



Celebrating Food, Art & Culture

World Cuisines

Featuring the
food, art, and culture of
Iran, Indonesia, and Argentina

The Silk Road

The King of Fruit

À la Parrilla



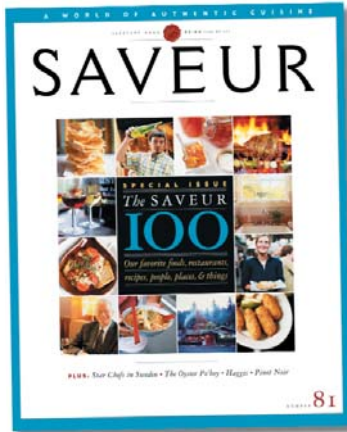
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Experiencing the world...food first

While *Unity* would like to claim this line, it actually comes from the world's best food writers at *Saveur* magazine.

To learn, discover, and devour—what better ways are there to experience the world? Not only is this the idea behind this month's edition of *Unity*, which is a celebration of world cuisines, it is also the philosophy behind one of the world's most respected food journals, *Saveur*. In case you aren't familiar, *Saveur* isn't just a glossy magazine filled with hundreds of recipes, it actually tells the life story of food, visiting the fascinating places it comes from and meeting the people who create it. *Saveur* satisfies a hunger for genuine information about food in all of its contexts.



Where else but in *Saveur* would we learn the history behind “carbonada en zapallo,” the Argentine dish dating back to colonial times that creates a hearty mixture of beef and vegetables, accented with peaches, and is festively served in a baked pumpkin? Beyond the recipe, which is a treat in itself, is the story of Spanish explorers—incorporating a treasure trove of new-world foodstuffs such as pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and corn into dishes from their homeland—inventing this unique stew-in-a-pumpkin, which by the way is a formidable example of fusion cooking long before fusion became the buzzword it is today.

Or how about sate (pronounced “sa-TAY” and also spelled satay), the Southeast Asian dish of marinated meat, poultry, or seafood grilled on a skewer? If the dish sounds like shish kebabs to you, read on! With its usual vigor for the facts, *Saveur* discovered its favorite sate was Indonesian and flavored with sweet, aromatic kecap manis, a spiced molasses-soy condiment (not unlike teriyaki) that has scores of uses in Indonesian cooking. Even more, *Saveur* learned that the Indonesian island of Java was probably the birthplace of sate, not contiguous Asia, as everyone else had believed. Sate is an offshoot of kebabs, which were introduced by Muslim traders to the island sometime around the 12th century. Over time, the Javanese changed the dish to suit their tastes, cutting the meat smaller and flavoring it with indigenous spices.

For those who want to experience the world in a way that is intimate, tactile, and educational—*food first*—pick up a copy of *Saveur* at your local bookstore or visit its Web site, which is chock full of fascinating food facts from every part of the globe.

This month's *Unity*

This month's *Unity* celebration of world cuisine places the spotlight on Argentina, Indonesia, and Iran. These regions were selected because they are often portrayed negatively in the press, but just below the surface of what we see on television is a bigger, more realistic, and more inspiring story. Celebrating life through food, art, literature, festivals, and family gatherings is not unique to Americans or Europeans, but it is a time-honored tradition that takes us back to the most ancient of civilizations.

Saveur learned that sate (skewers on the left) came from Indonesia, not contiguous Asia, as everyone else believed.



Selamatan

A word with no translation is best understood with an hearty appetite

“In a recent cross cultural training program, a participant mentioned that he was surprised to find out that the new, modern office building in which his company was located had a water buffalo head buried in its foundation. When that building was dedicated, a ceremony was held to insure that events flowed smoothly and nothing bad occurred to the tenants of the building. This kind of ceremony is called a Selamatan,” noted George Whitfield, III, a cross-cultural consultant for clients doing business in Indonesia.

Selamatan is an Indonesian feast, communal and ritualistic, that also serves as an expression of religious belief. Americans may understand the spirit of Selamatan by comparing it to Thanksgiving, but Indonesians hold their celebrations anytime, anywhere, and for any number of reasons. The desire may be to bring grace upon the participants, end a run of bad luck, or reverse a string of business losses. George notes that the encroachment of modernization on the islands has produced new ways of celebrating the feast. The proud owner of a new BMW may request a Selamatan “to ritually purify the car before he drives it away.”

