

THE EPOCH TIMES

MIND &

BODY

LIUDMILA ANUFRIEVA/SHUTTERSTOCK; IGORSMB/SHUTTERSTOCK (INSET PHOTO)

FOOD AS MEDICINE

Zucchini

The Superfood Growing in Your Garden

This tasty fruit is easily grown in your garden or containers and offers several health benefits

Zucchini is often undervalued despite its numerous health benefits.

JOSEPH MERCOLA

The zucchini is an underestimated nutritional treasure.

The peak harvesting season for this delicious member of the gourd family in the Northern Hemisphere is from May to August. When harvested correctly, zucchini (*Cucurbita pepo*) is dark green and has firm fruit. Although most people think of it as a summer vegetable, it is, indeed, a fruit.

UWE KREJCI/GETTY IMAGES



Zucchini comes in different varieties, all of them are excellent source of fiber and nutrition.

The plant is native to Central America and Mexico. According to the Department of Agriculture (USDA), zucchini may have been one of “The Three Sisters,” which were crops planted within a shared space. This indigenous agricultural practice used three plants—corn, beans, and squash—to nourish and protect each other as they grew.

Zucchini plants can grow in nearly every climate during the warm summer months. It takes only one or two plants to produce enough for one family. In addition to being a good producer throughout the growing season, zucchini is also high in nutrition and has several health benefits. Zucchini are best harvested when they're 1.5 inches round and no longer than 8 inches.

Zucchini can taste bitter when they become overripe or stressed. That's because, like other vegetables in the family, zucchini contains toxins the plant uses to defend against predators. Zucchini produces cucurbitacins, which have a bitter taste. Usually, cultivated zucchini has a low level of the toxin, but the level rises when they are overripe or stressed by such things as wide temperature swings, uneven watering, low soil fertility, or low soil pH.

Continued on **Page 4**



The three sisters planting technique

is a traditional Native American method of planting squashes, beans, and corn together to enrich the soil, deter weeds, and support each other.

The Pandemic's Bacterial Echo

Our response to COVID-19 has brought a life-threatening increase in antibiotic-resistant infections in hospitals

A pill for every ill doesn't work well when it makes the bugs stronger.

XIAOXU SEAN LIN & HEALTH 1+1

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of life-threatening infections from a well-known superbug has spiked in hospitals.

MRSA, which stands for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, is one of the most well-known superbugs, or bacteria that are resistant to most antibiotics.

Since 2010, laboratory-identified

cases of MRSA infection were significantly decreasing. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the United States, hospitals have experienced an increase in the number of MRSA infections. The hospital overload has resulted in higher health care-associated infections.

During the fourth quarter of 2020, the national MRSA bacteremia standardized infection ratio was 34 percent higher than that of 2019. Several states reported even greater increases in 2020, such as Arizona with an 80 percent increase and New Jersey with a 99 percent increase.

Some studies have suggested the increase is due, in part, to the rising use of antibiotics to deal with the fear of secondary infections in COVID patients. Others have linked the rise to increasing use of antimicrobial agents, including sanitizers. Then, there are the health care conditions created by the pandemic itself.

MRSA is increasingly common in nursing homes. From September to October 2021, 48.7 percent of residents in nursing homes were found to harbor MRSA at any body site.

Continued on **Page 3**



VASILKAMALOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

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INTENTIONAL LIVING

6 Decluttering Principles

A sneak peek at some of the key highlights of the ‘Uncluttered’ course

When evaluating possessions, be decisive as you categorize each object—and move on.

JOSHUA BECKER

How much time and effort have you put into trying to declutter your home to find clarity and enjoy more rest in your life?

Too much? If so, I have a solution. I've been running the “Uncluttered” course consistently for six years—more than 75,000 people from all over the world have used the 12-week course to finally break through and declutter their homes. It's one of my favorite things that I'm involved in.

It's one thing to read about owning less and desiring it to be true, but it can be something very different for people to apply in their lives.

To give you a sneak peek at why the Uncluttered approach has been so effective, here are six decluttering principles that the course is built on.

