

# *Vikings and Sagas*

AN ICELAND ODYSSEY



A SCHOLARLY  
SOJOURN

HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND NATURAL WONDERS MERGE ON THIS  
SCENIC EXPEDITION AROUND ICELAND

## TOUR DETAILS AT A GLANCE

### 2018 DEPARTURE

August 5—12, 2018

### PRICE

\$4,695/person (double occupancy)

\$5,495/person (single occupancy)

### TOUR BEGINS

Reykjavik, Iceland

### TOUR CONCLUDES

Reykjavik, Iceland

### OPTIONAL AIR PACKAGE

From \$1,298/person\*

\*See page 10 for details

### TO REGISTER

Call us at **1-800-419-3443** or

Use the **online registration form**

**CLICK HERE TO  
REGISTER ONLINE**

### ABOUT SCHOLARLY SOJOURNS

Not only our name, but also what we call our flagship tours, Scholarly Sojourns are intellectually-stimulating travel programs that explore fascinating topics in history, literature, archaeology, art history, and science. Designed and guided by distinguished scholars, these engaging journeys provide the unique opportunity to explore a subject on location.



A sunrise illuminates the spectacular Icelandic landscape

## *Vikings and Sagas*

### AN ICELAND ODYSSEY

The Icelandic Sagas are undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of European culture, literary gifts from the medieval Icelanders that still speak to us after 1,500 years. In the sagas we meet fascinating and unforgettable characters whose remarkable deeds show both the tragedies of a flawed humankind and the triumphs of the human spirit against a hostile world. The sagas are unique in that, in one sense they are carefully crafted fiction, but in another they offer a remarkably accurate glimpse into the early history of Iceland.

As well, very few literary works are as closely tied to the land in which they were written as are the Icelandic Sagas. The descendants of the bold Vikings who settled Iceland knew and named every hill, river, cliff, farmstead and glacier in their land of fire, water and ice. In the sagas they include descriptions of places so accurate that we can often identify the precise locations where the events they chronicle occurred.

At the same time these monumental works also wonderfully capture a special era in Icelandic history. While they are no doubt fictional, they most vividly detail the epoch of Icelandic settlement and deftly capture the spirit of the people who forged the Icelandic nation. Indeed, it is somewhat difficult to fully appreciate the sagas without also developing a fondness for the Viking settlers who tamed and peopled the remarkable island they discovered.

Join us on this fascinating literary pilgrimage as we travel across the mesmerizing landscape of Iceland to walk in the very footsteps of the great Icelanders of the 9th and 10th centuries. Together we discover the stunning natural beauty of the island they called their new home. Under the expert guidance of celebrated medievalist Michael D.C. Drout, we come to know both their breathtaking land and their captivating stories which still profoundly move us today.

# Day-to-Day Tour Summary

## DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN REYKJAVIK

You arrive at Iceland's Keflavik airport this morning and transfer to the famous Blue Lagoon Spa where you enjoy some time to refresh and relax in the world-renowned, geothermal pools and perhaps indulge in one of the rejuvenating treatments offered here. At midday you rendezvous with your fellow tour participants and your Scholarly Sojourns Tour Director for a private transfer to our hotel in the center of Reykjavik. After some time to settle in, we depart on a guided walking tour of Iceland's capital city which concludes with a visit the celebrated Culture House—a museum which provides a unique journey through Iceland's visual legacy and offers an innovative guide to the nation's cultural history. This evening you join fellow sojourn members at a special opening reception where you meet our tour leader, Professor Michael Drout, who delivers some introductory remarks before we sit down to enjoy a special welcome dinner. [R | D]

