cesteiros



dez Núñez was born, as can be seen from the plaque at number 13, **rúa dos Sombreiroiros** 8.

The French troops passed through here in 1808, it is also where the Constitution of Cadiz of 1812 was read, an event that gave the square its present name. It is one of the liveliest corners of the city; numerous terraces fill with life and activity, especially in the evening, when you can enjoy a relaxing drink with friends. Among the most fashionable establishments is *La Central*, a gastrobar set in an 18th-century baroque mansion, Casa Pereira de Castro, for some the coolest place in the old town. Located in Constitución Square, number 9, is *Coco Melo*, a shop that sells accessories and fashion for women; as the shop itself puts it: “the clothes we like at attractive prices”.

At nearby **rúa dos Sombreiroiros number 8**, empanadilla lovers should check out *Paima*, a bakery with more than 25 varieties



of this product, including ones for coeliacs, vegans, vegetarians, and even lactose-free. Next to it is the *Mercería Crespo*, which since 1964 has been supplying fabrics, buttons and threads to the many customers who come here, and *Numismática Besteiro*, which delights coin collectors.

At **Cuesta de San Vicente, number 8**, the *Taberna A Mina* has been satisfying customers since 1953 by serving vermouth and spritz accompanied by its traditional tapas of tripe or mussels from the estuary served with the house’s special sauce.

We continue our walk until we reach the **Porta do Sol** 9, the heart of the city, which divides the two old quarters: O Berbés and A

ABOVE Praza da Constitución
BELOW Rúa dos Sombreiroiros sign
FACING Praza da Constitución



Ferrería. From here, along **rúa Elduayen** ¹⁰ and **Paseo de Alfonso XII** ¹¹, we reach the MIRADOR DEL OLIVO (Olive Tree Viewpoint), which takes its name from the majestic olive tree that is almost two centuries old. It is a meeting place for locals and visitors to enjoy the sunset, especially from the coveted terraces of the cafés that liven up the square. It is not surprising that the Vigo estuary has been a source of inspiration for medieval minstrels, poets and troubadours, such as Martín Códax, Xoán de Cangas or Mendiño, as attested by the monument dedicated to Xaime Quesada.

Following **rúa Ferrería** ¹², we enter the neighbourhood of the same name, undoub-

ABOVE Mirador del Olivo
FACING Fort

tedly one of the most dynamic areas after its recovery process and whose name reminds us of smiths and iron craftsmen. At the end of the street, we take a detour up the **Subida ao Castelo** ¹³ to visit the CENTRO DE ARTESANÍA TRADICIONAL DE VIGO (Vigo's Traditional Artisan's Centre) (CAT). In its exhibition rooms, we can learn about the work of seven traditional trades: potters, stonemasons, carpenters, basket makers, saddlers, blacksmiths and weavers, in order to protect a precious cultural legacy and, through their workshops, to recover these ancient ways of life.

We continue along the **rúa de San Sebastián** ¹⁴, one of the oldest streets in the city, and arrive at the BANCO DOS CONTOS, a place where the cattle breeders and merchants kept accounts of the market transactions that took place here. We can still see some numbers engraved in the stone that bear witness to this mercantile past. From here we can see the 17TH-CENTURY FORTRESS, which protected the town from attacks by Portuguese armies and English corsairs; part of the bastions and walled enclosure are still preserved. Today, the imposing structure of the VIGO CITY HALL, built here in the 1970s, stands out.

In the nearby **rúa do Pracer** ¹⁵, there are two unusual places. At number 19 stands Café Uf, a reference point in the cultural world of the old city, with more than thirty

years of experience, where you can listen to singer-songwriters or alternative music, attend a poetry recital or a philosophical declamation, see a painting exhibition, enjoy a film screening or even read books or magazines outside the usual commercial circles. At number 12 of the same street, the Centro Naturista Librería Gándal was established offering an immense variety of books and DVDs dedicated to natural medicine, yoga, astrology, spirituality, ecology, various therapies, personal development... Here we will also find a little bit of everything: from minerals, Bach flowers, essences, incense, runes or Tibetan bells to coins or useful objects for *feng shui*.