1 Identify the Purpose of a Room and Get Rid of Anything That Doesn't Serve That Purpose

This is such an eye-opening principle. Think about it. Your bathroom doesn't need a Peloton. Your kitchen doesn't need a video game station. Your bedroom doesn't need piles of boxes in the corner. Find a purpose for every space, or everything will remain confused and out of balance.

2 Distinguish Between Decluttering and Organizing

Simply put, these things aren't the same. It's like the difference between rearranging the furniture and renovating a

Identify the purpose of a room and get rid of anything that doesn't serve that purpose.



Decluttering your home can bring you a greater sense of peace and help you better treasure the things you already own.

space. Let's focus on decluttering (removing unneeded things from your home), and you'll find that organizing becomes a thousand times easier.

3 Start With the Easier Spaces and Move On to Harder Ones

Overwhelm is a true mind-killer. Some people say “eat the frog” and tackle the most excruciating task first. While this may work for some, I find it's better to get some quick wins, create momentum, and work your way up to the bigger tasks.

This approach also helps with the “I don't even know where to start” thinking that keeps too many of us stuck. You won't declutter your entire home in one week, but maybe you can declutter the easiest room. And before you know it, you'll declutter your entire home.

4 Choose 1 of 3 Options for Every Object: Remove It, Relocate It, or Leave It

Success and speed go hand-in-hand. When it comes to evaluating possessions, it's time to be decisive and categorize each object and move on. Rinse and repeat, moving as many items “out the door” as possible.

Focus on the Gains, not the Subtractions

Minimizing isn't just about getting rid of clutter. It's about adding freedom and control back into your life. Celebrate your wins in the form of new freedom, not in the number of items you eliminate—although it can be pretty fun to keep count.

6 Count the ‘Clutter Cost’
Think about your money, your energy, and the days and hours of your life spent addressing clutter. All that time dealing with clutter takes away from what matters most. From this standpoint, who among us can truly “afford” to live a cluttered existence?

Joshua Becker is an author, public speaker, and the founder and editor of Becoming Minimalist, where he inspires others to live more by owning less. Visit BecomingMinimalist.com

How to Unclutter Your Home

Identify the purpose of a room and get rid of anything that doesn't serve that purpose

Distinguish between decluttering and organizing

Start with the easier spaces and move on to harder ones

Choose one of three options for every object: remove it, relocate it, or leave it

Focus on the gains, not the subtractions

Count the “clutter cost”

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COVID Vaccines: High Risk, Little Benefit for Young Adults

COVID-19 vaccine boosters ‘unethical’ and up to 98 times worse than the disease, conclude top scientists in new study

JENNIFER MARGULIS & JOE WANG

A team of nine experts from Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and other top universities has published paradigm-shifting research about the efficacy and safety of the COVID-19 vaccines and why mandating vaccines for college students is unethical.

This 50-page study, which was published on the Social Science Research Network at the end of August, analyzed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and industry-sponsored data on vaccine adverse events, and concluded that mandates for COVID-19 boosters for young people may cause 18 to 98 actual serious adverse events for each COVID-19 infection-related hospitalization theoretically prevented.

The paper was co-authored by Dr. Stefan Baral, an epidemiology professor at Johns Hopkins University; Dr. Martin Adel Makary, a surgeon and professor at Johns Hopkins, known for his books exposing medical malfeasance, including “Unaccountable: What Hospitals Won't Tell You and How Transparency Can Revolutionize Health Care”; and Dr. Vinay Prasad, a hematologist-oncologist who is a professor in the University of California–San Francisco Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, as well as the author of more than 350 academic and peer-reviewed articles.

But among this team of high-profile international experts who authored the paper, perhaps the most notable is Dr. Salmaan Keshavjee, director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Global Health Delivery and professor of global health and social medicine at Harvard Medical School. Keshavjee has also worked extensively with Partners in Health, a Boston-based nonprofit co-founded by the late Dr. Paul Farmer, on treating drug-resistant tuberculosis, according to his online biography.

Continued on Page 12



Young people have been pressured to get a treatment that offers more risk than reward.

Why We Should Be Careful About Using Statins

These drugs interfere with several essential cellular activities

MINGJIA JACKY GUAN

The three greatest distinctions between plants and animals are that animals have a nervous system, mobility, and cholesterol.