## DAY 2 - EXPLORE REYKJAVIK

Following breakfast and our morning briefing, we walk to the National Museum of Iceland. Its permanent exhibition, "Making of a Nation - Heritage and History in Iceland," provides a fascinating glimpse into the history and founding of the Icelandic nation and showcases nearly 2,000 objects dating from the Settlement Era to the present day. Afterward, a short walk brings us to the Reykjavik 871 +/- 2 Settlement Exhibition, which offers a display of life during the Viking era and the opportunity to view the remnants of a 10th-century longhouse—thought to be Iceland's first man-made structure—which was just excavated in 2001. This afternoon, we head to Reykjavik's Old Harbor to embark on an whale-watching voyage. If we are lucky, our cruise allows us to witness a variety of sea life, including minke and humpback whales, white-beaked dolphins, and various seabirds in their natural habitat. Upon our return to Reykjavik, the rest of the evening is free to spend as you see fit. [B]



Geysir has been active about 10,000 years

## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

### DAY 1: SUNDAY

August 5

Tour begins Reykjavik

### DAY 2: MONDAY

August 6

Reykjavik

### DAY 3: TUESDAY

August 7

Reykjavik—Thingvellir—Borgarnes

### DAY 4: WEDNESDAY

August 8

Borgarnes —Sauðárkrókur

### DAY 5: THURSDAY

August 9

Sauðárkrókur—Lake Mývatn

### DAY 6: FRIDAY

August 10

Lake Mývatn —Höfn

### DAY 7: SATURDAY

August 11

Höfn—Hvolsvöllur

### DAY 8: SUNDAY

August 12

Hvolsvöllur—Reykjavik



Dazzling downtown Reykjavik on a summer's eve

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Sojourn Leader, Michael Drout, is Director of the Center for the Study of the Medieval at Wheaton College and a noted expert on the Icelandic Sagas
- ◆ Spend two days in Iceland's capital city, Reykjavik, and enjoy an afternoon whale-watching tour from its harbor
- ◆ Visit the amazing geological sites of Geysir, The Great Geyser, Lake Myvatn, and Gullfoss
- ◆ Drive through the beautiful scenery of Thingvellir National Park and visit the famous Blue Lagoon Spa
- ◆ See the extraordinary waterfalls Godafoss, Svartifoss, Skogafoss, and Seljalandsfoss
- ◆ Sample the best of unique Icelandic cuisine during special welcome and farewell dinners

*“This was an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will take with me personally and professionally for the rest of my life.”*

- Scott K., Waltham, MA



A spectacular view of Gullfoss

## Day-to-Day Tour Summary

### DAY 3 - REYKJAVIK TO BORGARNES

We depart Reykjavik early this morning and travel east to Thingvellir National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This geologically-unique marvel of nature, and Iceland's most important historical and cultural heritage site, is where the world's oldest parliamentary institution, the Alþingi, convened beginning in 930 AD. After visiting the exact site of the Alþingi and taking a scenic drive through Thingvellir, we arrive at Gullfoss—a waterfall which provides both a spectacular view as well as demonstrates the forces and beauty of nature. The picturesque fall is located on the Hvítá (White) river which is fed by Iceland's second biggest glacier, Langjökull. We enjoy lunch in the lovely café here before departing for Geysir, also known as The Great Geysir, which has been active for approximately 10,000 years. This evening we arrive in the fishing village of Borgarnes which puts us in the perfect location to explore Egil's Saga tomorrow. After some time to setting into our lodging for the night, we gather for dinner and discussion led by our tour leader. [B | D]

### DAY 4 - BORGARNES TO SAUÐÁRKRÓKUR

We explore the picturesque seaside town of Borgarnes, first noted in *Egil's Saga* as Digranes, this morning. Nine large cairns have been erected around the town to mark the sites of some of the most significant scenes from *Egil's Saga*. These include Grani's Farm where Egil's childhood friend Thordur grew up, Skalla-Grimur's burial mound, and Krum's Bog, where locals contend the treasure of Skalla-Grimur still remains hidden. Next we travel to Reykholt, one of the most celebrated historical sites in Iceland, largely because of the medieval scholar and author Snorri Sturluson, who lived here from 1206 until his assassination in 1241. The Cultural and Medieval Center known as Snorrastofa was founded in memory of Snorri and is situated on his ancient homestead. After a picnic lunch at *Snorri's Bath*—a geothermally-heated pool—we continue our journey north to visit Eiríksstaðir, a full-scale replica of Erik the Red's farmhouse. This is also the birthplace of his son, Leif Erikson, who discovered Greenland. We also see the excavated longhouse on which the replica is based and spend a bit of time inside the authentic recon-

