

## NORTH EASTERN HIMALAYAN TRAIL

12 NIGHTS / 13 DAYS;

DEC 18-30, 2014



This is one of the most interesting trips of Eastern part of India. With sights ranging from visiting largest inhabited Riverine island, one horned Rhino, Hollock gibbons and other animals, interesting Mishmi tribe of Arunachal and their culture, tea gardens, first oil refinery of South Asia. This is a land most interesting.

Dates:	Dec 18-30, 2014
Start from:	Guwahati airport
End at:	Dibrugarh
Distance covered:	1050 kms approx.
Maximum altitude reached:	Mayodia (2655M)
Best time to Visit:	October- April
Meals:	Lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 13
Min/ Max group size:	10-16
Grade of trip:	Easy
Permits required	Yes - will be taken care of by us
Document required:	Photocopies of valid nationality proof Photo-IDs (Passport, Driving License, Voters ID, PAN card
Booking deadline:	Nov 15, 2014

### Highlights:

1. See the world famous one horned rhinoceros.
2. Ride an elephant and discover wildlife in Kaziranga National Park.
3. Visit Majuli- the largest inhabited river island in the world.
4. Live in colonial splendor.
5. Visit to a Tea Plantation. Experience how different varieties of tea are processed in surrounding plantations.
6. Explore local villages and sights.
7. Enjoy a local dance performance.
8. Drive on a trail of orange plantations & butterflies.
9. Learn about the Mishmis and the Khamptis (the original keepers of domestic elephants). Appreciate their culture, food and also discover lesser known Buddhist monasteries.
10. Participate in community driven tourism project at Wakro.
11. Visit to Oil Museum in Digboi, the first oil town in South Asia.
12. Visit to Dibru-Saikhowa National Park.

## Itinerary:

### Day 01: Guwahati- Kaziranga- 220 kms/ 5 hrs

Land at Guwahati airport by around 1200 hrs and drive to Kaziranga. Stay the night at a resort at Kaziranga.

Kaziranga is a World Heritage Site, where more than 75% of the world's total population of the great Indian One Horned Rhinoceros can be found. It lies on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra River and is one of the oldest parks of Assam. Besides rhinos, the Asiatic Water Buffalo, Elephants, Tigers, Swamp deer, Barking deer and Hog deer can be seen. About 400 species of birds are found in Kaziranga National Park. Swamp Francolin, Great Hornbill, Pallas's Fish Eagle, Pied Falconets, Greater Adjutant Stork, Long Billed Vulture. There is no telling what one might find in Kaziranga but it is always a great experience. The specialty here is the Blue-Naped Pitta among a host of Raptors and Waterfowl. The adjoining buffer areas are worth a try too, as numerous rare sightings are reported regularly. The park remains open from 1<sup>st</sup> Nov to 30<sup>th</sup> April only.

### Day 02: Kaziranga

Early morning go for an elephant safari followed by jeep safari post breakfast. Afternoon go for another jeep safari.

Timing:

Elephant Safari Approx 45 mins duration- 05.30 to 06.30 or 06.30 to 07.30

Jeep Safari: Forenoon: Entry time between 07:00 to 09:30 Hours. Visiting time till 12:00 Noon

Afternoon: Entry time between 13:30 to 15:00 Hours. Visiting time till sunset.

Note: **Allocation of elephant riding seats and timings are regulated by the forest department, Kaziranga National Park, Government of Assam. The tickets for the same are issued only on the previous evening of the ride after 7:30 PM. We will try our utmost to avail the seats but cannot guarantee the same.**

### Day 03: Kaziranga -Majuli- 80 kms/ 2 hrs + 1 hr cruise

Majuli is the largest inhabited river island in the world and famous for the Vaishnavite Satras or monasteries and culture and is nestled between the confluence of the Subansiri and the Brahmaputra River. The island has long served as a monastic retreat to the Vaishnavite community and is noted for its beautiful rural setting and the traditional Assamese and Mishing tribal architecture. The Satras were set up by Srimanta Shankerdev, the leader of Vaishnavite revival in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. These are active and nurture the traditional dance form 'Satriya', music and crafts (mask- making), besides religious teachings.