What is eaten at a Selamatan? You guessed it—rice, rice, and more rice, accompanied by a smorgasbord of dishes prepared by the participants.

Did you know?

- The world's largest food-and-beverage company got its start in the 1860s, when the founder, a Swiss pharmacist, created an infant formula for babies who could not or would not breast feed. His first success saved the life of a premature baby who couldn't tolerate his mother's milk or use any known substitute. Today the company operates in nearly every country, serving up Taster's Choice coffee, Carnation Instant Milk, Häagen Dazs, Lean Cuisine, KitKats, and Powerbars, to name just a few well-known brands. And for four-legged family members, the company makes Friskies, Fancy Feast, Purina, and Pro Plan. The founder: Henri Nestlé, and now you *should* know the rest of the story.

Festivals of Iran and Ancient Persia

Before Islam came to Iran around 642 AD, the state religion was Zoroastrianism, a monotheistic religion originating 3,500 years ago with fire representing the deity. Although Muslim Arabs crushed Zoroastrianism (only 1 percent of today's Iranian population keeps the faith), the Zoroastrian solar year features nature festivals that have remained ecumenical celebration days and are filled with rich traditions in food, the most important of which is Noruz.

Meaning “new day,” Noruz is the Persian New Year and falls on the spring equinox (most all Zoroastrian festivals are based on natural phenomena or the turning of the earth). Noruz features a ceremonial table set with items that must begin with the letter “s” or “seen” in Farsi. For gatherings of families and friends, herbed rice, fish, and noodle soup are traditionally served along with many sweets.



A Noruz ceremonial table

From *A Taste of Persia: An Introduction to Persian Cooking* by Najmieh Batmanglij, ©1999-2000 Mage Publishers

The Haft Seen or Seven S's of Noruz

Sabzeh	sprouts, representing new life
Sib	apple, representing health, beauty
Senjed	jujube fruit, representing love
Sir	garlic, representing medicine
Sumac	a red berry that represents the color of sunrise and the idea of the sun as a good force conquering evil darkness
Serkeh	vinegar, representing age and patience
Sekkeh	coins, representing prosperity

The Festivals of Fire and Water

The fire festival is celebrated in early January and marks the discovery of sacred fire. Not surprisingly, roasted foods like potatoes and chestnuts are served with rich soups.

In July, Jashn-e Tirgan, or the water festival, celebrates the comings of the life-giving rain. Dancing, singing, and tambourine playing mark the day along with a traditional serving of spinach soup.

Autumn's Jashn-e Mehregan is celebrated for six days and is dedicated to the god of light. Specific breads are served on this day including a date bun called kolucheh.

Winter is also the time of the Shabeh Yalda or “longest night”—the winter solstice. Tradition has it that family and friends gather in front of a roaring fire to munch on a dried fruit and nut mixture called “agil”, fruits including pomegranates then in season. Sweets and rice dishes are served and the goal is to stay awake through the night, telling stories and keeping each other company until the long hours of darkness pass.

A study of Persian culture and its long-standing celebration of food, complete with easy-to-make recipes, is found in *A Taste of Persia: An Introduction to Persian Cooking* by Najmieh Batmanglij, also featured in this edition of *Unity*.



Planning your next picnic Argentine Style

The people who invented the tango wouldn't throw cold cuts in a cooler, head to the park, and call it a picnic. After all, the tango, which was birthed in the back alleys of Buenos Aires, is just one expression of an intense, Argentine passion for life, a passion also found in the way they celebrate food. Understand that Argentina is blessed with natural resources and a rich ethnic history that make it one of the world's top culinary regions. Next time you're searching for a special way to spend the day, try your outing Argentine style. It only takes a little extra effort and a desire to experience the world—*food first*.

Pack a basket with these items and head for an open, grassy field away from the city.

Wine. The vineyards of Cuyo, located in the Mendoza region, are watered by Andean glaciers and produce vinous varieties that rival the best in France or Italy. A wine boutique, where the staff is knowledgeable and friendly, is the place to find vintages that sell for less than \$15 and are likely to suit your taste profile.