In recent years, the pharmaceutical industry has painted cholesterol as the root of all evil, saying that if your cholesterol is anywhere higher than a certain level, then you're in great danger and must take X number of precautions and Y number of drugs.

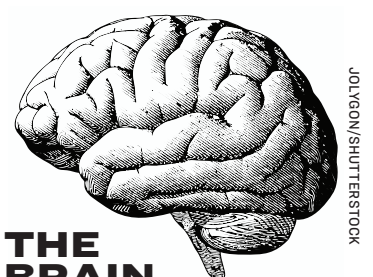
One class of drugs in particular that has risen to prominence over the past few decades is statins. Statins are a type of enzyme inhibitor, which means that they hinder biological processes in the body. Statins block the HMG coenzyme A re-

Memory loss is an acknowledged side effect of statin therapy.

ductase from functioning normally, which is a critical step in a long chain of reactions that leads to the production of many essential fats and molecules inside the body, including cholesterol. Blocking the HMG coenzyme A is how statins reduce cholesterol levels.

The Necessary Nature of Cholesterol
So what does cholesterol do? Cholesterol is a vital lipid found inside all animals and humans. It facilitates a well-functioning nervous system as well as efficient mobility. Cholesterol is found on the surface of cell walls in concentrated areas called “lipid rafts” and also scattered all over the surface.

Continued on Page 12



THE BRAIN makes up just

2%

of the body's weight, but contains about a quarter of the cholesterol in the body.

THE EPOCH TIMES
TRUTH and TRADITION

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Better Brain Health for Students and Seniors

Food provides the essential compounds for a healthy brain that functions at its best

DEBORAH MITCHELL

Who can benefit from better brain health? If you said “everyone,” you’re right. However, we will focus on two groups of individuals with special reasons for focusing on brain health: students and seniors.

First, however, let’s define brain health. The World Health Organization defines brain health as “the state of brain functioning across cognitive, sensory, social-emotional, behavioral, and motor domains, allowing a person to realize their full potential over the life course, irrespective of the presence or

absence of disorders.”

Why Students and Seniors? Students are our present and future, and they need all the assistance they can get to go to school, stay in school, and thrive academically. They need to be motivated, supported, and nourished.

Seniors have lived for decades, accumulating experience and wisdom. At the same time, the passing years can take their toll on the brain. The brain health of older adults can be affected by age-related changes in the brain, but also injuries (e.g., stroke, trauma), diseases (e.g., hypertension, Alzheimer’s disease), and mood disorders. All these

factors affect the quality of seniors’ lives.

Food and Brain Health

One thing that can have a significant effect on brain health in both groups of individuals is food choices. Researchers have documented evidence that some foods are especially beneficial for brain health because of the quantity and quality of nutrients and other substances that can support brain function.

The following 11 foods support and promote brain health and should be included in the daily diet of students and seniors whenever possible. At the end of the list, we provide a few helpful hints on how to include these foods much easier.



Almonds

Need a memory boost? Are you experiencing age-related brain dysfunction? Then eat more almonds. Experts found that healthy rats fed almonds experienced increased levels of acetylcholine (brain chemical with a role in memory and message transmission) and enhanced memory, while rats with amnesia also showed better memory after consuming the tree nuts.



Avocado

This versatile fruit is a great source of healthy monounsaturated fats, which have been shown to lower blood pressure. Since hypertension has been linked to a risk of poor brain health, it’s high time to include more avocados in your diet.



Beets

We know that beets are often low on kids’ menu choices, but they have been shown to promote better blood flow to the brain, thanks to the presence of nitrates. That’s a plus for students and seniors alike. These ruby red vegetables are also associated with boosting function in the area of the brain involved with working memory and decision-making.



Blueberries

These small berries are packed with antioxidants, plant compounds that deliver antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits, both of which are highly helpful in warding off neurodegenerative disease and aging of the brain. Blueberries’ antioxidants may improve brain cell communication, boosting brain power. One study of children and seniors who consumed blueberries also demonstrated better memory and brain processes.