After breakfast, we drive to Neematighat (80 kms / 02 hrs) for ferry crossing (1 hr downstream boat cruise- the time depends upon the water level of the river) to Majuli. On arrival, you will be transferred by road to a monastery, en route pass through both Assamese and Mishing Villages - the Mishing houses are typified by being built on stilts and their 'long house' style of design. At the monastery, you will be given an orientation tour by one of the monks of the monastic cell and temple. (Please note that you will be expected to remove your shoes when entering the Vaishnavite monasteries). These Satras were set up by Srimanta Shankerdev, the leader of Vaishnavite revival in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. These are active and nurture the traditional dance form 'Satriya' (which is the 5<sup>th</sup> nationally recognized dance form other than Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Manipuri), music and crafts (mask- making), besides religious teachings. Visit the monasteries and interface with the tribes on the island. Overnight at Majuli.

### Day 04: Majuli- Sivasagar- Dibrugarh- 145 kms/ 45 hrs

After breakfast, ferry across to Neematighat (1½ hrs) and later drive to Dibrugarh (145 kms/ 03½ hrs). En route we visit the Ahom monuments and temples at Sivasagar which encompass the 600 year old history of the Ahom Dynasty. Check in at Mancotta/ Chowkidinghee Heritage Chang Bungalow for 02 nights. Overnight at Chang Bungalow.

Sivasagar was once the capital of the Ahom Kings. The Shans who came from Thailand through Northern Myanmar to this area in early 13<sup>th</sup> century, ruled for 600 years. The Siva Temple, built by the Ahoms, situated here is believed to be the tallest of all existing Hindu temples. The ruins of the Ahom palaces and monuments dot the landscape around this historical town. Centuries, before the arrival of the British, this part of the world was controlled by a number of tribal chieftains.

In the town of Sivasagar, one can still see the remaining well preserved relics. The largest and the oldest amphitheatre of Asia (Rang Ghar) is also another remarkable landmark in the history of Sivasagar. The Tai- Ahom Museum of Sivasagar contains some of the relics of the Ahom period like - swords, clothes, manuscripts and sundry artifacts.

DIBRUGARH is the gateway to the "Hidden Land" of Eastern Arunachal Pradesh and Northern Myanmar. The Ahoms from Thailand came through Northern Myanmar to this area in the 13<sup>th</sup> century to establish their Empire which thrived in the ancient land of Assam. It is the "Camellia" town of Upper Assam, an undisturbed haven, with its rich tea gardens resembling a lush green carpet. Experience and enjoy the richness of these tea gardens while staying at the Heritage Chang Bungalows. These are constructed on stilts and are situated in a serene atmosphere free from pollution.

When the British established their tea plantations in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century they quickly built comfortable bungalows designed to make life as pleasant as possible in what, was to them, a hostile and strange land. One of the main features of these buildings has given rise to their name - CHANG BUNGALOWS. Chang in the local language means "raised on stilts" and the design served multi purposes- to keep the house cool by allowing the breeze to blow underneath and to keep both water and animals out!

### Day 05: At Dibrugarh, Assam

Post- breakfast, take a **tea tour** around a tea estate known for producing high quality **CTC teas**. Know all about tea - its origin, how it is grown, all about tea tasting and its quality. Later in the afternoon, we visit **Mancotta Tea Estate** known for its Orthodox type of tea. Take a tea walk and enjoy a sundowner or a cup of tea on a tree house. In the evening, enjoy a dance performance (Bihu Dance) by an ethnic dance group on the bungalow lawns. Overnight at the Heritage Chang Bungalow.

A tea tour through a 157- years old heritage tea garden gives an insight into the different activities that vary from season to season. It teaches us all about tea- its origin, how it is grown, tea tasting and its quality.

CTC (Crush, Tear and Curl) tea is a method of processing tea. In this process the leaves instead of being rolled, are passed through a series of cylindrical rollers with hundreds of small sharp "teeth" that Crush, Tear, and Curl.

This style of manufacture has the advantage that the finished product brews quickly, gives a dark infusion rapidly, is well suited for tea bags, and yields more cups per kg. In the Indian domestic market, this type of manufacture has virtually taken over - over 80% of tea production is of the CTC type.

