

## Promoting Meditation Tourism in Egypt

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### Abstract:

Egypt is known for its rich history and ancient architecture, but it also has the potential to become a destination for meditation tourism. This paper explores the benefits of meditation, the growth of wellness tourism, and the potential for Egypt to tap into this market. The study aims to explore the benefits of meditation and assess the potential for meditation tourism in Egypt, investigate the motivations and interests of potential meditation tourists in Egypt, and identify their package preferences. An online survey was conducted to assess Egypt's capability to tap into this market, with 108 complete responses collected between July and September 2023. The hypothesis tested suggests a significant impact of effective marketing and promotional materials on considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. The findings highlight the potential benefits of promoting meditation tourism, including diversifying the tourism product, stimulating economic growth, and promoting sustainability. The statistical analysis provides valuable information about

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participant demographics, the effectiveness of marketing materials, and the impact of word-of-mouth recommendations. These insights enable tourism stakeholders to develop tailored strategies, target specific demographic segments, and foster positive customer experiences to attract potential visitors.

**Keywords:** Meditation tourism, Egypt, Promoting, Wellness tourism.

**Introduction:**

The meditation has recently gained attention globally, as it has shifted from a religious practice to a more worldwide tourism practice. People engage in these practices with the motivation to cultivate the mind, release stress, explore their inner selves, and enhance their overall health and well-being. There has been a great interest in spiritual tourism and health and wellness tourism; however, meditation tourism has received little attention, and little empirical research has been conducted in this context (Piuchan, M., 2018). Meditation is all about positive energy, spiritualism, and maintaining balance in our lives; thus, Egypt is the right place for meditators to be. Egypt has astonishing landscapes and phenomenal history: Ancient pyramids and temples dotting the River Nile, From the Great Pyramids to the stunning Red Sea coast—there are endless historic and cultural sites that can be potential destinations for meditation. However, while Egypt offers a wealth of cultural experiences, its potential as a destination for meditation tourism remains relatively unexplored. The existing literature on meditation tourism primarily focuses on other destinations, leaving a significant gap in knowledge regarding the benefits, motivations, and preferences of potential meditation tourists specifically in the context of Egypt. This research paper aims to address this research gap by investigating the relationship between marketing and promotional materials and the consideration of travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. By understanding the unique characteristics and needs of potential meditation tourists in Egypt, tourism stakeholders can develop

targeted strategies to promote meditation tourism, diversify the tourism product, stimulate economic growth, and enhance sustainability in the region. This study fills an important research void and contributes to the broader understanding of meditation tourism within the Egyptian context.

## **Literature Review:**

### **Definition of Meditation: -**

According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2021) meditation defines as, “private devotion or mental exercise encompassing various techniques of concentration, contemplation, and abstraction, regarded as conducive to heightened self-awareness, spiritual enlightenment, and physical and mental health.”.

The definition provided by Encyclopedia Britannica highlights key elements such as private devotion, mental exercise, concentration, contemplation, and abstraction. and recognizes meditation as a practice that can lead to various positive outcomes, including heightened self-awareness, spiritual enlightenment, and improved physical and mental health.

The definition offers a well-rounded and inclusive understanding of meditation, capturing its essence as a personal practice that encompasses various techniques and can lead to transformative and beneficial effects on an individual's well-being.

**Benefits of Meditation:**

Meditation has a variety of health benefits, including reducing stress, improving sleep quality, and boosting immune function (Goyal et al., 2014). and there's evidence that meditation may reduce blood pressure as well as symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and acute attacks in people with ulcerative colitis. It may relieve symptoms of anxiety and depression and may help people with insomnia. Evidence about its effectiveness for pain and as a smoking-cessation treatment is uncertain (NCCIH, 2016).

In addition to these health benefits, meditation can also have spiritual benefits. Many people use meditation as a means of connecting with their inner selves, exploring their spirituality, and finding a sense of peace and purpose in life (Pathath, 2017).

**The growth of wellness tourism:**

Meditation tourism is a growing trend in the travel industry, with more people seeking out destinations that offer opportunities for relaxation, self-reflection, and personal growth (Cohen & Cohen, 2015).