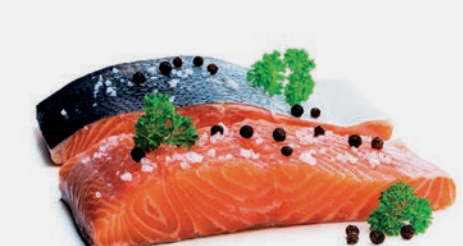
Green Tea

When you enjoy a cup of green tea (including matcha tea), you’re gifted with antioxidants, the amino acid L-theanine, and polyphenols. Antioxidants and polyphenols may help to prevent mental decline, while L-theanine can help you to relax—and who can’t use that advantage when studying for a test or needing to combat stress? Overall, experts report that green tea is a tasty beverage that can improve brain performance, memory, and the ability to focus and stay alert.



Coffee

If you want a cup of joe to help increase alertness, boost your mood, and improve concentration, that’s fine, if you’re old enough. Experts recommend for people to be older than 12 to consume this beverage. Children are extra-sensitive to caffeine, so it’s best for them to turn to other brain-healthy drinks. For seniors, however, the aforementioned benefits can be on the table, unless coffee and caffeine don’t agree with their digestive system or would disturb their sleep. Research suggests that drinking three or four cups of coffee daily can reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases.



Salmon

Would you like more gray matter? That’s the stuff in your brain that’s packed with nerve cells involved with memory and decision-making. Salmon and other oily fish (herring, tuna, mackerel) contain omega-3 fatty acids, healthy fats that the brain needs to make nerve and brain cells for good memory and the ability to learn. Not getting sufficient amounts of omega-3 may result in depression and learning problems, a situation that’s not good for students or seniors.



Dark Chocolate

Dark chocolate is defined as containing at least 70 percent cocoa powder. This powder is rich in antioxidants and flavonoids. Researchers have found that the flavonoids in dark chocolate benefit memory and learning. In one large study, individuals who consumed dark chocolate more often did better on memory and other mental tests than those who ate less of it.



Turmeric

This popular spice contains curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant powers and can enter the brain and impact brain cell function. Curcumin has the ability to promote the growth of new brain cells and improve mood, including anxiety and depression. Looking for a better memory? Curcumin may help.



Eggs

We often think of eggs as a great source of protein, but they’re also good for brain health. That’s because they provide choline, a micronutrient necessary to make a neurotransmitter involving memory and mood. One egg yolk contains more than 25 percent of a woman’s daily need for choline. Eggs also provide several B vitamins that play a significant role in brain health, including vitamins B6 and B12, and folate.



Walnuts

Several different nuts are good for brain health, but walnuts have an edge because they contain omega-3 fatty acids, which are healthy fats for the brain. These nuts are also a source of vitamin E, an antioxidant that can protect against the deterioration of cognitive abilities.

Brain-boosting foods can be combined to provide extra impact.



foods every day.

Deborah Mitchell is a freelance health writer who is passionate about animals and the environment. She has authored, co-authored, and written more than 50 books and thousands of articles on a wide range of topics. This article was originally published on NaturallySavvy.com

Brain Health Food Tips

Why boost your brain health with one food, when two or more together will do? All the brain health foods in this list can be combined easily, either in a salad (greens with almonds, walnuts, hard-boiled egg, and avocado), smoothies (endless possibilities that include blueberries, walnuts, green tea, almonds, and dark chocolate), or main dishes (salmon with turmeric and lemon, egg omelet with avocado, beets with almonds and turmeric).

Start the school day with avocado toast and slivered almonds, or a blueberry, almond milk, and walnut smoothie. Great snacks for students and seniors alike include hard-boiled eggs, blueberries, walnuts, or dark chocolate-covered almonds. Enjoy!

Bottom Line

Whether you’re a young student or a senior student of life, you need to promote and support your brain health. You can do so by choosing healthy

It turns out that motivation is a fickle thing. Much like deciding that you will become happy or humble, motivation doesn’t lend itself to direct pursuit—certainly not from a standstill. Unfortunately, I spent far too much time (read: I procrastinated for far too long) on trying to learn about motivation and new methods of becoming a highly productive individual.