# Day-to-Day Tour Summary

struction where our tour leader reads lines from *Grettir's Saga* to us. Continuing our journey to Iceland's north coast, we arrive in the picturesque village of Sauðárkrúkur. After checking into our cozy abode, Hotel Tindastoll, the oldest hotel in Iceland, the evening is free to explore and dine on your own. [B|L]

## DAY 5 - SAUÐÁRKRÚKUR TO LAKE MÝVATN

We depart Sauðárkrúkur and travel north on the rugged road to Grettislaug today. From here we see Drangey Island—a fascinating remnant of a 700,000 year-old volcano which was first mentioned in *Grettir's Saga* as being the refuge of the outlaw Grettir who spent his last years there with his brother Illugi and his slave Glaumur. It was on the island where Grettir was assassinated in late autumn of 1031. We travel by boat around the island where we enjoy the breathtaking views and see a variety of waterfowl before returning to the mainland to enjoy another Scholarly Sojourns' signature picnic lunch. This afternoon we stop for a brief visit at Hólar, which was founded as a diocese in 1106 by bishop Jón Ögmundsson. Hólar played an important part in the medieval politics of Iceland and was a cultural and educational center for almost seven centuries (1106-1798). Continuing east, we see the spectacular Goðafoss—considered one of the most impressive waterfalls in Iceland—which is closely connected with the country's conversion to Christianity in the year 1000. Our final stop is Lake Mývatn, recognized as one of the premier bird-watching sites in the world. Over 115 species of birds have been sighted at the lake, including thirteen species of ducks that nest in the lake area. After checking into our lakeside hotel, the day concludes with another group dinner and engaging conversation led by Professor Drout. [B|L|D]

## DAY 6 - LAKE MÝVATN TO HÖFN

We begin the day with a mesmerizing drive through some of the most fascinating terrain in Iceland, dotted with steaming geothermic pools, geysers, and bubbling mud pits. This afternoon we explore the sites of the *Droplaugarsona Saga* in the beautiful landscape around the East Iceland city of Egilsstaðir before



A puffin keeps watch on Drangey Island

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ Travel entirely around Iceland and explore each of its beautiful regions
- ◆ Cruise to mysterious Drangey Island—the refuge of Grettir in *Grettir's Saga*—and see its puffin nesting grounds and other indigenous waterfowl
- ◆ Experience an Icelandic horse trek in South Iceland—the land of Njál's Saga
- ◆ Visit stunning Skaftafell National Park and take a private, guided cruise on a glacial lagoon
- ◆ Enjoy two Scholarly Sojourns' signature picnics set against the backdrop of breathtaking Icelandic scenery
- ◆ Visit the homestead of Erik the Red and a replica of his farmhouse, the birthplace of Leif Eriksson



Exploring Iceland on horseback

*“Your attention to detail is way beyond any tour operator I have ever worked with!”*