We return to the historic centre by **rúa de Abeleira Menéndez** ¹⁶, where in recent years new entrepreneurs have set up shop and are revitalising the neighbourhood of A Ferrería with new trendy commercial initiatives. At number 17 is Aveleira Viños, a gateway to the world of wine, where, in addition to tasting and buying it, we can attend wine tastings, winery presentations and meetings with sommeliers and oenologists to share experiences.

At number 8 of the same street is the FRANCISCO FERNÁNDEZ DEL RIEGO ART GALLERY, which occupies the 17th-century Arias Taboada manor house, where exhibitions of contemporary Galician art are presented and which also has a "Salón de Autor" dedicated



monographically to a single artist, and the "La Galería" room, which has a viewpoint overlooking the Old Quarter.

We return to **Porta do Sol** ⁹, where the space is dominated by EL SIRENO, a half-fish, half-man sculpture by the famous artist Francisco Leiro, a leading figure in contemporary Vigo.

Vigo's history is full of wealthy philanthropists, many of whom gave their names to the city's new streets during its expansion, which took place at the end of the 19th century thanks to the economic prosperity provided by Vigo's sea and its port. The Policarpo Sanz and García Barbón streets are fine showcases for the architecture of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as here we find a fusion of eclecticism, modernism, historicism and rationalism, among others.

The most outstanding buildings, among the



many other examples of fine architecture that Vigo has to offer, are [EL MODERNO](#), by architect Michel Pacewicz, with its curved façade; the [SIMEÓN](#), by the Gómez Román brothers, which features balconies profusely decorated in granite and wrought iron; the [PARDO LABARTA](#), by Jenaro de la Fuente, complete with an open gallery; and the [SALGUEIRO](#) building, by Romualdo de Madariaga, which boasts a ceramic frieze that gives it movement.

As we move away from the historic centre, we pass along Rúa Príncipe, Rúa Urzáiz and Rúa Gran Vía, where you can find the latest fashion brands, as well as accessories, footwear and all kinds of items that make this area one of the busiest in the city centre. Next to it is the [Praza da Princesa](#) ¹⁷, in honour of the first-born daughter of Queen Isabel II of Spain. However, this place was known as *Praza da Pescadería*, as this is where the *peixeiras* (fisherwomen) used to come up from the port, carrying wicker baskets on their heads, to sell the freshly caught fish. Behind the old Town Hall is the [PENZOL FOUNDATION LIBRARY](#), considered to be one of the best libraries on Galician subjects, with collections ranging from the 15th century to the present day.

Passing under the Arco de Quirós (Quirós Arch), we come across two of the most recent buildings in the historic centre: The [Juanita Gastrobar](#) and the [Margarita Cocktail Bar](#). Further on lies [Joaquín Yáñez street](#) ¹⁸, where the Ferro Building stands out. It is currently home to the [JUAN COMPAÑEL PUBLIC LIBRARY](#), which features the work of the editor and printer of *Cantares Gallegos*, a work by Rosalía de Castro published in Vigo in 1863, with which the *Rexurdimento*, or Resurgence, of Galician literature was brought about. Its architecture, dating from 1889, is the work of Jenaro de la Fuente, and was originally a private house, then a textile warehouse and later the headquarters of the Casino Obrero, whose elegant ballroom is now the reading room.

[Almoneda Altamira Vigo](#) is located on the same street at number 18. It opened its doors more than 25 years ago and is a paradise for collectors, as it offers everything with a certain antique and vintage flavour, such as old and second-hand books, postcards, coins, decorative objects, antiques... With patience and time, you can buy almost anything in this place.

On the corner of Rúa Ballesta, we'll find [El Rincón del Arte](#), which is not only a framing workshop but it also offers small-format art pieces. It is the ideal place if you are just starting out as a collector of original works.



We take a detour on our walk towards [rúa de Fermín Penzol](#) ¹⁹ and connect with [rúa Carral](#) ²⁰, where the old city wall used to run, whose Porta de Gamboa (Gamboa gate), of which only the toponym remains, was the site of a confrontation with Napoleon's troops in 1809.