My thoughts on the subject, after so many years of searching for answers, are now rather simple. High-level, abstract motivation for a goal doesn’t easily translate into actually feeling motivated in the moment to get started. One of the best things I did was to carve out a specific time each day to work on my most important work and treat that time as a sacred commitment. It didn’t matter how I felt that day; I was going to sit down and do the work.

Over time, your willpower muscle will grow stronger, but perhaps more importantly, the progress you make in this focused effort will provide a propelling sense of motivation to keep going.

Just Go
What getting unstuck boils



INTENTIONAL LIVING

Feeling Stuck?

How to get past the 3 beliefs that may be holding you back

MIKE DONGHIA

Have you been feeling stuck, unable to move forward in important areas of your life? That’s rough. I’ve been there.

In the decade after college, there were long seasons when I felt the gap between who I was and who I wanted to be wasn’t shrinking nearly as fast as I wanted.

The worst part was that I knew my own



Embracing challenges and difficulties, rather than shying away from them, can help you develop confidence and a greater sense of purpose.

shortcomings were largely to blame, but I didn’t know how to change.

I wish I’d had a mentor during those years—someone who really knew me and my struggles and could’ve coached and encouraged me. I think I wouldn’t have felt stuck for so long.

But gratefully, over time, I’ve been able to figure out many of the obstacles that were holding me back. It turns out that many of them were unhelpful mindsets that I had picked up along the way—mostly through overly idealistic books and websites I had read and internalized.

It’s true that you’ll need to learn these lessons for yourself. Don’t expect that simply reading this article will do the work for you. In my own life, the value of reading about other people’s journeys has been two-fold.

It helps me to imagine new possibilities. Sometimes you get stuck because you have no vision for how things could be different. Perhaps the greatest value of art, of any kind, is to broaden the horizons of someone’s imagination.

It helps me to put words to my experiences.

I have a friend who regularly visits a therapist, and he claims that the real value for him is in hearing someone else describe his experiences back to him. Somehow, this allows him to see these experiences in a new light and makes them feel more manageable. Reading often does that for me.

I hope my words can be that for you. What follows are a few tips for avoiding the kind of unhelpful beliefs that might cause you to get stuck.

1. Don’t Overvalue an Easy, Pleasurable Life

I think it’s obvious to most of us that attempting a life of pure hedonism would be foolish. However, on the margin, everyone feels that their particular life would be better off with a little more pleasure and convenience. I know I did. I now see this belief as one that held me back and one that’s likely wrong for most people.

It’s a mindset that makes your world smaller. Instead of pursuing hard and challenging goals that expand future possibilities and add a sense of purpose to each day, you’re left optimizing your existing life to avoid inconveniences and various activities you don’t enjoy. This, ironically, has the effect of making you increasingly fragile toward all sorts of discomfort.

If there were only one piece of advice I could give you today, it would be this: Find the hard work you nonetheless enjoy—and go do it.

2. Don’t Wait for the Perfect Plan

When it comes to action, everyone loves the

idea of it. We think that in the moment of action, we will feel confident, certain, and powerful. Instead, I find that when I take action, it’s almost always accompanied by self-doubt. Even as I write this article, one of hundreds I’ve written, a significant part of me wants to stop and go do something more comfortable.

You could try to combat this feeling by doing as much planning as possible. But in almost all cases, this would be the wrong choice. I’ve consistently underestimated how much faster I learn by throwing myself straight into a problem. And anyway, most of the time, I already know what needs to be done; I’m simply avoiding the discomfort of starting. Of course, it doesn’t feel like avoidance when I’m doing it; planning feels like the real thing, but it’s usually not.

The way to combat this tendency isn’t a mystery—you need to start before you feel ready. If there really is more planning that needs doing, it will reveal itself soon enough. But chances are, what you really need is to push past the inertia of the status quo and make progress.

3. Don’t Wait for Motivation

One mistake that had a huge opportunity cost for me was believing that I needed to solve the puzzle of motivation before I could really commit to a course of action.

Why did I feel this way? The people I admired most had incredible levels of energy and focus, and I figured that cracking this nut would be the highest value problem I could solve for myself.

ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCK

WISE HABITS

Creating a More Spacious Life

Find more ease and freedom by recognizing what you can control

Go for a walk in nature, take a deep breath, and enjoy the feeling of spaciousness around you.

