

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - Expedition (ASG 2017)



TRIPDURATION
16
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Relaxed

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Premium

Trip Code: ASG

Trip Highlights - Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - Expedition

- ✓ Combine the contrasting landscapes of Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland
- ✓ Explore the immense grandeur and wilderness of remote eastern Greenland
- ✓ Discover the dramatic beauty of Scoresbysund Fjord, the largest fjord system in the world
- ✓ Search for the mighty polar bear - the King of the Arctic
- ✓ Cruise in the company of soaring fulmars, kittiwakes and guillemots on your way to the Land of Fire and Ice, Iceland

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 15 nights Premium Boat
Included Meals: 15 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 15 dinners
Start Point: Join trip: Longyearbyen
End Point: Trip ends: Reykjavik
Transport: Zodiac, Expedition
Countries: Arctic Region, Greenland, Denmark

Spitsbergen, Greenland and Iceland - Expedition

Sail from Spitsbergen to Greenland, following the ice's edge always on the lookout for wildlife. Navigating south, explore this remote landscape not only by ship but also on foot and by Zodiac inflatable boat. This journey highlights the contrast and change in the Arctic as you move south, finally ending in the Land of Ice and Fire - Iceland. Inuit villages, unique wildlife and remote destinations are some of the highlights on this truly unforgettable voyage through the Arctic.

Spitsbergen & the Greenland Sea

Before heading west, we discover the Arctic nature and scenic wilderness of Spitsbergen, always on the search for walrus and the mighty polar bear. Possible areas to explore include Krossfjorden or Hornsund. We cross the Greenland Sea keeping a vigilant watch for wildlife, late summer icebergs and pack ice from the decks and observation lounge. This journey highlights the contrast and change in the Arctic.

Wild Greenland

The ship travels as far north as the ice allows before hugging the coastline towards Iceland. Every day is a new adventure as we explore this remote and spectacular national park with landings, trekking and Zodiac cruises. Inuit villages, unique wildlife and remote destinations are some of the highlights on this truly unforgettable voyage through the Arctic. It is a rugged world with tundra, fjords, icebergs, waterfalls and glaciers, but the tenacity of mankind is seen in remnants of explorers' huts, Greenlandic (Inuit) settlements and the Danish Sled Dog Patrol.

Slowly moving south, explore along the eastern coast of Greenland. In this remote and untouched landscape we search for wildlife such as walruses, seals, narwhals, polar bears, musk oxen, wolves, Arctic foxes, ermine, Arctic hares, lemmings, and a variety of birds. We will board our Zodiac boats to get a closer look at some of the birdlife and to walk in the tundra. Our southward journey will culminate in Scoresbysund which is one of the largest fjord systems in the world with imposing granite walls, mountain peaks, glaciers and icebergs beautifully carved by the glaciers. From here we cross the Denmark Straits to Iceland.

Wildlife

Polar Bears, walruses, seals, Arctic fox, musk oxen, Reindeer, narwhals, wolves, ermine, Arctic hares, lemmings and a variety of birds - Arctic terns, Ivory gulls, Guillemots, Kittiwakes, to name a few..

Ship Description

Expedition

At a nimble 105 metres (345 ft) in length, with a capacity to hold 132 guests, the Expedition is an ideal vessel to ply polar waters. The ship is large enough to provide stability, speed, spacious cabins and ample public space. Yet she is small enough to manoeuvre in remote areas and get you close to the action. Ship stabilizers ensure a smooth ride in rough waters, allowing you to enjoy more of your time at sea. A fleet of ten Zodiacs allows passengers to get out and actively explore remote shores. The Expedition is a speedy vessel. A top speed of 16 knots means you'll spend less time getting from A to B, and more time exploring your surroundings.





Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Premium

Our comfortable accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Relaxed

Easy paced tours with plenty of time to relax and absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

DAY 1 Arrive Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen is the largest settlement on the archipelago of Svalbard with a population of about 2,060 people and about as many snowmobiles. You will transfer to the ship on arrival and we will depart Longyearbyen in the early hours, under the Midnight Sun.

Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Dinner

DAY 2 West Coast of Spitsbergen

We will have five full days to explore a small portion of the western coast of Spitsbergen. Entering the fall the days are getting shorter so we will try to take advantage of all of the sunlight possible to search for wildlife.

Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner


DAY 3 West Coast of Spitsbergen

By not following a set itinerary, we take on an expedition spirit and are free to take advantage of the best that Svalbard has to offer, both by Zodiac and on our landings ashore.

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Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 West Coast of Spitsbergen

Svalbard is one of the few places on the planet that offers a wealth and diversity of natural and cultural history sites. Highlights include fjords with breathtaking mountain scenery and glaciers flowing into the sea around us. We will spend these few days in search of the elusive polar bears, hunting seals. At one or more of our stops, we hope to see Svalbard's unique subspecies of reindeer. They are much smaller than their southern relatives, but still carry impressive antlers. We also have the possibility of Arctic foxes.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 West Coast of Spitsbergen

This is also a land of history: from whaling to reaching for the pole, to trapping, coal mining and war. We will visit some of these historic sites. We may cruise in Zodiacs along the ice edge viewing seals or walrus, in fjords with glaciers spilling down to the sea.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 West Coast of Spitsbergen

We will have opportunities to walk on shore, observe and photograph the Arctic flora and fauna. As we are in the land of the polar bear, your expedition staff will carry rifles and flare guns on shore for your protection.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Greenland Sea

Frigid waters escape the Polar Ocean south into the Greenland Sea. There is an opportunity for whale watching here as many species are known to feed here in the summer months. We may see Orca, Humpback, and Minke whales as well as White-Beaked dolphins. The view is often complimented by fulmars, kittiwakes, gannets, guillemots, and razorbills.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Greenland Sea

Lectures by our on board Expedition Staff will increase your appreciation of these animals and the wild coast of Greenland.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 East Greenland & Scoresby Sund

We hope to sail through and land in some of the most spectacular fjord country in the world along down the coast of Greenland, as we will explore rarely visited glaciers, bays and inlets.

Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 East Greenland & Scoresby Sund

This is the largest National Park in the world, nearly impossible to reach except on Expedition ships, such as the MS Expedition. Spectacular geology combined with glacial features create steep mountains raising directly from the sea. Looking out for picturesque scenery, wildlife and other interesting landing sites in this unspoiled wilderness.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 East Greenland & Scoresby Sund

We will spend two days exploring Scoresby Sund, which is one of the largest fjord systems in the world. The distance from the mouth of the sound to the head of its innermost fjord is 350 km. It is a favoured hunting ground of the Inuit and is home to a variety of wildlife including:- walrus, seals, narwhals, polar bears and muskoxen. You will also find wolves, foxes, ermine and arctic hares, as well as lemmings and a variety of birdlife.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 East Greenland & Scoresby Sund

Walking over lush stands of colorful autumn tundra may lead to opportunities to see muskox grazing nearby.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 East Greenland & Scoresby Sund

We hope to visit the local village of Ittoqqortoormiit to get a glimpse of how people live in these harsh conditions.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14 Denmark Strait

We continue our lecture series, as we head back towards Iceland and to the steaming hot springs of Reykjavik.


Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 15 Denmark Strait

Another day cruising the Denmark Strait, with more bird-watching opportunities.

Expedition

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 16 Depart Reykjavik

You will disembark after breakfast in Reykjavik. A complimentary airport transfer will take you to the airport in time for your scheduled flight.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Food & Drink

Included meals: 15 breakfasts, 14 lunches, 15 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Cabins

Prices are based on the use of outward facing, category one cabins on the lower deck. Category one cabins are triple or quad share. They are comfortable with a private toilet and shower, and porthole. The Expedition has a number of different cabin categories, all outside facing and with two beds (apart from suites which have queen size beds). Some have larger windows. We can also offer single occupancy, subject to availability. Call us for details on the cabin choice to fit your requirements.