Cheese. Argentina isn't just a gourmand's paradise, it is also paradise for innumerable heads of cattle, sheep, and goats. Traditionally, they feed only on pampas grass with no dietary additives, so they produce world-class meats and dairy products. Visit the *Igourmet Web* site to choose from several cheeses that can be delivered right to your home.

There are many more ideas! Check out the back page of this edition or pick up a copy of *Argentine Cooks!* at your local bookstore.

In the news ...

- Argentina's most famous chef, Francis Mallman, recently opened yet another signature restaurant in Miami. Named for one of Argentina's most famous wine regions, Mendoza serves Italian and Spanish dishes with an Andean flair. A dining room trimmed exclusively in white and a terrace overlooking Biscayne Bay make the perfect setting for a romantic evening by candlelight. Francis owns several high-end eating establishments in Argentina, Uruguay, and New York City, and he describes his cooking style as “classic rebellion”. A lover of words and poetry, (Argentina is the home of Jorge Luis Borges), the walls of Francis's New York restaurant are painted over with stanzas from Eliot, Byron, and Yeats. (www.epicurious.com)

Global Crossroads

A Visual Montage of World Art

Promoting Cultural Awareness

Diversity, as it is represented through art, provides a window into cultural differences. Our art collection attempts to educate clients, shareholders, and communities. *Unity* and *Diversity* program and be used as a stand-alone display to demonstrate a commitment to diversity and discovery.

Goldberg - Untitled photo from "Unstable Geographies"- latincollector gallery



Siamak - Leaving Home



Sullivan - Indonesia



Sullivan - Rickshaw at Sunset



Siamak - Lost



Siamak - Solitude



Goldberg - Untitled photo from "Unstable Geographies"- latincollector gallery

Siamak, born in Tehran, Iran, showed remarkable talent at an early age and began his formal art studies at age 8. He studied with his country's leading artists before earning a classical education at the Bella Arte di Roma in Rome, Italy. During the years 1980 through 1987, he worked with famed traditional artists Maffei and Calozari, refining his classic approach to color. Siamak is also a master

of the ancient Italian art of oil painting on enamel and antique restoration.

North Sullivan believes that photography is the "art of seeing," that being in the right place at the right time is only half the story, and, most important, that "nothing is ever ordinary, it's only the way you see it." North is one of Australia's most

respected advertising photographers, and when he is not shooting for a living, he is shooting to satisfy a passion. His images of Indonesia capture real people in their real time. North is an enthusiastic proponent of today's digital darkroom, and his recent works are an assimilation of both black and white and color, partly crisp, partly soft, part reportage, part illustration.

and Diversity Through the Arts

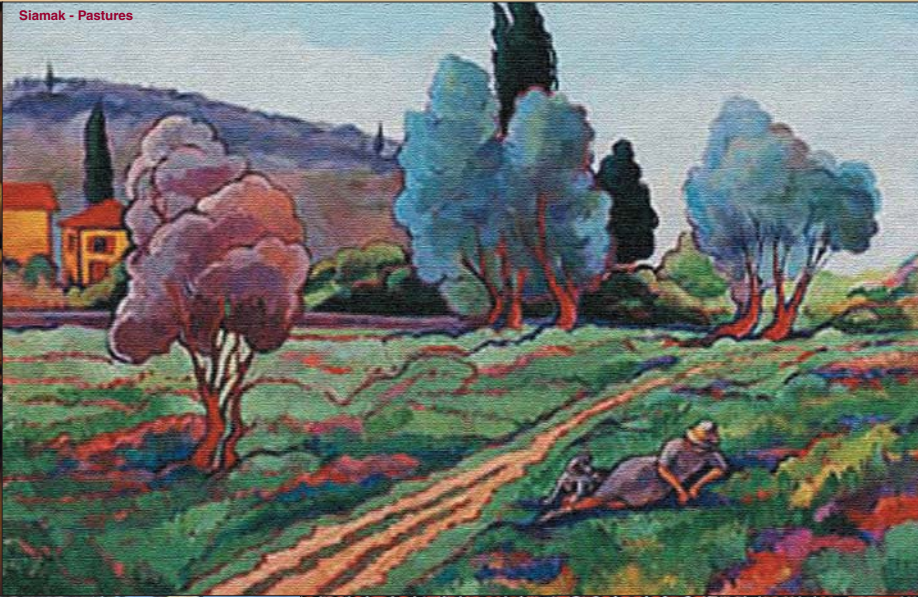
is a personal and visual expression of our valuable
to mirror the diversity of employees, students,
and the artwork it showcases can supplement your
diversity publication. They are the perfect way to
over the vibrancy of new cultures and lifestyles.

