



THAILAND AND LAOS ADVENTURE

Go Beyond Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 2

Bangkok – Chiang Mai – Hmong Hilltribe - Chiang Rai – Pakbeng – Luang Prabang – Vientiane

Perfectly combined to create an unforgettable experience, venture off the beaten track to discover the colourful hilltribe cultures of Thailand's northern highlands and explore the tranquil treasures and rich culture of beautiful Laos.

- Cruise Bangkok's Chao Phraya River
- Discover Chiang Mai charms by rickshaw
- Spend a night at a Hmong Hilltribe lodge
- Stroll through laidback Chiang Rai
- Meet monks in Laos
- Bathe in the pools of the Kuang Si Falls

TOUR MAP



THAILAND AND LAOS ADVENTURE TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless land only is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa assistance for Australia passport holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g., drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Thailand and Laos Adventure’ is rated as a **physical level 2** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required, but it is more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You will be getting on and off coaches, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- You will be required to get on and off small boats without assistance

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 15 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on a ‘Land Only’ package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Bangkok and end the tour on Day 14 in Vientiane. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

We intend to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours, or as dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1: Fly to Bangkok

Meals: D

You will be met at Bangkok airport by your Local Guide or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer approximately 1 hour to your hotel and check-in to your room. There is no sightseeing today.

Meeting point at the airport is located at Exit B Gate no.6. Your National Escort/ Local Guide will welcome you there holding a signboard.



Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Destination Information

Bangkok - Bangkok has been Thailand's dominant city since the 18th century. It was established as the capital after the former capital Ayutthaya was destroyed by the Burmese. The emerging city, which was protected by a wall, was occupied by a large number of stilt houses built to adapt to common seasonal flooding. Up until the Thailand War, Bangkok was still largely undeveloped, until it became a popular place of rest and relaxation for American soldiers, which resulted in a boom of nightclubs, massage parlours and bars. However, in the 1980s and 1990s, Bangkok underwent rapid modernisation and exploded into the metropolis it is today. Bangkok's dazzling neon signs, charming architecture, Thai cuisine and colourful markets make for an exciting first few days of our tour.

Day 2: Bangkok

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of the city today. Tour the Grand Palace, Wat Pho and Chinatown. Take a cruise down Chao Phraya River on a longboat to see Pak Khlong Talaat Flower Market and take in an alternative view of the city.

This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant. Sightseeing involves around 5 hours on foot today and involves hopping on and off the boats, sometimes on unsteady or slippery surfaces, occasionally without handrails or assistance.



Destination Information

Wat Pho - One of Bangkok's largest temples. Experience the monk's chant as you explore the grounds of Wat Pho, spread over eight hectares. The largest reclining Buddha and the largest collection of Buddha images in Thailand are housed here.

Grand Palace - The Grand Palace is the city's most famous landmark. Built in 1782, for 150 years it was the home to the Thai King, the royal court and administrative seat of government. Within the Palace are several impressive buildings, including the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

Pak Khlong Talaat Flower Market - The biggest wholesale and retail fresh flower market in Bangkok.

Day 3: Bangkok – Chiang Mai

Meals: B, L, D

Explore the Maeklong Railway Market, an extraordinary market that makes its home right on the tracks. Drive to Damnoen Saduak Floating Market, where you will travel by wooden boats through the canals.

Return to Bangkok ahead of this evening's 1-hour flight to Chiang Mai.

**Destination Information**

Maeklong Railway Market - As the train rolls slowly through eight times a day, inches away from the goods for sale, this market makes for an unusual spectacle and an interesting place to walk and shop on the tracks.

Damnoen Saduak Floating Market - Step back in time to experience the traditional way farmers would trade their produce. The canals are lined with boats that are paddled by local women and piled high with vegetables, fruit and even souvenirs for the tourists. Sit back and soak up the atmosphere as the locals go about their daily life and entertain with their haggling techniques.

Chiang Mai - Located among tall mountains, Chiang Mai is the largest and most culturally significant city in northern Thailand. The city was founded in 1296 and was the capital of the Lanna Kingdom, which was eventually occupied by the Burmese. For the next 200 years, Chiang Mai was virtually abandoned until it was again taken over by Siam in the 18th century. During the 20th century, Chiang Mai became a thriving centre for handicraft pottery, weaving, silverwork and woodcarving; however, tourism took over in the 1960s as the main source of income. Today, Chiang Mai is famous for its hilltribes, tea plantations and elephants.