CTC teas produce a rich red-brown color when they are boiled, which adds a beautiful color to tea made in the Indian style. This is done by boiling leaves in a mixture of milk, water and sugar and some spices (producing Masala Chai). With this production method, the tea does not get bitter, and its red colour comes through the white of the milk.

Orthodox tea: The manufacturing process of orthodox tea is similar to that of CTC tea. Instead of the tea leaf been crushed, the leaves are rolled in a machine that twist and break the leaves to release the natural chemicals that later react with oxygen in the air and give the tea its characteristic aroma and taste. It is the leafy variety of tea.

BIHU is the most popular folk dance of Assam. The people of Assam are very proud of its unique position among all other such dances of India. Except Bhangra (the popular folk dance of Punjab), no other folk dance in India can compete with the rhythmic exuberance of the Bihu dance. 'Bihu' performed by young men and women reflects youthful passion and joy rejuvenating life during the spring season, accompanied by songs woven around the theme of love and physical yearning. The dance is performed by all irrespective of caste, creed and religion.

Note: Visit to tea factory is subject to being operational on the day of the visit. There is no tea plucking between December till mid March and hence the actual manufacturing process of tea cannot be demonstrated when one visits the factory during this period. Factory also remains closed on Monday's of the week.

#### **Day 06: Dibrugarh-Wakro, Arunachal Pradesh**

After breakfast drive to Wakro (190 kms / 4 hrs). Enroute visit Empong Village to see the Khampti tribes and also visit the Buddhist Gumpa. Check in at Mishmi Retreat, Wakro. (Traditional Mishmi huts) for 02 nights.

Khamptis are one of the major tribal inhabitants of the Lohit District. They are deeply influenced by buddhist ethics and morality. The Khamptis are Buddhists of the Theraveda School. They are the only tribe in Arunachal Pradesh who have their own script for the language. Traditionally, they live on the cultivation of paddy and other crops. The social structure of the Khamptis is well organized on the basis of clan or village determined by kinship or locality.

Wakro (maximum valley altitude 2000m) is the homeland of the "Mishmis" one of the Mongoloid tribes of Tibeto-Burman origin. They speak their own dialect which varies from different groups. The three major Mishmi groups are "Idus" "Tarons" and the 'Kamans'. Mishmis are very rich in culture and may be termed as a festival loving people. They believe any day of the year is auspicious for a ceremony if provisions exist. On these days animals are sacrificed. Mishmis are nature worshipers.

Mishmi are the inhabitants of Lohit Districts and the border area of adjoining district. Mishmis are animist and believe in a number of higher spiritual beings. Kabeya, or Pharai in their traditional village council who exercise the judgment of any disputes comes to their society. The Mishmi society is divided into numbers of sub-tribes such as Idu -Mismis, Digaru Mishmi, Miju Mishmi with more or less distinctive characters on its dresses among themselves. This tribe can be easily distinguished from other by their typical hairstyle

Their dresses reflect the artistic taste and the cultural thinking of the society. The male dress of Miju and Digaru consist of a sleeveless black or maroon coloured cloth with ornamental borders and waist cloth with a embroidered flag in the front. They wear a head dress of woven cane. The women wear black skirts with coloured stripes reaching above the ankle and a beautiful embroidered bodice and a shawl. The also wear beautiful ornaments made of silver. The women keep themselves busy in weaving. The men are involved in making cane and bamboo products. The puffing of opium with the help of silver or wooden pipes by both men and women is the part and parcel of their tradition. These people may be termed as festive tribe. Reh is the most important festivals celebrated by Idu-Mishmis during 1<sup>st</sup> week of February.

Mishmi Retreat : Surrounded by enchanting nature, this campsite comprises of four Mishmi traditional huts, each with two rooms one double bedded and one twin bedded. It can cater to a maximum group size of 16 pax. Four western toilets with provision of showers are not en-suite but conveniently located behind the huts. Hot waters will be provided in buckets. There is a gazebo which provides for the common seating and dining area - an ideal getaway for the nature lover.

#### **Day 07: At Wakro, Arunachal Pradesh**

Today we visit the local Mishmi tribal villages like Kanjan Village, Pukhuri Village, and Thomba Village to learn about their rich culture and traditions and interact with the Mishmi tribe.

