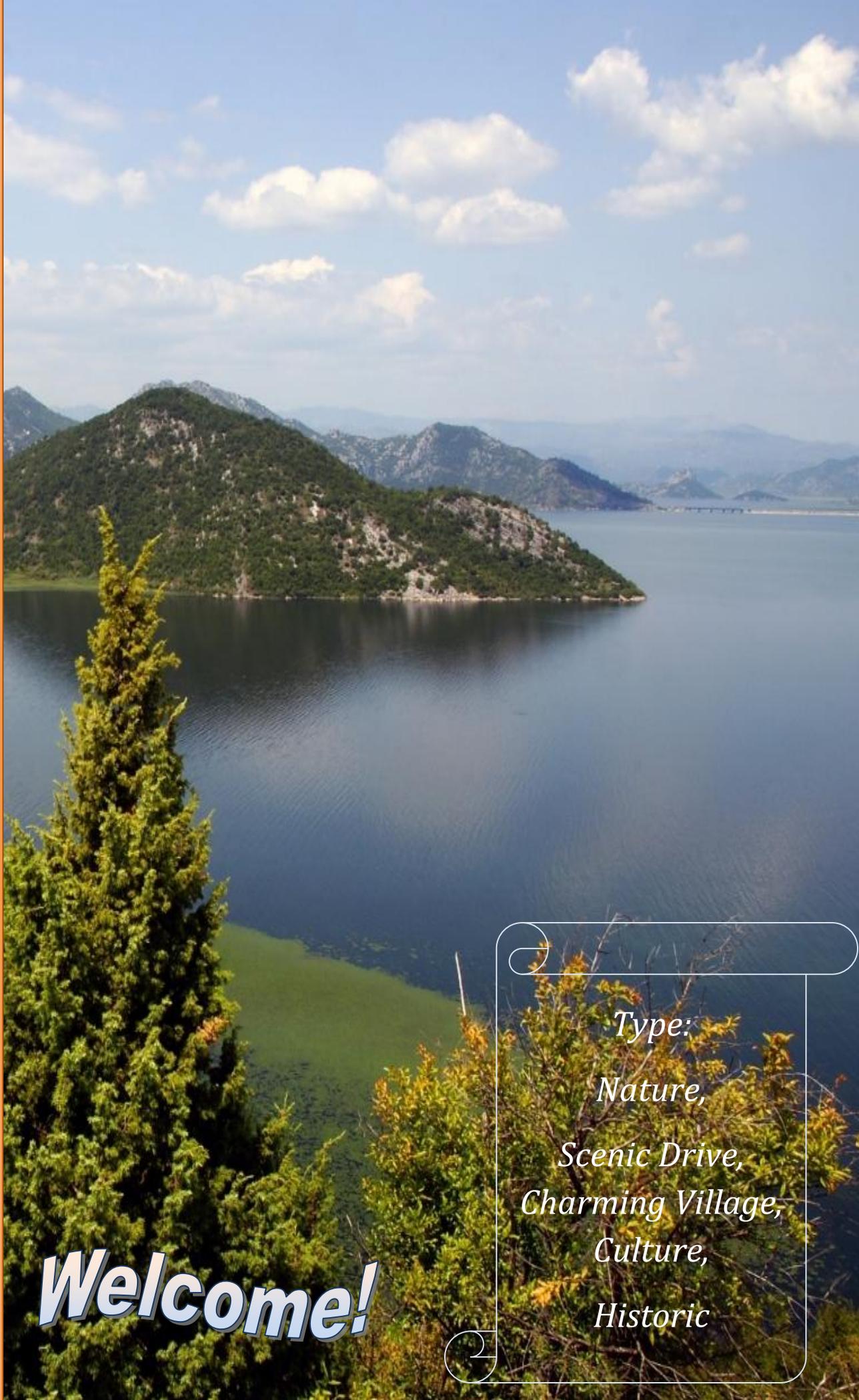


SKADAR LAKE TOUR



Welcome!