Day 4: Chiang Mai

Meals: B, L, D

Begin with a rickshaw tour of the city, taking in the sights before stopping to visit the Folk Life Museum, Wat Chedi Luang and Wat Prah Singh. After lunch, visit Wat Doi Suthep, one of Thailand's most sacred temples. Tucked away in the mountains at 1,056 metres above sea level, it offers a panoramic view of Chiang Mai. You will have the option to climb the Naga staircase or catch the cable car to visit the exquisite Golden Pagoda.



This evening we will enjoy a typical Thai (Khantoke) dinner while watching a performance of ancient dances and songs from northern Thailand by various hill tribes. Afterwards we will have an opportunity to visit the colourful Chiang Mai Night Market.

Destination Information

Folk Life Museum – The museum recreates traditional Lanna village life inside a former Thai Colonial-style provincial court.

Day 5: Meditation Centre – Hmong Hilltribe Lodge

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit a local yoga centre and enjoy a meditation session. Later this morning journey into the hills surrounding Chiang Mai. Transfer approximately 1 and a half hours by minivan, crossing the countryside, passing forests, farms and villages eventually reaching the village where you will spend the night in a traditional Hmong Hilltribe lodge.



The Hmong Hilltribe Lodge is made up of ten individual houses, each comprising of four separate rooms with private bathrooms, arranged around a central communal area. The afternoon is at leisure. Optional activities this afternoon include a short hike to the village, or relax and unwind by the pool. You also have the chance to join in a meditation session (depending on availability). This evening, enjoy a barbecue and a cultural show.

Destination Information

Hilltribes - Northern Thailand is home to various tribal people who migrated from China and Tibet over the past few centuries. They now inhabit the remote border areas between northern Thailand, Laos and Myanmar (Burma). The six major hill tribes within Thailand are the Akha, Lahu, Karen, Hmong, Mien and Lisu, each with a distinct language and culture.

Day 6: Hmong Hilltribe Lodge – Chiang Rai

Meals: B, L, D

Visit the Thai Elephant Care Centre in Mae Rim this morning. The centre is located in the beautiful Mesa Valley and is the peaceful retirement for elephants rescued from logging camps and elephant shows. You'll have the chance to meet one of their caretakers who will guide you through the centre, explaining about the care centre and its residents in more detail.



Continue 90 minutes to Tha Ton, a small town by the Mae Kok River, and board your long tail motorboat for your cruise to Baan Pha Tai. Upon arrival, drive a further 2 hours to Chiang Rai where you may wish to take a walk around the night market before enjoying dinner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Thai Elephant Care Centre – a care centre dedicated to looking after elderly elephants in their final stage of life. Please note that elephant rides are not permitted.

Chiang Rai – The northern-most province of Thailand sharing borders with Myanmar and Laos, and also one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in Thailand. The province is abundant with natural scenery; lush rice terraces, hills scattered with orchids and the mountains of Myanmar and Laos are visible in the distance.

Day 7: Chiang Rai

Meals: B, L, D

Today, peek into some of the hidden artistic gems of Chiang Rai with a visit to Wat Rong Kun, also known as the White Temple, where you will see some surprising imagery.



After lunch, visit a tea plantation on Doi Mae Salong to taste the local tea.

Destination Information

White Temple - One of the most recognisable temples in Thailand, the unorthodox White Temple is a contemporary Buddhist and Hindu temple, an ongoing project by Thai artist Chalermchai Kositpipat in 1997. Inside, you will see a surprising fusion of imagery depicting the 'wickedness of mankind', with images ranging from nuclear warfare to fictional characters such as Freddy Krueger, all interspersed with the faces of fiery demons.

Mae Salong - Once known as a centre for opium trade in the golden triangle, Mae Salong is now associated with tribal villages and the production of excellent local tea.

Day 8: Chiang Rai – Pakbeng

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early to reach the border into Laos and join your Mekong cruise to Pakbeng. The boat is a local wooden slow boat, with a roof and toilet. You will be travelling for approximately 6 to 7 hours today, depending on the water level and will be served lunch on board your cruise. Stop along the way to observe rural life, visiting Ban Houy Lumpair Hmong village. Arrive in Pakbeng and check in to your hotel.



You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Pakbeng. Main luggage will be left in safe storage on the boat and picked up on arrival in Luang Prabang.

Destination Information

Pakbeng – A traditional village on the Mekong River, Pakbeng is the first stop in Laos for travellers crossing the border by slow boat.

Day 9: Pakbeng – Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, board the boat for the second leg of the cruise. Continue to Pak Ou village at the mouth of the Nam Ou River, where you visit the Pak Ou Caves of a Thousand Buddhas. Arrive in Luang Prabang and check in to your hotel.

**Destination Information**

Pak Ou Caves - The caves are noted for their miniature Buddha sculptures. Hundreds of very small and mostly damaged wooden Buddhist figures are laid out over the wall shelves. They take many different positions, including meditation, teaching, peace, rain, and reclining (nirvana).