#### **Day 08: Wakro-Roing, Arunachal Pradesh**

After breakfast drive to Roing (160 kms/ 5 hrs) in the Debang valley of Arunachal Pradesh crossing the Lohit River at Digaru. Enroute visit Parasuramkund- a pilgrimage site where thousands of pilgrims come every year during Makar Sankranti to take a holy dip in the Lohit River. Overnight at Roing.

Roing rises from the Himalayan foothills to the middle ranges with the highest point of Mayodia at a height of 2655 meters from mean sea level. Snow-capped peaks, turbulent rivers, mystic valleys and abundance of rich flora & fauna are a few attractions of the district. The district is well known for its largest cover of thick green forest with almost 80% of the area being notified as reserved forest, wild life sanctuaries or unclassified state forests. Idu Mishmi is the major tribe inhabiting this area along with the Adi Padam tribe in the lower plain areas. The Idu Mishmi tribe is also known as Chulikatas. They build their houses on the slant of hills or in the forest .The roof is thatched with grass bamboo, timber etc. Their main festival is Reh. Their dress is remarkable for the wealth and beauty of its designs. Most of the dress is made by themselves from wood, partly from cotton and sometimes of nettle fibre. They also wear thick coats of black with white pattern made of nettle fibre and human hair.



The abundance of natural beauty, colorful and charming tribes, ancient archeological sites make the place a perfect destination for nature lovers, adventurous tourists, archeologists and anthropologists.

#### **Day 09: At Roing, Arunachal Pradesh**

Today we we drive to Mayodia Pass (55kms/1hr30mins) - a unique pass situated at an altitude of 7000 ft amidst lofty hills, lush green forests and breathtaking landscapes. Return to Roing and visit the local villages.

#### **Day 10: Roing –Tinsukia, Assam**

After breakfast drive to Tinsukia (120 kms/4 hrs) including ferry crossing. First we drive 02 hrs to reach Sadiya Ghat to board a ferry cruise (01 hr) on the headwaters of Brahmaputra river to reach Soikhowaghat. From Soikhowaghat we drive 01 hr to reach Tinsukia. Check in at Wathai Heritage Bungalow, Limbuguri Tea Estate for 02 nights. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at the Bungalow.

Steal yourself away to a 'Wathai Heritage Bungalow, Limbuguri Tea estate- this plinth bungalow will allow you to rejuvenate your senses. Located just 5km from Dibru Saikhowa National Park, it is the ideal retreat for a birding break. This 'Managers Bungalow', defines serenity and you will most certainly leave revitalized. It has been recently renovated and is the ideal base whether on a quest for quietude or seeking refuge whilst on an explorative ornithological voyage at the neighboring Dibru Saikhowa National park . Although reverine in nature, this park remains open most of the year with innumerable varieties of colourful birds chirping at various pitches and hopping from branch to branch. It is indeed an orinthologist's delight. Endangered species like Gangetic Dolphin and Feral Horses are common sights in Dibru- Saikhowa.

Fresh tea can be enjoyed in the 'jali room" to the front of the bungalow in a peaceful atmosphere overlooking the manicured gardens, while meals are served in the spacious dining room complete with an original fireplace. The family room and two large bedrooms complete with ensuite enables eight people to sleep here very comfortably.

#### **Day 11: At Tinsukia, Assam**

Today early morning we visit Dibru-Saikhowa National Park and Magori Bheel for a full day birding programme. We take several boat rides on the Dibru River, go for jungle walk, bird and Gangetic Dolphin sighting. Overnight at the Bungalow.

Dibru-Saikhowa National Park has the most distinct and vibrant wilderness on earth and is known for its pristine scenic beauty. The forest in this park ranges from semi-evergreen to deciduous to littoral to swampy marshes with patches of wet evergreen jungles Dibru-Saikhowa is a safe haven to many rare and endangered species of over 350 birds and is a must visit site for target-list birders. The big three here are Jerdon's Bushchat, Black-breasted Parrotbill, Marsh babbler. Several other rarely observed species can be found in the extensive grasslands, wetlands, and riverine forests. These include Baer's Pochard, Bengal Florican, Pale-capped Pigeon, Falcated duck, Baikal teal, Chinese spotbilled duck and Rufous vented prinia etc. Dibru-Saikhowa is a haven for an incredible no. of waders, ducks, raptors and its specialty grassland birds.