There is a trend of further disintegration of wellness tourism into various subsectors such as holistic tourism, yoga and meditation, spa tourism, new age tourism, spiritual tourism, etc. (Ali-Knight, none).

Wellness tourism was a \$720 billion market in 2019 and then fell to \$436 billion in 2020, due to the widespread travel disruptions during the pandemic. And expected that wellness tourism will grow rapidly in the coming years as the

world emerges from the pandemic (+20.9% annual growth), with the market reaching \$1.1 trillion in 2025.

International wellness tourists on average spent \$1,601 per trip in 2020, 35% more than the typical international tourist. Domestic wellness tourists spent \$619 per trip, 177% more than the average domestic tourist. Secondary wellness travelers accounted for 92% of wellness trips and 90% of wellness tourism expenditures in 2020. Secondary wellness tourism involves trips where wellness is not the primary motivation for the trip, but where wellness affects some choices and activities because the traveler would like to maintain good health and/or their wellness lifestyle during the trip (GWI, 2023).

### **Potential for Meditation Tourism in Egypt:**

Egypt has the potential to become a destination for meditation tourism, a growing market within the broader wellness tourism industry.

Egypt offers a plethora of meditation centers and retreats to suit various preferences, ranging from silent retreats to group meditations and yoga classes. Siwa Oasis, the Red Sea Coast, Aswan, and Cairo are among the top destinations for meditation tourism in Egypt.

To tap into the growing market of wellness tourism, Egypt could invest in creating new meditation centers and retreats that cater specifically to tourists. These retreats could offer a range of services,

such as guided meditations, yoga classes, and spa treatments, all set against the stunning backdrop of Egypt's natural beauty. In addition to using marketing campaigns targeting specific segments of the wellness tourism market.

### **Impact of Marketing Efforts on Destination Choice:**

Destination attractiveness and destination image significantly influence tourist behavior (Ahmed et al., 2018). Destination image, which refers to individuals' perceptions and impressions of a destination, plays a crucial role in destination choice (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Marketing efforts are instrumental in shaping and promoting a positive destination image that attracts potential tourists. These efforts include destination branding, promotional campaigns, and effective communication of the unique experiences and benefits offered by the destination (Ahmed et al., 2018; Pike, 2005). Positive perceptions of a destination lead to higher intentions to visit (Chen & Kerstetter, 2003). Effective marketing strategies can influence potential tourists' perceptions by creating desirable destination images, thus increasing their inclination to choose a specific destination (Ahmed et al., 2018). Tour operators and travel agents play a crucial role in shaping destination images too. Their perceptions and experiences can influence the promotional efforts and marketing strategies implemented for a destination (Baloglu & Mangalolu, 2001). Collaborating with these stakeholders can enhance marketing efforts and facilitate destination choice. destination branding is a key marketing tool that helps differentiate a destination from competitors and influences destination choice (Pike,

2008). Effective destination branding ensures that the destination is perceived as unique, authentic, and desirable by potential tourists. Furthermore, proper positioning ensures that the destination aligns with the target market's preferences and resonates with their motivations for travel (Kozak & Baloglu, 2011; Cooper et al., 2017).

Wang and Xie (2020) found that destination attractiveness, cultural experiences, and personal interests play significant roles in shaping tourists' decisions to visit a destination. Furthermore, Smith and Johnson (2019) highlighted the importance of marketing and promotional efforts in raising awareness and influencing travel choices.

Kim and Lee (2018) explored the impact of online marketing on travelers' destination choices and found a positive correlation between effective online promotional materials and destination awareness. Similarly, Huang and Hu (2017) investigated the influence of marketing messages on tourists' perception of destination attractiveness and reported a significant association between persuasive marketing materials and destination choice.

### **Promoting Meditation Tourism in Egypt:**

Egypt is famous for its ancient monuments and rich cultural heritage, attracting millions of tourists every year (MOTA, 2021). However, the tourism industry in Egypt faces challenges such as political instability, security concerns, and environmental issues (Elsayed, Khalifa, & Mahmoud, 2020). Thus, there is a need to diversify the tourism product and cater to changing consumer preferences. Tourism is a crucial sector for the Egyptian economy,



generating income and employment opportunities (CAPMAS, 2021). However, with the rise of wellness tourism, there is an opportunity to diversify the tourism product in Egypt by promoting meditation tourism.