For more information on our
cultural fine art collection, visit

www.picture-that.com.



Indonesian Cloth



Siamak - Pastures



Siamak - Quiet Hours



Luciana Abait - Untitled



Sullivan - Bride, Tana Toraja Indonesia

Nicolás Goldberg, born in Paris, France and only 26 years old, has already achieved international acclaim for his stunning photographic essays. He writes of *Unstable Geographies*, "Being in transit creates unreality about the places where one lands and confers a sense of contingency on everything, and a strong sense of being misplaced. People are 'figures' embedded in a mutilated world, inhabit-

ing a charged psychological and liminal space, interacting with a specific landscape or environment. The conflict between them, the figures' vulnerability, and eerie emptiness becomes the point of interest." Nicolás has studied at the International Center of Photography in New York City and several well-respected institutions in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Luciana Abait was born in Buenos Aires and has studied art extensively in her hometown at the National School of Fine Arts, as well as at internationally acclaimed schools in Cambridge, England and Amherst, Massachusetts. Her work has been exhibited in Hong Kong, Grand Caymen, Buenos Aires, New York, Chicago, and Houston.



Najmieh Batmanglij

Author of *A Taste of Persia: An Introduction to Persian Cooking*, ©1999-2000 Mage Publishers

Along the Silk Road

An ancient trade route provides the earliest fusion foods

Born and raised in Iran, Najmieh Batmanglij has spent the past 25 years travelling across much of the Silk Road region that, in ancient times, was the main trade route between the Mediterranean and China. Always looking to expand her knowledge of the regional foods, she has explored Persian cuisine with countless chefs and home cooks. As a result, Najmieh now is regarded as the world's leading authority on Persian cuisine.

Eager to enlighten the public about the rich cultural heritage of her country, which is often overlooked in the media, Najmieh created Mage Publishers to promote the art, music, history, and literature of Iran. She has taught and lectured at numerous cooking schools across the United States and is currently living in Washington, D.C., where she teaches master classes on Silk Road cooking.

Her books include *Ma Cuisine d'Iran* (Paris, 1984), *Food of Life and New Food of Life: Ancient Persian and Modern Iranian Cooking and Ceremonies* (Mage, 1986 and 1992), *Persian Cooking for a Healthy Kitchen* (Mage, 1994), and *Silk Road Cooking: A Vegetarian Journey* (2002).

Kebabe Kubideh - Ground Meat or Ground Chicken Kabab

Najmieh's recipe makes 6 servings and requires flat kebab skewers.

For the meat, you'll need:

- 2 pounds lean, twice ground beef (or 1 pound each beef and lamb)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 large onion, peeled and finely grated

For the chicken, you'll need:

- 2 pounds ground chicken breast
- 1 small onion, peeled and grated
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled and grated
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil

For the baste, you'll need:

- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon lime juice

1. In a warm mixing bowl, combine meat or chicken and the rest of the kebab ingredients. Knead with your hands for about 4 minutes to form a paste that will stick to kebab skewers.

2. Using damp hands, divide the meat paste into 12 equal lumps about the size of oranges. Roll each into a sausage shape 5 inches long and mold it firmly around a flat, sword-like skewer. Cover and keep in a cool place.



3. Start charcoal at least 30 minutes before you want to cook and let it burn until the coals are glowing evenly.

4. For the basting sauce, melt the butter in a small saucepan and add a pinch of salt and lime juice.

5. Arrange skewers on the grill 3 inches above the coals, keep in mind that the ground meat should not touch the grill. After a few seconds turn the meat gently to help it attach to the

skewers and prevent it from falling off.

