

LOVERS' WALK, MARTYRS' STAKE AND WIGTOWN HARBOUR

- Circular town, country and shore walk**
- 2.7km/1.5 miles to 5.2km/3 miles**
- Allow 1-3 hours depending on route**
- Roads, track and grass track**
- Moderate**
- Boots or stout shoes recommended**

As an interlude to browsing around the many bookshops, try this walk from the centre of Wigtown.

START at the County Buildings, which stand at the head of the town square, walk downhill from the clock tower along Bank Street until you reach the boundary wall of the churchyard. Turn left along Church Lane, continue along Beddie Crescent and you will see a blue sign for Lovers' Walk. On a clear day this old lane gives superb views of Wigtown Bay and the Galloway Hills beyond as it rises gently away from the town.

Pass the communications mast and turn right at the T junction (signed Wigtown via A714). On reaching the A714 turn right and follow the verge for 100m, before turning right down the minor road signed for Moss of Cree. Turn right at the next road junction and continue until you reach the car park for the Martyrs' Stake. Here you will find picnic tables and a bird hide.

A short walk along the old railway line will take you to a series of information boards and the start of the boardwalk across the saltmarsh to the Martyrs' Stake. This monument records a sad event of 1685 when two local women were drowned at the stake for their sympathies with the Covenanters. The Covenanters were Presbyterian Protestants who opposed the Established Protestant Episcopal Church in the latter part of the 17th century. The Royal Authorities ruthlessly suppressed them during the 'killing times'. There are Covenanters monuments throughout the region.

There are good bird watching opportunities on these walks, so be sure to take your binoculars.

Regular winter visitors are pink-footed geese and whooper swans from Iceland. These return annually to Britain's largest Local Nature Reserve and may be seen along with other water birds during your walk.

You now have two options to continue your walk:

OPTION 1

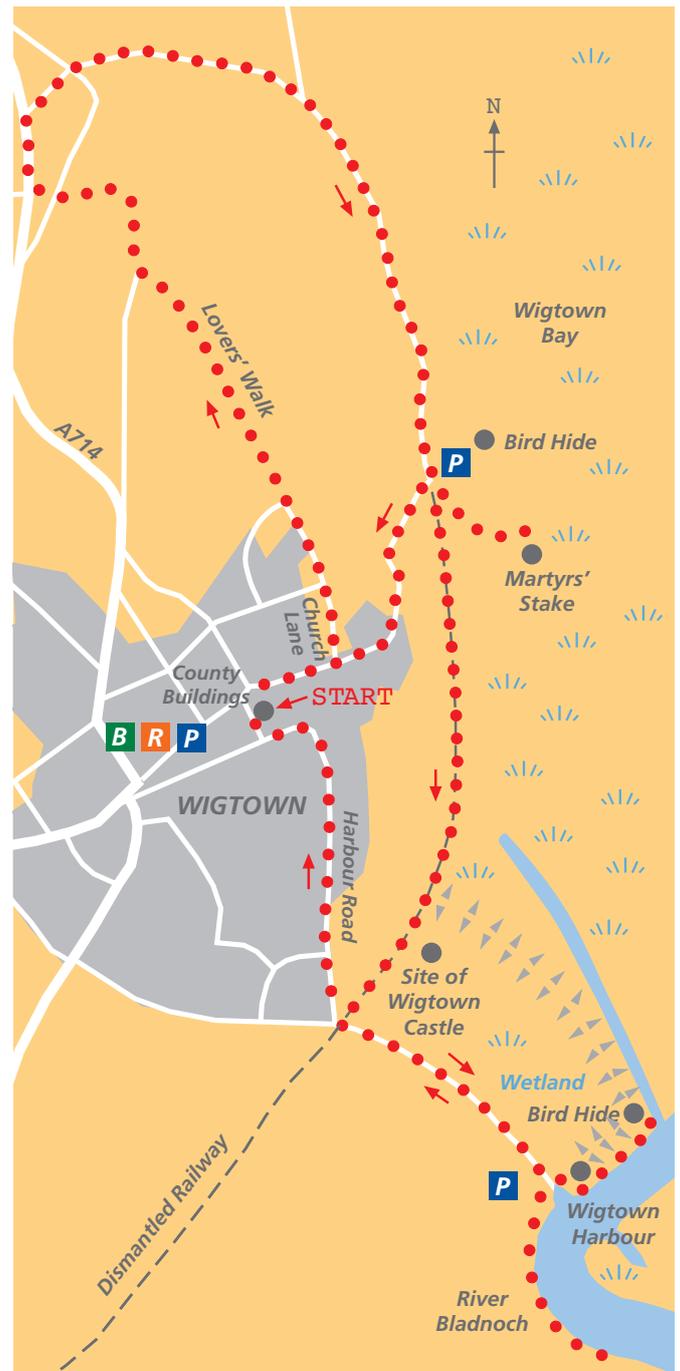
Return to the road, turn left up the hill which will take you back to the County Buildings and the start of your walk.