Tourism marketing plays an important role in attracting tourists to the destination and creating a variety of positive images of the destination. These images are important for marketing the place, which affects people's perceptions of the place and influences their choices and behavior towards this destination. Therefore, travel agencies and the government can improve the image of positive destinations through the use of marketing tools. This effectively increases its attractiveness to potential tourists, and thus the economic profitability of the destination.

Destination promotional efforts are one of the most powerful tools for developing destinations to enhance the travel experiences of tourists. (Mohamed et al., 2022)

Effective marketing and promotional materials play a crucial role in attracting tourists to destinations and influencing their perceptions and behaviors. To promote meditation tourism in Egypt, the government and private sector could work together to create marketing campaigns highlighting the benefits of meditation and the unique experiences that can be found in Egypt. The campaign could target specific segments of the wellness tourism market, such as yoga enthusiasts or spiritual seekers.

In addition to marketing, the government could provide incentives for businesses interested in investing in the development of

meditation centers and retreats. For example, tax breaks or subsidies could be offered to companies that build or operate these facilities.

The ideal target market for meditation tourism in Egypt includes individuals seeking spiritual and wellness experiences. This includes solo travelers, couples, and groups of friends or families who are interested in meditation, yoga, and other mind-body practices (HBR, 2020).

This may include people who practice meditation regularly, as well as those who are new to the practice but are interested in learning more. Other potential target markets may include individuals seeking a break from their busy lives and wanting to relax and recharge in a peaceful environment, or those interested in exploring ancient spiritual traditions (Cohen & Cohen, 2015).

Marketing efforts play a crucial role in diversifying a destination's tourism products (Mohamed et al., 2022). Considering the challenges faced by the Egyptian tourism industry, such as political instability and security concerns, effective marketing is vital to attract tourists seeking unique experiences like meditation tourism. Promoting meditation tourism in Egypt requires targeted marketing campaigns highlighting the benefits of meditation and showcasing Egypt's diverse meditation offerings and natural beauty.

## **Methodology: -**

### **1. Study Procedures and Study Sample:-**

An online survey was developed on the Survey Monkey website, and a relevant link was distributed to travelers interested in meditation on social media platforms. The online survey used in this

study was carefully developed to gather comprehensive insights into promoting meditation tourism in Egypt. The survey questions were designed to capture relevant information regarding participants' interest in meditation retreats, and perceptions of marketing and promotional strategies.

The target population of this study comprised individuals who expressed an interest in meditation tourism in Egypt. To reach this population, the survey link was shared through various social media platforms known for their meditation and wellness communities. The study employs the “random sampling” technique. Participants were provided information about the study's purpose, scope, and survey content. The survey was conducted in English to ensure wider accessibility. A total of 108 out of 112 complete surveys were collected between July and September 2023.

## **2. Study instrument**

The survey was divided into 03 main parts. The first part focused on the demographic characteristics of the respondents (03 items), including age, gender, and education to understand the characteristics of the participants. The second part aimed to evaluate participants' interest in meditation retreats in Egypt (04 items), asking about participants' past experiences, respondents were asked to rate their level of interest in visiting Egypt for meditation purposes and specify their motivations, such as relaxation, spiritual growth, or cultural immersion. The third part delved into the marketing and promotion of meditation tourism in Egypt (03 items), asking about participants' awareness of meditation retreats in Egypt, the

Effectiveness of marketing and promotional materials, and their likelihood of recommending such retreats to others. The survey employed closed-ended questions and a 5-point Likert-type scale for responses (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely).

### **3. Statistical analysis: -**

Various statistical tools were used to analyze the collected data. Firstly, a convergent validity and reliability test was conducted to measure the consistency and reliability of survey items. Secondly, descriptive statistical analysis was employed to provide an overview of the sample and variables. Thirdly, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.