6. Grill 3 to 5 minutes on each side and brush with basting sauce just before removing from grill.

7. Remove kebabs with a piece of pita or lavash bread. Serve with bread or rice.

An excellent and simple side dish for this recipe is Salade Shirazi, which you can find on the Thompson Hospitality Web site.

Did you know?

- Before the Americas were "discovered" by European explorers, Iran was quite literally at the crossroads of the world. Known in ancient times as the seat of the Persian Empire, the region was the centerpiece of a trade route—otherwise known as the Silk Road—connecting the great civilizations of Greeks (and later Romans) to the west, Indians to the south, and Orientals to the east. Today the Silk Road is being revived after several hundred years of decline. Tourists are paying big dollars to visit Xian, the modern Chinese city that was once the eastern end of the route; Kashgar, the former crossroads of Asia; and the Bezeklik Grottoes in the Flaming Mountains, home of priceless Buddhist carvings and murals.

The world's largest Archipelagic Polyglot

A comprehensive source of information on Indonesia is a virtual encyclopedia written for those who are moving to the islands. Living in Indonesia: A Site for Expatriots offers useful information about Indonesian life: housing, leisure fare, business practices, learning the language, and more than 500 detailed articles. Some information in this story comes from the site and is used with permission.

Learning about Indonesia is also an exercise in expanding your vocabulary. If a dictionary isn't handy, just realize that Indonesia is a really big country (slightly less than three times the size of Texas), with a lot of little islands (17,508, to be exact), and with a lot of different people (more than 300 distinct ethnic groups). Adding to the mix, the islands have been heavily influenced over the centuries by Indian, Chinese, Muslim, and European traders in search of what once was as valuable as gold—spices. The result: a highly diverse cultural heritage that is the hallmark of Indonesian life. To fully appreciate the Indonesian culture, here are more words you'll want to add to your vocabulary.

Wayang

Wayang is a Javanese word meaning “shadow” or “ghost.” Wayang is also a highly developed form of theater that uses puppets as the central characters. The art is particularly popular in the city of Yogyakarta, one of Java's foremost cultural centers and home of the sultan's palace.



Indonesian storytellers have used puppets for centuries to re-enact the ancient epics (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) as well as mythical stories. Puppets fall into two major classifications: wayang kulit—the leather or shadow puppet of Central Java; and wayang golek—the wooden puppets of West Java. Good guys, bad guys, gods, demons, nobles, giants, clowns, princes and princesses, and monkeys ... they all can be found in traditional puppet forms.

Batik

It would be impossible to visit or live in Indonesia and not be exposed to one of the country's most highly developed art forms, batik. Batik is the traditional textile of the islands—fabric hand-waxed with intricate decorations, patterns, or motifs—that is prized worldwide. The fabric is actually created using sophisticated techniques in dye resistance. Artisans, who are usually women, use natural silk or cotton cloth, wax, copper stamps, cantings, and traditional dye colors like blue and brown to create one of more than 3,000 established batik designs. Motifs can include flowers, animals, twining plants, or geometric shapes.

Congklak

Talk about old games: Archeologist have found congklak playing boards in Jordan that date back to 7,000 to 5,000 B.C. Although people around the world play congklak, which is known by a variety of names, Indonesians have adopted the game as their national pastime.

The board is shaped like a slender rectangle and has two rows of small, shallow depressions (receptacles for pieces) down the middle, with one larger indentation (the storehouse) on each end.



This spiny, Indonesian delicacy is the King of Fruit, but there's more. Read about it below.

Pieces can be stones, shells, or seeds—whatever is handy. While the game requires a great deal of strategic prowess in order to win, the simple object is to have the most shells in your store house at the end of the game or be the last person to run out of shells on your side of the board.

Indonesian Cuisine

The islands are a bountiful source for delicious and exotic recipes, with rice and spice being the focal points of the Indonesian diet. For ideas to try at home, pick up *The Cuisines of Asia*, by Jennifer Brennan. It includes recipes and the cultural backgrounds behind the dishes.



Batik is a traditional fabric hand-waxed with intricate patterns or motifs. It is prized worldwide.