During the stroll, we come across numerous restaurants, many with lively terraces, where you can enjoy the local gastronomy that ranges from the most traditional tapas to the most innovative or fusion dishes. We will also find some shops with a degree of tradition, such as [Alejandro Lepina](#), which is a benchmark in the field of interior design, now in its third generation of the same family since 1939. Here they offer the most exclusive brands.

ABOVE Teatro García Barbón
FACING El Sireno

Without straying too far from the world of decoration, we can also visit [Quadro](#), a workshop for framing and mounting works of art, which has an exhibition space and, in the backroom, an art gallery. On Rúa Carral, the [Vaidhé Design Shop](#) specialises in "customised" personal objects.

Next to it is the [Abadía de Campos](#). Open since 1994, it's a shop that specialises in religious articles and monastic products, such as cream pastries made by the nuns of Trasmañó (Redondela) or the famous Euca-liptine, a liqueur made by the monks of Santa María A Real de Oseira; at Christmas time, the range is extended with products made by numerous religious congregations from all over the country.

[Arjeriz Vinos y Licores](#), one of the oldest corner shops in the city, opened its doors just across the street in the 1920s. The quality and variety of its wines make it one of the



most important wine shops in Spain, which completes its offer with other delicatessen products. Next to it, [La Despensa de Castilla](#) offers gourmet products from the region of Castilla.

A little further down is the [Martínez Bakery-Pastry Shop](#); its owners, who have more than a century of tradition behind them, originally came from Meira, a village located on the other side of the estuary. They have made a name for themselves among the most demanding palates thanks to their 18 varieties of seafood empanadas, especially those made with lobster, spider crab or razor clams. They can all be sampled in their cafeteria, along with bonbons and handmade chocolates that come in a thousand different shapes.

At number 20, [Cervecería Pits](#) combines a craft brewery and a pub, so you can learn about the brewing process of many varieties it offers. Next to it, [Sweet Paripé](#) is an original initiative of a group of creative people

who, based in Vigo, design, make and sell their colourful and daring socks, tights and masks.

Once we reach Rúa de Montero Ríos, we can enjoy a pleasant stroll through the marina facilities, where the rationalist building of the [NAUTICAL CLUB](#) stands out, imitating the bridge of a ship; the historicist [HOTEL UNIVERSAL](#), whose halls were witness to the economic, intellectual and political strength of the city at the end of the 19th century; or the [SCULPTURE IN HOMAGE TO JULES VERNE](#), who visited Vigo to document the Naval Battle of Rande, a historical episode reflected in his novel *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. Many terraced bars and restaurants occupy this promenade, some of them reusing the former offices of the shipping companies, which were once very important in a port city such as Vigo.

Continuing along the streets of [Cánovas del Castillo](#) ²¹ and [Baixada á Fonte](#) ²², we reach [A Pescadería](#) ²³, popularly known as rúa or Mercado das Ostras (Oyster Market), where anyone who wants to try this exquisite Vigo-grown delicacy may do so. The eating of oysters has been a tradition for over two thousand years, as far back as Roman times, and it is a tradition here to watch the oyster sellers open the molluscs using their unique skills, thereby continuing this centuries-old trade. The oyster beds maintain a close relationship with the restaurants in the area,



which allow people to use their facilities to eat the oysters they may have purchased elsewhere in exchange for buying their drinks and any other food at the restaurants themselves.

The port offers a wide range of gastronomic options, mainly seafood restaurants with open terraces, which allow us to enjoy the city's mild climate and, in some cases, the privileged views over the estuary. In the past, restaurants such as [Restaurante La Marina](#), which has been around for more than a century, would serve the emigrants on their way to America. Today, they serve all the visitors, tourists and locals who go there to enjoy a quality meal. It is undoubtedly the busiest area of the city, especially at apéritif time, when there is usually no shortage of traditional bagpipe music.

It is not surprising that, due to all the comings and goings, most of the craft and souvenir shops are concentrated here. Some have been around for over 75 years, such as [Bazar Jamaica](#), which even has its own artist who hand-paints plates with pictures of the city.