## **Results and discussion:**

### **Convergent validity and reliability test:**

According to Shrestha (2021), convergent validity is used to measure the level of correlation between multiple indicators of the same construct that are in agreement. Convergent validity is confirmed when the average variance extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's alpha are greater than 0.5 and the value of composite reliability (CR) is higher than 0.7. As a result, for the convergent validity of the survey items (table1), the average variance extracted, and Cronbach's alpha  $> 0.5$ , the composite reliability  $> 0.7$  for all Items; Thus, it can be inferred that the convergent validity is accepted and all survey items have higher reliability

Table 1. Analysis of convergent validity and composite reliability  
 C $\alpha$ : Cronbach's Alpha; CR: Composite reliability; AVE: Average  
 variance extracted

Items	Factor loading	0.5>AVE	0.7>CR	C $\alpha$
<b>Motivations and Interests</b>		<b>0.523</b>	<b>0.811</b>	<b>0.653</b>
Have you visited Egypt before	<b>0.610</b>			
have you participated in a meditation or wellness retreat in Egypt	<b>0.859</b>			
Have you ever participated in a meditation or wellness retreat	<b>0.652</b>			
Would you consider traveling to Egypt specifically for meditation purposes	<b>0.745</b>			
<b>Marketing and Promotion</b>		<b>0.576</b>	<b>0.770</b>	<b>0.727</b>
Are you aware that Egypt offers meditation and wellness retreats for tourists	<b>0.403</b>			
How likely are you to choose a meditation retreat in Egypt based on effective marketing and promotional materials	<b>0.888</b>			
How likely are you to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others	<b>0.828</b>			
				<b>0.780</b>

### Demographic Analysis:

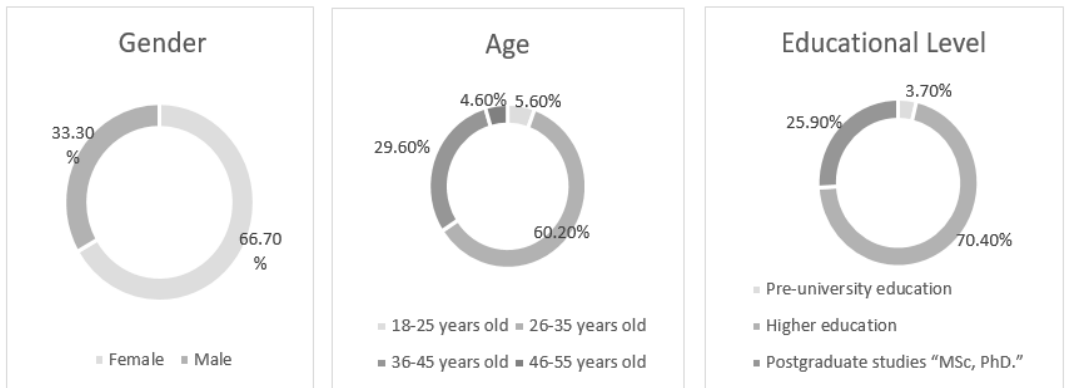


Figure 1: Demographic profile of the sample

Results in figure1 reveal that the majority of participants were between 26-35 years old, accounting for 60.2% of the total respondents. And most of them were female, accounting for 66.7% of the total sample. Additionally, the results reveal that the majority of participants had a higher education, accounting for 70.4% of the total sample, and 25.9% of the respondents pursued postgraduate studies, such as MSc or PhD.

### Motivations and Interests:



Figure 2: the motivations and Interests of the sample

The results indicate that a significant portion of respondents, 46.3%, have participated in meditation or wellness retreats occasionally, 21.3% of the respondents reported participating in meditation or wellness retreats regularly. This indicates a considerable interest in and engagement with these types of retreats among the survey participants. A considerable percentage of respondents (74.7%) who have not participated in a meditation or wellness retreat in Egypt expressed an interest in doing so in the future, indicating a potential market for meditation tourism.

The main motivations for considering a meditation retreat in Egypt include relaxation and stress reduction (25%), spiritual growth and self-discovery (14%), and positive reviews from previous visitors (16%). These motivations suggest a demand for well-being, personal growth, and positive experiences (Figure 2).