Type:
Nature,
Scenic Drive,
Charming Village,
Culture,
Historic

ABOUT TOUR



The Skadar Lake - the biggest lake on the Balkan Peninsula. Famous around the world for its unique beauty. Fulfilled with richness of flora and fauna, as so, under protection of UNESCO, as a National Heritage. While our boat is sailing on the lake, enjoy the site of many islands and bays, with picturesque surroundings, this area offer you.

Type: Nature, Scenic Drive, Charming Village, Culture, Historic

Length: 8 Hours

Walking: Medium

Mobility: No wheelchairs

Guide: Licensed Guide

Language: English, Italian, French, German, Russian (other languages upon request)

On your tour of Lake Skadar, we will drive you by the coastline besides towns like Budva, Milocer, Sveti Stefan and Petrovac. The road takes us along the slopes of Pastrovska Gora toward Skadar Lake, the largest lake on Balkan Peninsula. Our tour takes you on the perfect route to see a panorama view Lake of Skadar. Then comes Virpazar, a picturesque little town situated at the very lake shore. This is a quaint, old town that has a beautiful abandoned castle over the city. You can hike up to this castle and take amazing photos of the lake as well as the mountains surrounding the area or you can take a boat tour out on the lake if you want (Reservations are required in advance).



ABOUT NATIONAL PARK



For sure, one of the most beautiful panoramas of Montenegro you can admire standing on Skadar Lake which is the largest lake at Balkan Peninsula and the largest freshwater lake in the Balkans. Two thirds of Skadar Lake is in Montenegro and the rest third lies in Albania.

The Montenegrin part of the lake and its surrounding area were declared a national park in 1983. It is one of the largest bird reserves in Europe, having 270 bird species, among which are some of the last pelicans in Europe, and thus popular with birders. The lake also contains habitats of seagulls and herons and is abundant in fish, especially in carp, bleak and eel. In 1996, by Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, it was included in the Ramsar list of wetlands of international importance.

The inhabitants are a constant that survived formerly as warriors and today as fisherman, farmers, wine grower...And they are ones who are writing new chapters on this place made of history and legends, between the mountains and the sea, crossroads of civilizations, source of culture and spirituality.

National park "Skadar Lake" is protected by UNESCO. It is a beautiful combination of flora and fauna, architecture, gastronomy and tradition.



ABOUT SKADAR LAKE



Skadar Lake is one of the most complex ecosystems in Montenegro. With its size, which varies during different seasons, and at the highest water – level it reaches more than 500 square kilometers, it is the biggest lake on the Balkan Peninsula. With average depth of about 5 meters, it was in its geological past an area where nature demonstrated its power tectonic processes make it a crypto depression. This is a complicated word to describe a natural phenomenon, which means that its surface is above and its bottom is under the sea level. Under the lake's bottom are so called Lake's eyes, underwater rivers (Karuc, Radus...) which bring freshwater from the depth of 60 meters. Those are waters which plunge into the stones and under the big pressure come from the bottom of the lake and become underwater whirlpools.

There is a very rich marsh vegetation zone on the north side of the lake of more than 20.000 hectares. It is a paradise for insects, birds, reptiles and different sorts of fish.

Skadar Lake is situated in the karstic terrain of the southeast Dinaric Alps in Albania, surrounded by the stunning Montenegrin mountains of Lovcen, Sutorman, Rumija and Tarabos on the southern side. Rumija Mountain rises above the town of Bar, and makes a natural Dinaric barrier, separating Adriatic Sea from the Skadar Lake basin.



Nature



One of the elements that make Skadar Lake so unique and well known in the world is its flora and fauna, which is its wealth of the plant and animal world...

The abundant vegetation has always fascinated biologists from this region as well as worldwide. But besides biologist, this area is interesting for regular people simple because while traveling the Skadar Lake it fascinates with its beauty, and with its diversity hooks the traveler into a desire to dedicate more time for its exploration...

In order to preserve this sensitive ecosystem and variety of living species on its coasts, Skadar Lake –a real gem, was proclaimed a national park in 1983 and was added, in 1996, to the World's List of Wetlands of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention. The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Ramsar Convention is the only global environmental treaty that deals with a particular ecosystem. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and the Convention's member countries cover all geographic regions of the planet.