To finish our route, we follow [rúa Teófilo Llorente](#) ²⁴ until we reach [Praza Ribeira do Berbés](#) ²⁵; the square, which was bathed by the sea until the 19th century, once held an open-air market. Even today, we can still appreciate the beautiful cross of Antón Failde and the typical view of the sailor's porticoed houses. It should be remembered that Vigo is one of the most important fishing ports in the world, as it generates thousands of jobs and boasts five fish auction markets dedicated to several types of fishing: coastal, inshore, deep-sea, shellfish and an innovative digital fish auction.

ABOVE Mercado das Ostras
FACING Oyster seller

Viewpoint and Parque do Castro

On top of an ancient Celtic settlement (in fact, you can visit the partially excavated hill fort site on the lower part of the hill) a double fortified enclosure was built, which today is one of the best viewpoints in the city, offering magnificent views of the estuary and the port of Vigo. The boats coming and going before our eyes connect the small fishing villages along the estuary. We will also be able to appreciate the impressive port facilities, where the cranes of the naval shipyards or the docks full of containers, granite and vehicles ready to be exported stand out. In the background, the Cies Islands complete the scenery. The panoramic view is truly a sight to behold.

MONTE DO CASTRO also offers numerous sculptural ensembles, such as the one dedicated to Curros Enríquez, to Martín Códax or Las Anclas (The Anchors), in memory of the galleons sunk in the battle of Rande in 1702. We should also mention that this place is a small botanical garden where you can discover a variety of species and centuries-old trees, not forgetting its beautiful camellias, which are included in *Galicia's Camellia Route*.

BELOW Parque de Castrelos
FACING Sunset over the Illas Cies

Parque de Castrelos and the Pazo Quiñones de León

We owe the PARQUE DE CASTRELOS (Castrelos Park) to the philanthropist Fernando Quiñones de León, Marquis of Alcedo. Thanks to him, and since 1924, we have been able to enjoy the 22-hectare park; the gardens, with their splendid botanical specimens; and the Palace, which has now been converted into a municipal museum. The whole complex has been declared an Asset of Cultural Interest. There is an artificial lake in the park, which features various water birds, fountains, paths, century-old trees and a large open-air auditorium. The PAZO QUIÑONES DE LEÓN (Quiño-



nes de León Palace) shows us the city's past through its time-locked rooms, which recreate the atmosphere of a 19th-century manor house and the decorative arts. It also has an important collection of paintings, considered one of the largest art galleries in Galicia.

Behind the palace itself lie the gardens, which invite us to stroll through their different sections: the rose garden and the heraldic collection; the French garden with its geometric layout of boxwood hedges and Methuselah camellias, one of the oldest in Galicia; the English garden or Pradera del Té (Tea Meadow), with elegant examples of camellias, tulip trees and magnolias which surround the central pond; whilst the forest, with some impressive eucalyptus trees planted in 1872, can be found at the end of the garden.

Walk around the monumental sculptures and Samil beach

Vigo offers one of the best examples of contemporary public sculpture, among which we can list the MONUMENTO AL TRABAJO ("Monument to Work"), by Ramón Conde, located on the Gran Vía and popularly known as LOS COLOSOS (The Colossi), due to the enormous effort made by the men of the sea; the FUENTE DE LOS CABALLOS (Fountain of the Horses), by Juan de Oliveira, in Plaza España, full with enormous dynamism and

a true homage to the ancestral festival of A RAPA DAS BESTAS; the Puerta del Atlántico (The Gate to the Atlantic), by Silveiro Rivas and found in Plaza América, which reminds us that Vigo is the gateway to America; the MONUMENTO AL HERRERO ("Monument to the Blacksmith"), by Guillermo Steinbrüggen, in Plaza de Eugenio Fadrique, which shows the importance of the metallurgical sector in the shipbuilding industry; or EL RAPTO DE EUROPA (The Abduction of Europa), by Juan Oliveira, on Avenida de Samil, which takes us to the most popular beach in Galicia, an ideal place to enjoy the open air of the beach itself, the lush pine forests that surround it or the terraces which offer the best views.



BELOW Pazo Quiñones de León





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