OPTION 2

Continue along the old railway line until the path descends the side of the embankment. Pass through the pedestrian gate at the side of the cattle crush.

Continue until you meet the Wigtown Harbour Road. Here you may turn left and head downhill to look at Wigtown Harbour, the River Bladnoch and the two recently created wetlands. The new bird hide gives good views over the river, the saltmarsh and the freshwater wetland.

Alternatively turn right and return to the County Buildings by crossing the old railway bridge and walking along Harbour Road.



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Leave gates as you find them - Keep dogs under close control at all times - Keep to paths across farmland - Take care on country roads
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BLADNOCH RIVER WALK

INCLUDING WHEELCHAIR SECTION

- **Linear riverside walk**
- **Wheelchair section 1.5km/1 mile (return)**
Full route 4 km/2.5 miles (return)
- **Allow 1 hour**
- **Surfaced path and beaten earth**
- **Easy**
- **Everyday shoes can be worn for the wheelchair section. Walking boots or wellies are recommended for the full route**
- **Dogs must be kept on leads through the distillery garden and are not to foul the garden or the wheelchair path.**

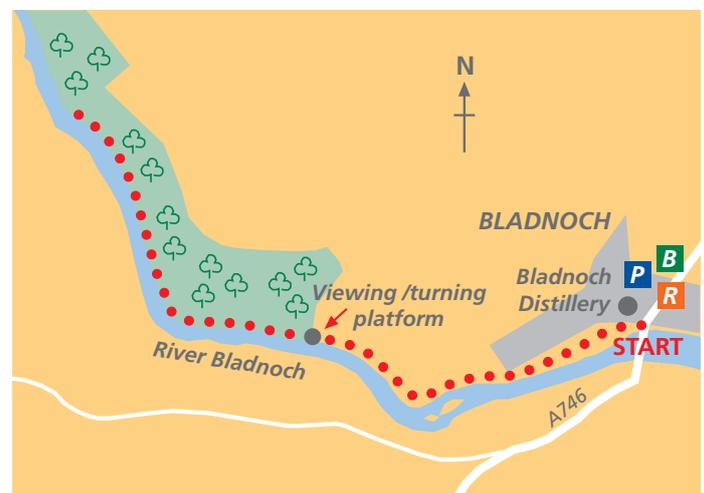
PARKING Wheelchair users should park at the far end of the distillery car park.

START between the buildings by the 'Welcome' sign. The sloped start and short grass section mean that this route is best suited to motorised or accompanied wheelchair users. The purpose built path starts at the end of the distillery garden. The path is gently undulating and runs through an attractive strip of mature mixed woodland between a tidal stretch of the River Bladnoch and the distillery lade.

The distillery recently resumed production and draws its water 2 miles upstream through a purpose built pipe. The warehouses are being restocked and you can sample a dram at the distillery's visitor centre. Contact the Visitor Centre (01988 402605) or Newton Stewart Tourist Information Centre (01671 402431) for opening hours.

The wheelchair section terminates at a turning/viewing platform. Look out for trout rising to take flies and salmon jumping on the final leg of their return to their spawning grounds. You may also see grey heron and mute swan.

The pedestrian riverside path continues upstream to the old wooden sluice gates.