FLORA



The flora of the Skadar Lake contains many Mediterranean and continental species.

The flora includes more than 25 rare and endangered species among which is the Skadar dub (*Quercus robur* subsp. *scutariensis*) and water chestnut (*Trapa natans* subsp. *scutariensis*). Large areas of the lake are covered in marshes that are covered in white water lilies (*Nymphaea alba* - bijeli lokvanj) and yellow (*Nuphar luteum* - water lilies) and the waters along the shore are covered by bamboo (*Phragmites communis*). This bamboo is exactly what makes the lake very desirable for the lakes large number of bird species. Especially attractive are the many types of endangered plants growing in the Skadar Lake territory such as: *Fritilaria gracilis*, *Crocus dalmaticus*, *Edraianthus tenuifolius*, *Ramondia serbica*, and many orchids (*Ophrys*). According to the latest research and studies done of the lake it is a fact that the Skadar Lake has 930 types of alga in all their forms. From this number 246 are new types of alga, and 135 are very rare in the entire world. Territory of the lake contains, besides wetlands and bamboo, a large number of forests for which variety of elements, climate, hydrographic, geologic and many other specifics, as well as geographic location, are responsible for. We will name a number of these forests: *Carpinetum orientalis punicosum* – oak forest, *Quercetum confertae cerris* – bitter oak forest, *Salicetum albo - fragilis* – forest of white willows, *Quercus robur* ssp. *Scutariensis*, *Fraxinus oxycarpa*, *Periploca graeca* and many more.