Table 2: considering travel to Egypt for Meditation Purpose

	Definitely not	Unlikely	Unsure	Probably	Definitely	mean	S.d	cv
Would you consider traveling to Egypt specifically for meditation purposes?	3(%2.8)	3(%2.8)	15(%13.9)	64(%59.3)	23(%21.3)	3.94	0.846	%21.4

the data in (Table 2) suggests that a significant portion of the respondents (59%) expressed a likelihood or definite interest in considering traveling to Egypt for meditation purposes. This suggests

a significant interest in exploring meditation opportunities within the country and emphasizes the potential market for promoting Egypt as a destination for meditation tourism. Furthermore, 21.3% of the respondents expressed a definite willingness to travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. This group represents individuals who have a strong interest and intention to engage in meditation activities within the country. Their definitive response highlights their readiness to pursue meditation experiences in Egypt, making them a valuable target audience for marketing efforts. However, it is important to note that a portion of respondents, 13.9%, expressed uncertainty or were unsure about their willingness to travel to Egypt specifically for meditation purposes. This group presents an opportunity to provide further information, address any concerns, and showcase the unique offerings and benefits of meditation experiences in Egypt. By addressing their uncertainties and providing compelling reasons to choose Egypt as a destination for meditation, it is possible to increase their interest and potentially convert them into prospective visitors.

Understanding the respondents' willingness to travel to Egypt for meditation purposes is crucial for developing targeted marketing strategies. By highlighting the unique features, serene environments, and transformative experiences available, Egypt can position itself as an attractive and sought-after destination for individuals seeking meditation-focused travel.



## Marketing and Promotion:

Table 3: Recommending a meditation retreat in Egypt to others

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely	Mean	S.d	cv
How likely are you to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others?	1(%0.9)	5(%4.6)	22(%20.4)	67(%62.0)	13(%12.0)	3.80	0.746	19.63%

The provided table (Table 3) focuses on the likelihood of respondents recommending a meditation retreat in Egypt to others. It provides insights into their willingness to advocate for such retreats based on their personal experiences.

The results indicate that the majority of respondents, 62.0%, expressed a likelihood of recommending a meditation retreat in Egypt to others. This suggests that a significant portion of participants had positive experiences or perceptions of these retreats and are willing to share their recommendations with others. Word-of-mouth recommendations can be a powerful tool for attracting new participants and building a positive reputation for meditation retreats in Egypt.

Furthermore, 12.0% of respondents indicated they were very likely to recommend a retreat, indicating a strong willingness to promote and endorse the retreat experience. This subset of participants likely had highly positive experiences and holds a particularly favorable view of meditation retreats in Egypt. Their enthusiastic advocacy can contribute to attracting new participants and enhancing the overall reputation of these retreats.

A smaller percentage of respondents, 20.4%, expressed neutrality regarding their likelihood of recommending a retreat. This suggests that while they may not actively discourage others from attending, they might not actively promote or recommend the retreat experience either. It is possible ve unsure about the preferences and expectations of others.

The mean score of 3.80 indicates that, on average, respondents are moderately likely to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others based on their experiences.

Considering the data, there is a consistent trend of respondents being likely to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others. This highlights the potential for positive word-of-mouth and personal recommendations to contribute to the growth and success of these retreats.

In summary, the majority of respondents are willing to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others based on their experiences. Their positive word-of-mouth and advocacy can play a significant role in attracting new participants and building a positive reputation for these retreats. Retreat organizers should strive to provide high-quality experiences that exceed participant expectations and encourage positive recommendations from satisfied participants.