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KILSTURE FOREST WALKS

- **2 Linear walks with loops.**
- **Woodpecker Trail - 2km/1.25 miles**
- **Deer Trail - 6km/3.5 miles**
- **Woodpecker Trail - ½ hour**
- **Deer Trail - 1 ½ hours**
- **Forest tracks and roads**
- **Easy/moderate**
- **Boots or stout shoes recommended**

PARKING To reach Kilsture Forest travel south from Wigtown on the A714/A746; pass through Braehead and Kirkinner and at the fork take the B7004 Garlieston Road. After 1/2 mile turn right into the forest car park. The information board provides route details.

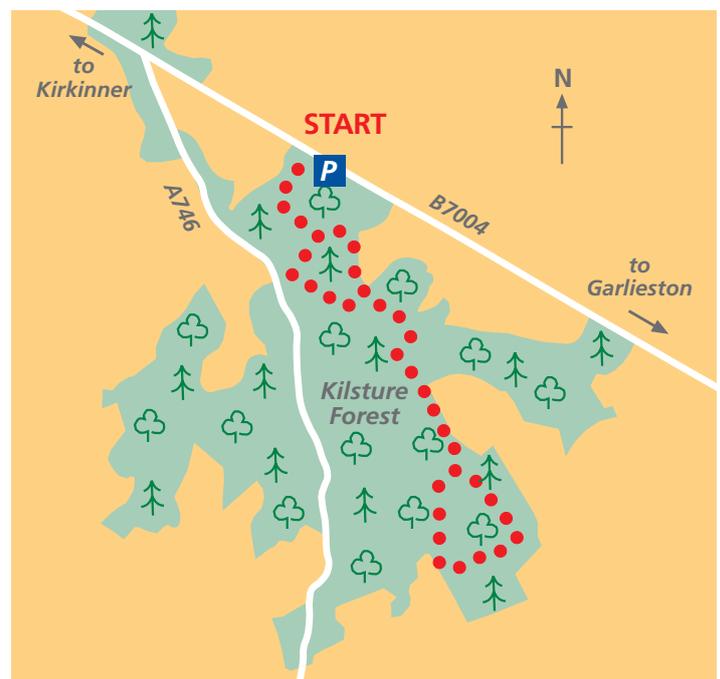
START both walks from the car park.

To use the Woodpecker Trail follow the yellow waymarkers.

If you are following the Deer Trail use the white waymarkers.

The end loop of the Deer Trail takes you to a car park at the far end of the forest, cross this in order to pick up the continuation of the trail. When the path rejoins the outgoing path remember to turn right to return to your car.

The forest trails of Kilsture are shared with cyclists and horse riders and take an interesting meandering line through the thinned hardwoods. Look for the fine specimen larch trees and the views out to lush pasture from the margins of the forest. In spring the constant birdsong is punctuated by the alarm calls of cock pheasants and the overhead mewing of buzzards. Look out for the attractive group of Dawn Redwood trees on the end loop of the Deer Trail. These graceful trees are natives of the Western Seaboard of the United States and have thick spongy fireproof bark.



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CRUGGLETON CASTLE & GALLOWAY HOUSE GARDENS

- Linear woodland/shore and cliff walk and various circular garden paths**
- Length 6km/4 miles (return)**
- Allow 2 hours**
- Tracks, beaten earth and garden tracks some of which are suitable for wheelchairs**
- Various stiles on Cruggleton Castle Walk**
- Moderate**
- Boots or stout shoes recommended.**

PARKING At the crossroads with the B7004 just outside Garlieston you will see a sign for Galloway House Gardens. Follow the drive until you reach the small fenced car park on the left hand side. The shelter in the car park houses an information board and an honesty box alongside the start of the various Garden Walks.

START Shorter sign posted walks are available in Galloway House Gardens, with various features of interest, including the walled gardens, a specimen handkerchief tree, the pond and an impressive collection of large rhododendrons. Some of these paths are suitable for wheelchair users and there are various permutations, allowing you to meander through the gardens at your leisure.

For Cruggleton Castle follow the signs for the seashore, this will take you past the walled gardens and on to the picnic site at Rigg Bay. The structure out in the bay is part of the prefabricated 'Mulberry Harbour', which was tested here prior to being used by the Allied Armies at the D-Day landings in Normandy during World War Two.