#### **Day 12: Tinsukia-Digboi-Dibrugarh, Assam**

Today early morning we visit **Barekuri Village** (10 kms / 20 mins) to see a small group of Hollock Gibbons. Post breakfast we drive to Digboi (45 kms / 01 hr), the first oil town of South Asia. Visit the Oil Museum and the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War Allied Forces Cemetery where 200 graves are permanently maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Drive back to Dibrugarh 80 kms / 02 hrs and check in at Heritage Chang Bungalow for the overnight.

Barekuri – An Assamese village situated next to famous Dibru Saikhowa National Park, at a distance of about 10 kms from Guijan. The village is famous for the presence of a few number of Hollock Gibbons, an endangered ape species found in India. Here the Hollock gibbon have been protected and cared for since long by the villagers on account of their age old religious beliefs. Every day the villager feed them and they always stay in and around the village. The people of the village never cut the tall trees, because the gibbons live on them, and they belief that it's a bad sign if anybody sees a gibbon walking on the ground.

Digboi: Digboi is a small but wonderful town in Tinsukia district in the north-eastern part of the state of Assam, India. Petroleum oil was discovered here in late 19th century and the Digboi oilfield is one of the oldest oil fields. With a significant number of British professionals working for the Assam Oil Company as late as until the decade following the independence of India, Digboi had a well developed infrastructure and a number of bungalows unique to the town. It has a world class golf course with 18 holes as part of the Digboi Club.

#### **Day 13: Dibrugarh Fly out, Assam**

Morning at leisure. Later in time transfer to Dibrugarh airport to board flight for onward destination.

**COST PER PERSON: INR 100,000/-**

**The cost includes:-**

1. 12 nights' accommodation at hotels mentioned above on twin share basis.
2. All meals starting with lunch on Day 01 and ending with lunch on Day 13.
3. All land transfers.
4. Entry fees, Monuments fees, parking fee, road taxes, village visits and local sight- seeing as per programme.
5. Visit to Umananda Temple by country boat.
6. 01 Elephant safari + 02 Jeep Safari at Kaziranga National Park. Jeep Safari at Kaziranga would however be on open Non AC Jeep / Gypsy.
7. Public ferry charges to and from Majuli Island. Visit to Majuli Island by Non AC Tata Sumo or similar.
8. Tea Tour and 01 Cultural programme at Dibrugarh.
9. Permit charges for visiting Arunachal Pradesh.
10. Public Ferry charges while coming from Roing to Dibrugarh.
11. Visit to Dibrusaikhowa National Park using Country boat.
12. Services of accompanying English speaking escort from arrival till departure and local guide wherever necessary.

**The cost does not include:**

1. Any Camera/Video Camera Fees.
2. Any Insurance.
3. Any Airfares/ train fares.
4. Any expenses of personal nature like laundry, phone calls, beverages, snacks or refreshment, room service orders, mini bar usage, conveyance, porter age etc apart from those clearly mentioned above.
5. Any other expenses incurred due to unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances.
6. Any change / new tax imposed by the Government.
7. Supplement charges charged by hotels during Christmas, New Year's Eve, festival time, if any.
8. Any other services not mentioned in the "package include" section.
9. Service Tax as applicable which is presently charged @ 3.09% on total bill amount.

**TOUR NOTE****Accommodation:**

Kaziranga:	Iora-The Retreat /similar
Majuli:	Mepo Okum Eco Camp /similar
Wakro:	Mishmi Retreat /similar
Roing:	Dibang Valley Jungle Camp /similar
Tinsukia:	Wathai Heritage Bungalow /similar
Dibrugarh:	Mancotta/Chowkidinghee Heritage Chang Bungalow /similar

**Food & Hygiene:**

Food is a mix range from vegetarian/ non- vegetarian meals to good food with a choice of Indian, Continental & Chinese food. All meals are buffet meals. There is no room service.

**Fitness:**

You should be in decent health if you wish to hike. We advise jogging and breathing exercise.