Table 4: Effectiveness of marketing and promotional materials

	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely	Mean	S.d	cv
How likely are you to choose a meditation retreat in Egypt based on effective marketing and promotional materials	1(0.9%)	1(0.9%)	17(15.7%)	75(69.4%)	14(13.0%)	3.93	0.637	16.2

The results in Table 4 indicate that a majority of respondents, 69.4%, expressed a likelihood of choosing a meditation retreat in Egypt based on effective marketing and promotional materials. 13.0% of respondents indicated they were very likely to choose a retreat based on effective marketing materials. A smaller percentage of respondents, 15.7%, expressed neutrality in their likelihood of choosing a retreat based on marketing materials. The mean score of 3.93 indicates that, on average, respondents are moderately likely to choose a meditation retreat in Egypt based on effective marketing and promotional materials. These findings emphasize the importance of investing in well-crafted marketing campaigns that effectively communicate the unique value propositions and experiences offered by meditation retreats in Egypt.

### 5. Hypothesis Testing: -

The hypothesis is: There is a significant impact of the effective marketing and promotional materials on considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes.

A simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Table 7 shows the value of the standardized coefficient,

their significance level, and the support for the acceptance of the hypotheses.

Table 5: Descriptive statics of Effectiveness of marketing and promotional materials

The Questions	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variations
How likely are you to choose a meditation retreat in Egypt based on effective marketing and promotional materials	3.93	0.637	16.2
How likely are you to recommend a meditation retreat in Egypt to others?	3.80	0.746	19.63%

Table 6: Descriptive statics of considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes

The Questions	Mean	Standard deviation	Coefficient of variations
Would you consider traveling to Egypt specifically for meditation purposes?	3.94	0.846	21.5%

Table 7: Result of the simple linear regression analysis to test the hypothesis

Hypotheses	Path direction	Standard Coefficient	Stander errors	T statistics	sig	Result
H1	→ Marketing Considering Meditation in Egypt	.508	.124	4.088	0.001	Supported

The results show that effective marketing and promotional materials have a significant impact on considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. The value of the standardized coefficient is .508 at sig 0.001. This indicates effective marketing and promotional

materials will effect on considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported.

These findings suggest that the effectiveness of marketing and promotional materials contribute to travelers' likelihood of considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes. The data provides evidence to support the hypothesis that there is a significant impact of effective marketing and promotional materials on considering travel to Egypt for meditation purposes.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, promoting meditation tourism in Egypt holds significant potential for diversifying the tourism product, stimulating economic growth, and promoting environmental sustainability. By specifically targeting individuals in search of spiritual, wellness experiences, and personal growth, Egypt can position itself as a leading destination for meditation retreats and programs. The research findings emphasize the importance of utilizing social media platforms, influencer partnerships, and targeted advertising campaigns to attract more visitors to the country.

Marketing efforts are instrumental in shaping destination images, influencing tourist behavior, and ultimately impacting destination choice. By implementing effective marketing strategies, destinations can promote meditation tourism and position themselves as attractive options for wellness and spiritual seekers. In the case of Egypt, marketing campaigns targeting specific segments of the wellness tourism market, collaborating with tour operators and travel agents, and investing in destination branding and product

diversification can help establish Egypt as a desirable destination for meditation tourism.

Theoretical contributions of this study lie in highlighting the untapped potential of meditation tourism in Egypt and its alignment with the growing global wellness tourism market. By recognizing and capitalizing on Egypt's rich history and spiritual traditions, tourism stakeholders can develop unique offerings that resonate with the desires and aspirations of modern travelers.

From a managerial and practical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for tailored marketing strategies, targeting specific demographic segments, and leveraging positive word-of-mouth recommendations. These insights can assist tourism stakeholders in developing effective marketing initiatives and fostering positive customer experiences to attract potential visitors.

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this research. The study focused primarily on promoting meditation tourism in Egypt without comparing it to other destinations. Further research could employ a comparative analysis to explore the unique selling points and competitive advantages of Egypt in comparison to other destinations. In addition, there is a need for further research on sustainable practices within meditation tourism in Egypt. This research could explore initiatives aimed at integrating eco-friendly accommodations, responsible tourism practices, and community engagement. By examining the environmental and social impacts of meditation tourism, future research can provide valuable insights into sustainable strategies that promote the long-term well-being of the

destinations and local communities. Understanding the potential synergies between meditation tourism and sustainability can guide policymakers and stakeholders in implementing sustainable practices and enhancing the positive impacts while mitigating potential negative effects.

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