Turn right and follow the signs for Cruggleton Castle. The path meanders and climbs through a delightful strip of mixed hardwoods with a carpet of dog's mercury, garlic, bluebells and campions punctuated by patches of primroses.

After rounding Slidderly Point the route takes on a magical feel passing through twisted and gnarled oaks, beech and ash before reaching a run-down lodge beside a high boundary wall. Pass through the old iron gates and on to the cliff path. The solitary arch of Cruggleton Castle is your target.

At the ladder stile climb into the field and follow the boundary wall. Climb two more stiles and follow the fingerpost around the last field boundary to reach the castle enclosure. Return along the same route.



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ST NINIAN'S CAVE

- Wooded glen and pebbly beach walk**
- Length 3.3km/2 miles (return)**
- Allow 1 hour**
- Track/woodland path, pebble beach**
- Moderate**
- Boots or stout shoes recommended**
- Check local tide times**

PARKING The car park for this route is located to the left side of the minor road just before Kidsdale Farm (Grid reference NX433366). There is an honesty box for parking fees alongside the information board.

START at the car park and follow the direction sign for St Ninian's Cave. In the wooded glen the path forks, then re-joins. Follow the burnside path to the pebbles of Port Castle Bay. Turn right at the sign for St Ninian's Cave, look along the beach and you will see the cave entrance. This cave was, by tradition, the retreat of St Ninian, who brought Christianity to Scotland in the mid 5th century. He was said to have travelled from his church at Whithorn to be alone here with his thoughts and prayers.

During spring please be vigilant for ground nesting birds, such as oystercatchers, which often nest on the beach. Enjoy the variety of wildflowers, such as spring squill, sea campion, buck's horn plantain, scurvy grass, thrift and primrose. Physgill Glen presents a beautiful display of bluebells and is a delightful approach to the drama of Port Castle Bay.



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COASTAL WALK TO PORT CASTLE BAY

- **Linear walk along cliff tops.**
- **Length 7.5km/4.75 miles (return)**
- **Allow 2 hours**
- **Track, grass and beaten earth, stiles**
- **Moderate/Strenuous**
- **Boots or stout shoes recommended**

PARKING Turn right off the B7004 as you descend into Isle of Whithorn and follow the brown tourist signs for Burrow Head. At Cutcloy Farm continue straight ahead through the gate pillars and past the silage clamp. Enter Burrow Head Holiday Village and park next to the reception. During the open season (1st March – 31st October) please report to reception before setting out on your walk.

START on the road to the right of the holiday village reception building, follow it until you reach the fork before the cliffs then continue straight ahead. The path turns westwards and you will soon find a 'Coastal Footpath' signpost. Follow the cliff top path, keeping towards the coastal side on the more open sections.

On reaching the headland above Port Castle Bay look along the base of the cliffs to see the entrance to St Ninian's Cave. It is well worth descending to the pebbly beach to explore the cave, where you will find an information board.

Return to Burrow Head Holiday Village along the same route. You can buy refreshments from the site shop during the open season.