LEO BABAUTA

I've worked with a number of people who want more spaciousness in their lives—more time for rest, play, reading, reflecting, self-care, and hanging out with friends and other loved ones.

The challenge isn't that it's hard to create more time (although, for some people, it's actually very hard). The challenge is that no matter how much time we have, we aren't likely to experience it as spacious, restful, joyful, or playful.

We can create all the time in the world, but the truth is that we'll probably have a very similar experience in that spacious time that we have already. If you take a sabbatical, you'll probably experience some openness for a little bit, but then restlessness and fears will start to take over, and you'll create a lot of things for yourself to do and a feeling that you need to be productive (for example).

Whatever you experience already is likely to be what you'll experience no matter how you arrange your life.

The real freedom you crave isn't in rearranging your life (although that can be helpful), it's in changing how you experience life.

Let's take a look at how you can do that.

A Spacious Experience of Life

No matter what we're doing, we can experience it as rushed and stressful, or we can experience it as spacious and peaceful. We can have any kind of experience of the activity.

For example, if you're out for a walk, you can be on your phone checking messages and feeling the anxiousness of all the things you still need to do. Or you can experience the spaciousness of the walk, feeling expansive wonder about all the nature around you and feeling the freedom of being outdoors and being alive.

In any moment, we can experience peace. Whether you're responding to messages and emails, writing, washing a dish, talking to someone, sitting in on a meeting, or doing something courageous and inspired.

The thing to recognize is that it's a choice. You can choose to feel anxious and rushed in any moment or to feel at ease. You get to choose your experience of any moment.

As you practice moment to moment, you can expand how spacious your life feels as a whole. You go from feeling constantly rushed and behind to feeling life as abundant, free, and calm.

The real freedom you crave isn't in rearranging your life, it's in changing how you experience life.

How to Practice

So how do you practice this miraculous way to create spaciousness in your life? It's all yours for the low price of \$500—kidding! Try to practice right now, as you read this:

1. Take a moment to sit still and allow your awareness to expand outward, so you feel more expansive.
2. Allow your breath to be deeper and wider, so you feel a spacious nourishing breath.
3. Allow yourself to feel as wide as the sky, so all of life feels expansive.
4. Allow yourself to slow down for a moment, so life feels more spread out.

This is the kind of practice you can do in any moment, with any activity. You don't have to do all four of these steps, but you can try whatever helps you feel peace and freedom in each moment.

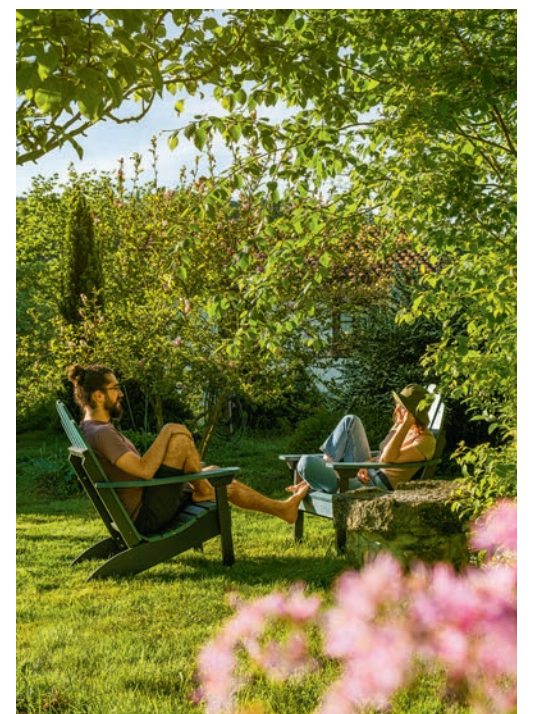
Try moving a little slower, so you aren't so rushed.

Try savoring each moment.

Try imagining that you can do anything within a wide open fresh expanse of the universe.

What would it be like if your life could be experienced with greater spaciousness?

Leo Babauta is the author of six books and the writer of *Zen Habits*, a blog with over 2 million subscribers. Visit ZenHabits.net



Allow yourself to slow down for a moment, so that life feels more spread out.



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