The King of Fruit

- That it's pollinated by bats would be the first thing to keep Americans from trying durian, known as the “King of Fruit” among Asians. But this spiny delicacy, which is about the size of a football, has another characteristic that is far more repulsive. “Some describe a durian as being something in the ballpark of custard, almonds, onions, wine, cream cheese or nuts,” writes Eugenie Mason for www.globalchefs.com. Indeed, lovers of the fruit—there are millions throughout Indonesia and Thailand—consider it almost sacred, with every part of it being eaten or used for medicinal purposes. But, as Eugenie goes on to write, “one thing is certain—it reeks.” As delicious as durians may be, they are primarily known for smelling like a dead animal.



Argentine cuisine ... one of the world's best-kept culinary secrets

Argentina's expansive landscape, with tropical jungles, vast grasslands (pampas), alpine lakes, and glacier-topped mountains, provides a wealth of fresh, healthy foods—game, lamb, an incredible assortment of fish and seafood, exotic fruits, and world-renowned, prime quality beef. This epicurean wonderland is the backdrop for *Argentina Cooks*, by Shirley Lomax Brooks, which highlights recipes from the country's nine regions and includes the signature recipes of five-star chefs, the author, and many talented home chefs. The recipes, adapted for the North American kitchen, are written so that even novice cooks will produce spectacular results.

What is chimichurri sauce?

Chimichurri is an absolute requirement for preparing the famous Argentine asado or barbecue. While there are many variations already bottled and ready to go at your local supermarket, you can easily make a more authentic chimichurri in your own kitchen. This recipe is typical of those you will find in the pampas. Some locals use it as a salad dressing as well. And don't limit your chimichurri to asado; serve it with any broiled or roasted meat or poultry.

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons hot paprika
(or 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper)
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 bunch fresh parsley leaves, minced
- 1 teaspoon crushed black peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 2 bay leaves, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon salt

In a large jar, combine the oil, vinegar, paprika, garlic, parsley, peppercorns, oregano, bay leaves, and salt. Cover the bottle and shake well to mix the ingredients. Refrigerate the chimichurri until ready to use. Moisten the cooked meats in each course with a little of the sauce and serve the remaining sauce in a sauce boat at the table. Makes about 2 1/2 cups of sauce.

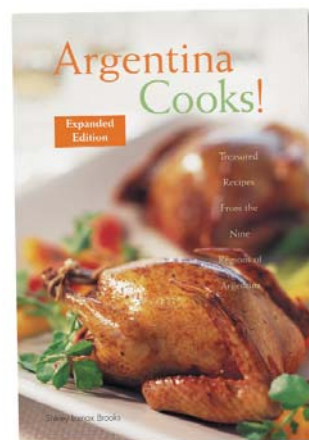


Bifteck à la Parrilla Pan-Grilled Steak

This recipe uses only two ingredients for the marinade, yet the results belie the simplicity. Well-marbled cuts such as beef filet, New York steak, porterhouse, or T-bone are recommended. Serves 4.

- 4 beef steaks, 1 inch thick
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons coarse kosher of sea salt

Marinate the beef steaks in olive oil for at least 30 minutes. Drain off the oil—leaving a light film of oil on the steaks—and salt the steaks on both sides. Heat a well-seasoned cast-iron skillet over a high setting. When hot, add the steaks and char on one side. Turn the heat down to medium and continue cooking for about 3 minutes for medium rare. Turn the steaks with tongs and turn up the heat to high. Be careful not to cut into the steaks while turning so that you don't lose any of the juices. Sear the second side of the steaks, then turn the heat to medium and cook for another 3 minutes for medium rare. Add 2 to 3 minutes per side for well-done steaks.



Variations:

If using an electric oven broiler, char one side of the steaks on high broil on a preheated broiler pan with the rack as close as possible to the broiler element. When browned, turn steaks with tongs and brown the other side. Total cooking time with this method is about 5 minutes per side for medium rare.

Less time is required for gas broilers and outdoor charcoal barbecues. If using the latter, char meat directly on a rack over very hot coals on the hottest part of the barbecue, then move the meat to a cooler area of the rack over the drip pan, leaving the barbecue lid open about 1 inch. Return the meat to the hotter area to char the second side and then move it back over the drip pan.

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