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MONREITH ESTATE

WHITE LOCH OF MYRTON

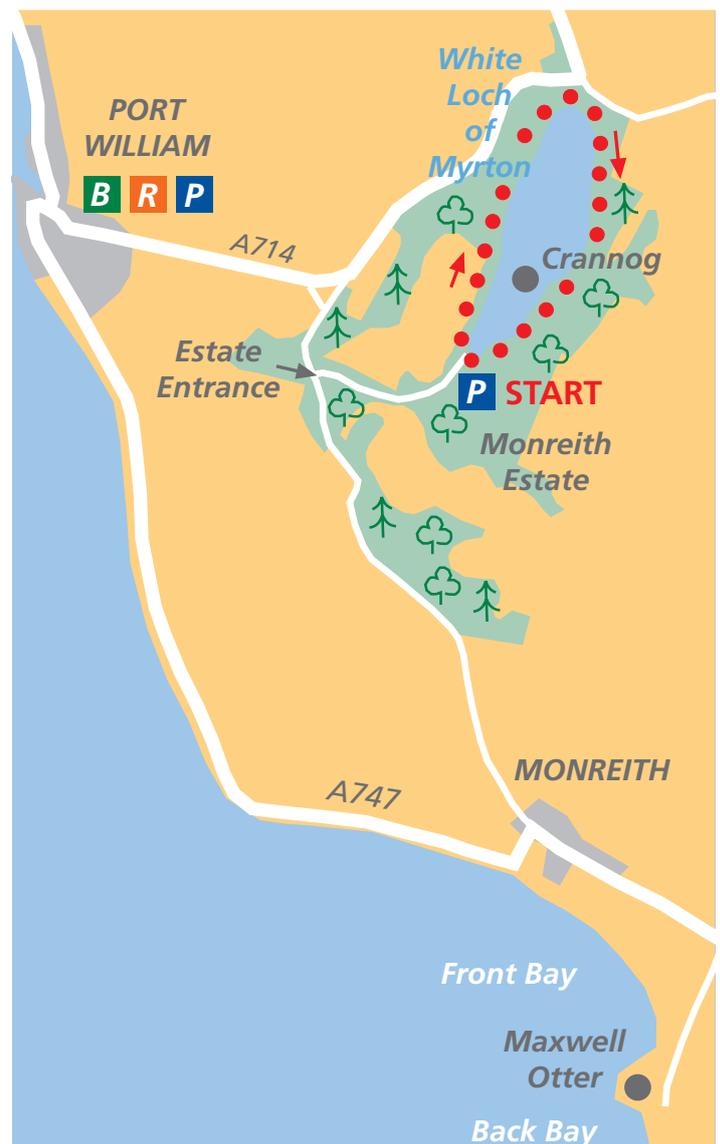
- Circular Loch side walk – The estate grounds are open from Easter to 31st September**
- 2.5km/1.5 miles**
- Allow 1 hour**
- Track and beaten earth**
- Moderate**
- Boots/wellies recommended**

PARKING Monreith Estate is located approximately one mile east of Port William. If you are travelling from Port William, head east on the B7085. Turn right at the T-junction (on the minor road signposted to Monreith), then first left at Monreith Estate Lodge, where you will see a white sign for the grounds, walks and fishing. Continue along the estate drive ignoring the first two forks to the right. At the third fork bear right and park by the sheltered map board.

There is plenty to see and enjoy on this waterside walk. The small island just off the southeast shore was once an Iron Age crannog. In spring the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells interspersed with white garlic spikes. Take some time to admire the big, spreading beech trees and see if you can spot the heronry.

START from the car park, retrace your route across the burn and turn right. Continue around the loch in a clockwise direction, passing the fishing platforms and the boathouse. Pass in front of the house and around the northern end of the loch. Follow the lochside path (which is narrow in places), and remember to look for the crannog as you approach the south end of the loch. Turn right on to the track and return to the car park.

Monreith Estate is the seat of the Maxwell family, members of which include the artist and politician Sir Herbert Maxwell and the popular author and naturalist Gavin Maxwell. A fitting tribute to Gavin Maxwell is the handsome bronze otter memorial that occupies a commanding viewpoint over the beautiful Front and Back Bays near Monreith village.