Luang Prabang - The capital of the province of the same name, Luang Prabang lies in a valley at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. It is known for its many Buddhist temples, including the gilded Wat Xieng Thong, dating to the 16th century, and Wat Mai, once the residence of the head of Laotian Buddhism.

Day 10: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

Visit Ban Xang Khong Craft Village, where you can see Sa Paper and local handcraft production. Later visit the monastery of Wat Xieng Thong, one the finest examples of Luang Prabang architecture, and Wat Visoun.

We spend some time talking with local monks and young people at a local temple and hearing about their lifestyle.

**Destination Information**

Wat Xieng Thong - A Buddhist temple (wat), located on the northern tip of the peninsula of Luang Prabang, Laos. Wat Xieng Thong is one of the most important of Lao monasteries and remains a significant monument to the spirit of religion, royalty and traditional art. There are over twenty structures on the grounds, including a sim, shrines, pavilions and residences, in addition to its gardens of various flowers, ornamental shrubs and trees.

Day 11: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning to see the Buddhist ceremony of Takbat or almsgiving. Continue to the Phousi Temple and the National Museum. From here, drive 1 hour to Kuang Si Waterfall, visiting a local market enroute. At the falls, enjoy the opportunity to swim, splash or simply relax beside the pools. Return to Luang Prabang, stopping at Ock Pop Tok Weaving Centre enroute.



Sightseeing at the waterfall will involve around 1 hour of light walking, and on the way up to the waterfall you follow a bush walking track, which has a slight upward gradient. Electric car transfers may be available. There are changing areas at the site.

Destination Information

Kuang Si Waterfalls – A three-tier waterfall about 29 kilometres south of Luang Prabang. The falls begin in shallow pools atop a steep hillside. These lead to the main fall with a 60 metre cascade. The falls are accessed via a trail to the left of the falls. Water collects in numerous turquoise blue pools as it flows downstream. The many cascades that result are typical of travertine waterfalls. There are walkways and bridges for your enjoyment. Most of the pools are usually open for swimming.

Day 12: Luang Prabang – Vientiane

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a day at leisure until your 45-minute flight to Vientiane. On arrival, check in to your hotel. Laos' laid-back capital mixes French colonial architecture with golden Buddhist. Notable shrines sit along Vientiane's tree-lined streets, and its many bakeries, cafés and villas seem straight out of 19th-century Paris.

**Day 13: Vientiane**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning visit Talaat Sao, Vientiane's Morning Market. Then continue to Wat Sisaket, the oldest original temple in Vientiane. Head out of town to visit one of Laos' slightly stranger attractions - Xieng Khuan Buddha Park. It is the site of a large collection of many kinds of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures.



Enroute, take a look at the impressive Thai-Laos Friendship Bridge which spans the Mekong river border. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner with some traditional Lao music.

Destination Information

Wat Si Saket - Wat Si Saket was built in 1818, on the orders of King Anouvong (Sethathirath V.) It is built in the 'Siamese style' of Buddhist architecture, with a surrounding terrace and an ornate five-tiered roof, rather than in the Lao style. This Siamese style may have kept it safe, since the armies of Siam that sacked Vientiane following Anouvong's rebellion in 1827 used the compound as their headquarters and lodging place. It may be the oldest temple still standing in Vientiane.

Days 14-15: Depart Vientiane

Meals: B

Today is at leisure until transferring to the airport for your flight home, arriving the following day.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

THAILAND & LAOS ADVENTURE TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Thailand: Australian passport holders do not need a visa for Thailand if they are travelling for less than 30 days for tourist purposes.

However, effective 01 May 2025, all guests travelling to Thailand must complete a mandatory Digital Arrival card (online e-immigration application) within 3 days prior to their arrival. Please see this website for further details: <https://tdac.immigration.go.th/arrival-card/>

Laos: Entry visas are required by all visitors to Laos. As this tour enters by cruise, this is payable locally on arrival (approximately \$40 USD). Two 2 x professional passport photos are required for the visa process. Your guide will assist you with this process.

Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia. Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in many local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in a tour group, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Southeast Asia.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in Southeast Asia. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. **However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).** Roads in Southeast Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Southeast Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Thailand and Laos Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. In Thailand: Chakri Memorial Day - 6th April (if 6th April falls on a weekend, Chakri is observed on the following Monday); Songkran Festival usually 12th – 16th April; Labour Day - 1st May; Coronation Day – 6th May; the King's Birthday – 29th July; the Queen's Birthday - 12th August; Chulalongkorn Day – 23rd October. In Laos: International Women's Day - 13th March, Laos New Year Holiday 14th – 16th April.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES:

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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