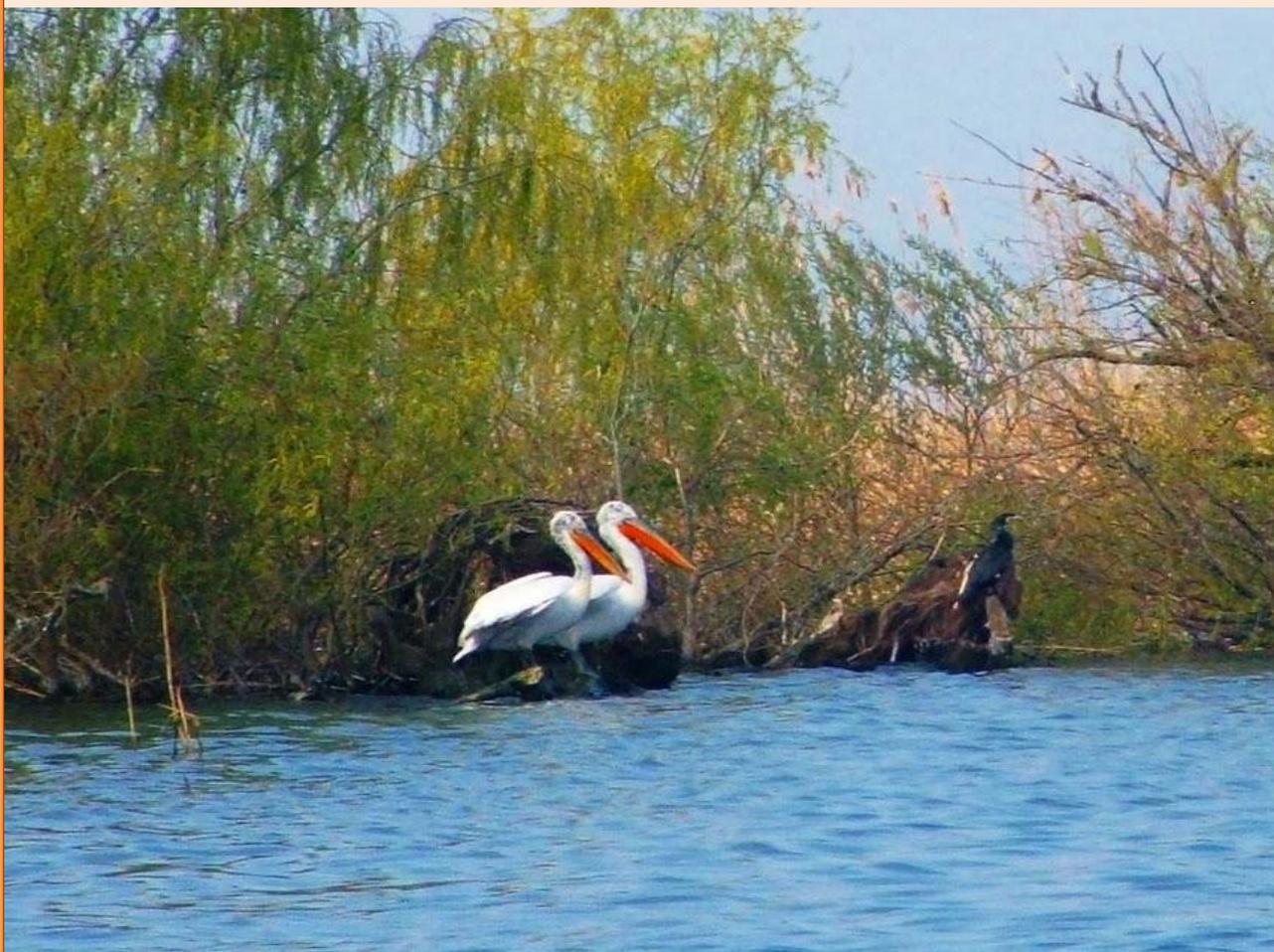




Skadar Lake is an ecological kingdom, a quiet oasis and a place for personal contact with nature intact. The lake is the largest lake reserve in Europe with more than 50 types of fish can be found predominantly types of carp and bleak. In the National park are of the Skadar Lake 39 types of fish are available with the most predominant being: *Alburnus alburnus alborella* – bleak, *Cyprinus caprio* – carp, *Anguilla anguilla* – gurnard, *Mugil cephalus* – gray muffed, *Lisa ramada*, and many more.

The animals the inhabit the lake on a temporary basis are: *Tropidontus natix* – snake, *Emysorbicularis* – swamp turtle, *Ophis aurus apodus* – lizard slowworm and many more.

Skadar Lake is a habitat for 280 species of birds some of which are on the list of endangered species. 73 species are the nesting migrant types, 18 conventional migrants, 45 are winter guests and 12 species spend the summer for nesting purposes. A good example of the endangered species is the pelican (Dalmatian pelican or *Pelecanus crispus*) and the Black Ibis (Pygmy cormorant *Phalacrocorax pygmeus*). During the spring time the migration of birds on this lake is considerable. The possibilities for bird watchers, both professional and armatures are exceptional.



Bird watching



The possibilities for bird watchers, both professional and amateurs are exceptional. The lake contains a number of towers and platforms built specifically for bird watching and they have been placed in the areas of the 5 largest ornithological reserves: Manastirska tapija, Grmozur, Omerova gorica, Crni zar and Pancevo oko. Grmozur, besides being called the Alcatraz of Montenegro which was built by King Nikola to serve as a dungeon for political opponents is also known as the island of birds. Other than a habitat for local birds, the Skadar Lake is also a temporary resting place for migrating birds from the middle and north of Europe toward Africa. The lake's location, directly in the zone where great zoo-geographical regions (arctic, Mediterranean and northern Africa) merge, are perfect for migration, with its average water temperature in the summer at 22 C° and in the winter never below 11 degrees. A typical example of the lake's diversity is that one can find examples of African birds as well as birds domestic to the regions of western Siberia in the Skadar region. Another species that makes the lake unique is the nesting area of the Silver swan at Swan island (Galebovo ostrvo), largest of its kind in Montenegro. Some of the other unique species are: *Anas platyrhynchos* – wild duck, *Gavia immer* – grebe, *Hieraaetus fasciatus* – mountain eagle, *Hieraaetus pennatus* – dwarf eagle and many more.