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GARNETS WALK

Circular walk through open countryside on the outskirts of Port William

3.5km/2.25 miles

Allow 1 hour

Tracks and minor roads

Moderate

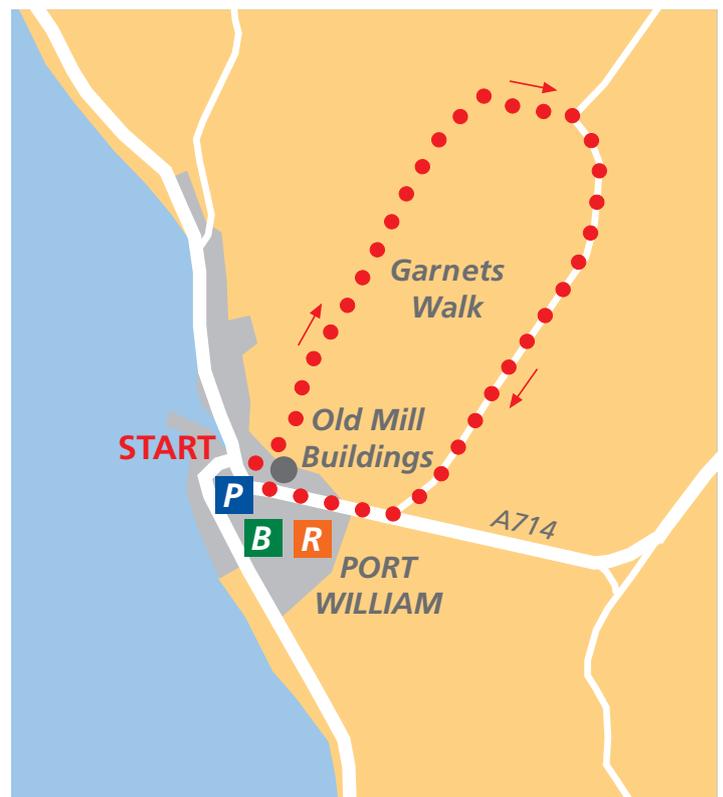
Stout shoes recommended

PARKING and **START** at the side of the old mill buildings on the Whauphill/Whithorn road close to the roundabout in Port William.

The route was once a main road into the village but today provides a quiet corridor for walkers and wildlife. The overgrown verges and hedges are ideal for many plants and animals and on a sunny summer day you will see several kinds of butterfly.

After a gentle climb, the slight elevation allows superb views along the coast and across the sea towards the Rhins of Galloway. The raised beaches of the Machars coast can also be seen, created thousands of years ago when the land rose at the end of the last Ice Age.

You will pass the old water supply tank for Port William and after passing three more fields the track turns sharp right (at a wooden bench) and carries you down to a minor road as a return to the town. Look out for the interesting erratic boulder in the field corner immediately after Moormains Bridge and opposite the small wood with the rookery.



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STAIRHAVEN COASTAL WALK

- **Circular cliff top walk returning along minor roads**
- **8km/5 miles**
- **Allow 3 hours**
- **Beaten earth, grass, track and minor roads**
- **Stiles**
- **Strenuous**
- **Boots recommended**
- **No dogs allowed**

PARKING Stairhaven is 2 miles south of Glenluce.

From the A747 take the first minor road to the right (signposted 'Stairhaven 1 1/2') and continue until you reach the car park at Stairhaven Bay.

START from the car park, head away from the bridge and towards the sharp left hand bend, where you will find a fingerpost indicating the start of the Coastal Path. Climb the stile and follow the path and white way marker posts up the steep hillside to top of the cliffs (look well ahead to spot the marker posts). This scenic route follows a strip of uneven grassland between a stock fence with slip gates and the west facing cliffs. Enjoy the views across Luce Bay to The Mull of Galloway, the most southerly point of Scotland, then, if you turn to the south you may see Little Scares and Big Scares Rocks, which are one of very few gannet nesting sites in the world. If conditions are good you will see The Isle of Man and its highest point, Snaefell. At the head of Luce Bay, just in from the coast, you can see the white golf ball shaped radar domes of West Freugh Airfield.

This section of coast is rich in marine and bird life, so look out for grey seals and cormorants searching the bay for fish. The energetic flight and song of skylarks can often be enjoyed along these cliffs.

Looking inland you will see Castle Sinniness Farm and as you head south, over the two ladder stiles and step stiles, you will reach an open field below Laigh Sinniness Farm. This is the site of Garliachen Fort, a promontory fort of Bronze or Iron Age origin. The path skirts around its edge.

Cross the burn below the farm and climb the next rise. Auchenmalg Bay will appear as you round the Mull of Sinniness. The path soon descends through gorse to connect with an access track to 'The Barracks'. At this mid-way point you can choose to head along Auchenmalg Bay to the Cock Inn for some refreshment.

To return to Stairhaven, follow the track towards the village of Auchenmalg and turn left on meeting the minor road. Ignore the turn to Castle Sinniness Farm and continue to the T-junction, where a left turn will lead you back to Stairhaven.



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