Ship Dining

Onboard our expedition ship you'll find a diversity of gourmet international cuisines prepared and catered by professional chefs; all meals are included in the price of your expedition. Dining is casual, tables are unassigned and the dining room is capable of seating the entire passenger complement at one time. There is always a selection of different meals available, and vegetarians will find plenty of options. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated with advance notice; please advise us at time of confirmation. Coffee, tea and water are all provided free of charge. All other beverages, alcoholic and non-alcoholic, are not included and can be purchased in the dining room, pub or in the lounge.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Arctic Region

Greenland

Denmark

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Arctic Region

Greenland

Denmark

Tipping - Local Crew

Tipping is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. It is an expression of satisfaction. The suggested amount is USD \$10 - 15 per person per day spent on board. Of course, tipping is a personal choice and the suggested amount is set only as a guideline. The money is collected by the Hotel Manager at the end of the voyage and distributed among the crew and Expedition Staff. The Officers choose not to participate in the tipping pool.

Foreign Exchange

Arctic Region

ATM Availability: Cash can be drawn on credit or debit cards from ATMs in major cities.

Credit Card Acceptance: Credit cards are useful and can be used in many places, but may be subject to a service charge. The ship accepts Visa and Mastercard.

Travellers Cheques: Travellers Cheques can be difficult to exchange and are not accepted aboard.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: A combination of US dollars cash and cards is best. It is advisable to take a minimum of US\$200-500 of your total spending money in cash, in mixed denominations (notes should be in good condition).

Where to Exchange: Banks or Forex offices in major cities.

Greenland

Denmark

Joining your Trip

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Norway: Entry visas NOT required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN Citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

Vaccinations & Protection

Arctic Region

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Greenland

Denmark

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

Arctic Region

The average temperatures in the Norwegian Arctic is approximately 5 degrees centigrade during the summer months (June-August.) It can however feel significantly colder with the wind, so be prepared for colder temperatures.

Greenland

Denmark

Clothing

Parkas

This will be provided by the ship operator. Please register your size with us before travel and we will arrange for your parka to be available in your cabin on arrival.

Gloves

Keeping your hands warm and dry can be a challenge. Thin polypropylene gloves can be worn underneath warm outergloves. This allows you some protection from the cold when removing your gloves to operate your camera etc. We strongly recommend that you bring more than one pair of gloves, in case one gets wet (or lost).

Hat/Cap

Warm, woollen hat/cap to protect your ears, as well as a scarf, neck gaiter or other face protection, such as a balaclava.

Trousers

Water-resistant trousers of coated nylon or, even better Gore-Tex®, are essential for your comfort. They can be worn over your regular clothes to keep you warm and dry. We suggest that you purchase trousers a few sizes larger than you normally wear as you will be wearing them over other clothing. Gore-Tex® or similar fabrics are excellent for keeping out wind and water without trapping excess heat. In addition to your waterproof trousers, warm ski pants are suggested if you have them. Warm trousers such as jeans, corduroys etc. are also good.

Socks

Warm wool socks worn over a thin pair of silk, polypropylene socks should provide enough warmth and insulation for your feet. Bring several pairs of socks, since you will inevitably get your feet wet.

Outer Clothing

Woollen, knit or cotton jumpers/tops, polar fleece tops (medium weight), several cotton turtlenecks and T-shirts for layering on and off the ship.

Underclothing

Thermal underwear is highly recommended as it will keep you warm without adding bulk. Most polar travellers prefer a lightweight version.

Equipment

Sunglasses and sun cream

Personal toiletries

A refillable water bottle

Books/reading material

Camera and extra memory cards (and something to protect the camera when out in the elements - dry bags are very useful for protecting camera gear)

Seasickness remedy

Walking poles

Personal First Aid

Footwear

Complimentary, used, waterproof boots will be supplied onboard. However, guests might want to bring their own if they are the following sizes due to the limited quantities onboard:

- men's UK size 12 & 13 1/2

- women's UK size below three & seven and above

Guests must bring their own if they are:

- men's UK size six 1/2 or smaller

- men's UK size 13 1/2 or larger

- women's UK size two or smaller

- women's UK size nine 1/2 or larger

These are rubber, waterproof boots that are just below your knees with a strong, ridged non-skid sole.

You usually have to step from the Zodiac into icy water up to 30 cm high on most landings. Do not bring heavy, cumbersome boots that make it difficult to walk or boots with metal cleats, as they cannot be used for landings. For maximum warmth, wear loose-fitting boots and two pairs of socks. Try out your boots before the voyage.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Arctic Region

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Greenland

Denmark

Electric Supply & Plugs

Arctic Region

2 Pin Round

Greenland

Denmark

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group



(www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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