**Tipping:**

Tipping amount is strictly at your discretion and experience.

**Photography:**

Please ask your guide before taking photographs inside any temple and if you plan to photograph any locals, please take their permission before doing so. You could charge your camera at the hotel.

**Medicine:**

There is a doctor in the town. We also keep a first aid kit. It would be anyway a good idea to bring your own basic first aid kit with medicines for motion sickness, nausea, some painkillers etc. Please carry sun block and chapstick. Keep your face, feet and hands well protected. Request your doctor to prescribe effective medicines to cover the following: Fever, Body and joint pains, Cold, Cough, Sore throat, Headache, Acidity, Stomach cramps, Vomiting, Dysentery, Loose motion, Constipation, Diarrhea, Swelling, Muscle Pulls & Sore eyes. We do carry a first aid box though. In case you have any illness of any sort, please do inform us in advance so that we can take necessary precaution. You could also carry vaseline, Band Aid, Cotton, Badge roll, Dettol, Mouth freshener, Nose inhaler, Cough drops, Lip balm, Vicks, Elastoplasts, Adhesive tape, 4" crepe bandage.

**List of things to bring:**

1. Duffel bag (avoid suitcases if you can)
2. A small day backpack to carry water, food, jacket and camera
3. Regular sports shoes/ hiking shoes.
4. 2 pairs of lowers.
5. 4-5 full sleeves T-shirts
6. A fleece jacket
7. A full sleeve thick jacket
8. Underclothing
9. 2-3 pairs of sports socks. 1 pairs of woolen socks
10. Woolen cap
11. Sun glasses
12. Lip balm
13. Cold cream and sun screen lotion (SPF 40+).
14. Water bottle.
15. Flash light
16. Personal toilet kit.
17. Personal medicine
18. Small repair kit consisting of safety pins, needle, thread and string.
19. Camera, memory-cards, batteries etc (carry enough spare batteries. Electricity is not available on the slopes.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE TO USE A LOT OF WOOLENS LISTED ABOVE BUT, WEATHER IN THE HIMALAYAS CAN BE RATHER UNPREDICTABLE HENCE, BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY.**

**BOOKING, PAYMENT AND CANCELLATION POLICY****CONFIRMATION:**

100% advance to confirm booking.

### CANCELLATION CHARGE:

Minimum : 20% of full amount.  
Less than four weeks of arrival date (or tour start date) : 50% of full amount.  
Less than two week of arrival date (or tour start date) : Full amount.

### PAYMENT MODES & METHODS:

1. ONLINE TRANSFER into our **current** accounts in Axis Bank **or** Standard Chartered Bank
2. DIRECT CHEQUE DEPOSIT into our **current** accounts in Axis Bank **or** Standard Chartered Bank at any branch/ ATM in India
3. DIRECT **CASH** DEPOSIT, into our **current** account at any branch in India
4. By CASH or CHEQUE handed over personally (or by your rep) AT OUR DELHI OFFICE
5. OUTSTATION CHEQUE payments are acceptable **only if** they are delivered (or we get a scan of the bank deposit slip) at least 4 working days before the payment due date.
6. OUTSTATION PAYMENTS by a **Payable at Delhi** DD sent to our Delhi Office by courier/post.

**IMP:** CHEQUE / DD to be made in **favour of "Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd."**

#### AXIS BANK:

- A/c name : Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd.
- A/c no. : 015010200017806
- Branch address : K-12; Green Park Main; New Delhi – 110016
- Branch Code : UTIB0000015 (for direct cheque deposit)
- IFSC Code : UTIB0000015 (for online transfer)

#### STANDARD CHARTERED BANK:

- A/c name : Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd.
- A/c no. : 525-0-509-319-3
- Branch address : 10 Sansad Marg; New Delhi – 110 001
- Branch Code : SCBL0036027 ( for direct cash/ cheque deposit)
- IFSC Code: : SCBL0036027 (for online transfer)











**Banjara Camps & Retreats Pvt. Ltd.**  
A26, Nangal Devat, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi- 110070  
Phone no: +91 11 65152334/5/6  
Email: [info@banjaracamps.com](mailto:info@banjaracamps.com) / [www.banjaracamps.com](http://www.banjaracamps.com)

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