Monasteries



Skadar Lake hides 15 Medieval Orthodox Monasteries that are fascinating spiritual nests through history testifying on the rich and turbulent history of the Medieval Zeta. The Balsic dynasty ruled Zeta from 1360 to 1421 from Skadar and subsequently from Ulcinj in Lower Zeta. The political position of Djurdj II Stratimirovic and his son and heir Balsa III was marked by the effort to preserve the integrity of their realm against the Venetians, the Ottomans and the Hungarians, who all struggled for control over the coastal areas whose strategic centre was Skadar Lake. The oldest monastic complex and the prototype of the Balsic tree-foil churches is the monastery church of the Dormition of the Virgin in Starceva Gorica, one of the three largest islands. Some of the Medieval Monasteries located on Skadar Lake are very interesting in terms of historical records and their almost inaccessible locations - Monasteries of Kom, Beska with two churches dedicated to Saint George and the Holy Virgin. On Skadar Lake there are also numerous other Monasteries and churches as the Bogorodica Preciska Krajinska - the endowment of Duke Vladimir, considered as the oldest Monastery in Montenegro, Starceva Gorica, Moracnik, Vranjina, dedicated to Saint Nicholas, on the confluence of Moraca River with the Skadar Lake, Orahovo Monastery - 2 km away from Virpazar... Montenegrins fought valiantly with Turks in the region of Zeta and Montenegro for which they have used numerous fortifications in Skadar Lake dating from the 14th till the 19th century - Tophala, Besac, Lesendro, Grmozur, Virska Kuca...



TOWNS



On the Skadar Lake shore there are two small towns - old urban centers featuring characteristic picturesque architecture - Virpazar and Rijeka Crnojevica. Virpazar with a population of 337 (2003) is a fishing village and the trade center of the Crminca area. It was first mentioned in 1242 by the name of Vir. During the rule of Peter I, Vir developed more and more into a trade center. Vir was erected on the delta of the Crmnica and Orahovistice rivers. Since 1888, Vir has a road connecting it with Bar. And from 1908 came the railroad with a 6 km long tunnel from here to the coast. A little later a road was built from Virpazar to the town of Rijeka Crnojevica. The road tunnel "Sozina" (4,189 m) from Virpazar to the coast was opened on July 13, 2005, Montenegro's national day. The small town of Rijeka Crnojevica is one of the most authentic urban settlements in Montenegro. The picturesque bridge is of a rare beauty and a witness of the rich history of the town. Both places are today recognizable by their restaurants serving traditional specialties, especially famous Skadar Lake carp. The southern hinterland of the Skadar Lake - Crmnica is known for the best wine in Montenegro. There are also several villages around the Skadar Lake shore with a modest variety of places to stay. In the rainy season Skadar Lake is full and blue and in the summer it appears silver, shimmering in the sun.



Visitors center Vranjina



In this center, all four Montenegrin national parks are presented as individual areas. Fauna and flora exhibits are authentic and illustrate the area and natural contents of the parks. Ethno room and exhibits gives you a picture of cultural tradition and they represent a kind of witness of the time, space and people from this area.

In the impressive mosaic of the beauties of Montenegro, the significant place belongs to the national parks as areas with exceptional natural, ambiental and cultural-historical values. Although the surface of Montenegro is relatively small, because of its ecological, bio-geographical position, as well as the turbulent history, it is rich with landscapes, biological diversity and cultural-historical values.

Total of 8% of the territory of Montenegro belongs to the national parks, where the most beautiful and the most valuable areas are protected by the Law on Environmental Protection. Of the five national parks in Montenegro (Durmitor, Biogradska Gora, Lovcen, Skadar Lake and Prokletije), three are with mountain character - Durmitor, Lovcen and Prokletije, Biogradska Gora has characteristics of virgin forest, while the Skadar Lake is a national park in which are dominant water and wetland ecosystems





PRICES

Prices from 45,00 € per person

Price of the excursions includes:

- 1) Transport
 - Up to 2 persons – Car Transport
 - From 3 to 7 persons - Minivan Transport
 - From 8 to 18 persons – Mini bus Transport
 - From 18-49 persons - Bus Transport
- 2) Entrance fee for NP "Skadar Lake" and Visitors Centre of National Parks of Montenegro
- 3) Boat ride on Lake Skadar
- 4) Lunch
- 5) Visit the cellar - a wine shop where you can buy the most famous Montenegrin wines
- 6) Tourist Guide Services





VISIT US AGAIN!



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