- Paula F., Travel Agent,  
Mahwah, NJ

## WHAT YOU SEE

BLUE LAGOON SPA

REYKJAVIK

CULTURE HOUSE

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF  
ICELAND

REYKJAVIK 871 +/- 2  
SETTLEMENT EXHIBITION

THINGVELLIR NATIONAL PARK

ALTÞINGI

GULLFOSS WATERFALL

HVÍTÁ (WHITE) RIVER

LANGJÖLL

THE GREAT GEYSIR

BORGARNES

REYKHOLT

SNORRI'S BATH

DRANGEY ISLAND

HÓLAR

GOÐAFOSS WATERFALL

LAKE MÝRVATN

MUSEUM HOUSE AT  
NORÐFJÖÐUR

THE SAGA CENTER

HVOLSVÖLLUR

JÖKULSÁRLÓN GLACIAL  
LAGOON

EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL VOLCANO

## Day-to-Day Tour Summary

traveling to the coastal town of at Djúpvogur to enjoy lunch and to visit the Museum House, which contains the fascinating East-Iceland Museum of Natural History. This afternoon, we continue with a scenic drive along Iceland's southeast coast to the atmospheric harbor town of Höfn. After checking into our hotel here, the evening is free to explore and dine on your own. Be sure to try the renowned lobster soup offered at almost every restaurant in town! [B]

### DAY 7 - HÖFN TO HVOLSVÖLLUR

An early departure this morning takes us to the mesmerizing, ethereal Jökulsárlón Glacier Lagoon where we enjoy time to walk, take photos, and perhaps spy some of the lagoon's abundant wildlife. Continuing westward, we arrive in the absolutely stunning Vatnajökull National Park where we take part in an expert-guided glacier walk focusing on the exploration of water cauldrons, waterways, and other unique features of the glacier. After enjoying lunch in the beautiful national park, we descend into the verdant region of South Iceland and the town of Hvalsövellur where we visit the Saga Centre. The exhibition here explores subjects such as Viking ocean travel and navigation, religion, cosmology, and the literary art of the sagas, Iceland's most important contribution to world literature. Prominence is given to Njál's Saga, which is the longest and most complex of the works, and widely considered the masterpiece among them. Afterward, we check into our nearby country-house hotel, set amidst the beautiful farmland of the region. The day concludes as we gather here for a special reception and our farewell dinner. [B | D]

### DAY 8 - TOUR CONCLUDES IN REYKJAVIK

Following breakfast, we enjoy a change of pace as we traverse the unique landscape on horseback to visit some of the locations from Njál's Saga. Afterward, we stop to admire nearby Seljalandsfoss—one of Iceland's most iconic and visually-stunning waterfalls—and then continue to the fishing community of Eyraþakki to enjoy one last lunch together before departing for Keflavik International Airport where we say our goodbyes as the sojourn draws to a close. [B]



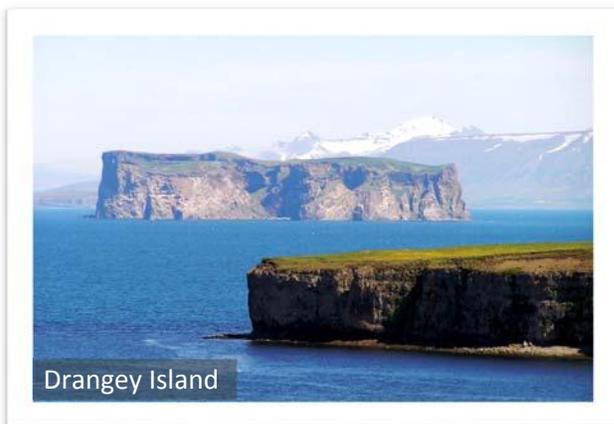
The dramatic scenery of Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon



Stunning views from Drangey Island

## An Expedition to Drangey Island

Towering majestically in the midst of Skagafjörður fjord is a massive rock fortress known as Drangey Island. Geological evidence indicates that long ago a massive volcano died and over the years deteriorated and dissolved into the ocean. Only the round rock plug that had once filled the main magma passage remains. Legend, however, tells of a pair of night trolls who turned to stone when they got caught by the sunrise while venturing across the fjord. Their prized cow became the island itself and the trolls became two pillars of rock – Kerlingin (the old woman) and Karlinn (the old man) – at each end of the island. Both pillars stood until 1755 when an earthquake caused Karlinn to collapse into the sea.



Drangey Island

What remains of this 700,000 year-old force of nature has become a symbol of life and renewal for local Icelanders, who travel to the island each spring to gather a feast of eggs, birds, and fish. In addition to being a celebrated nesting ground for falcons, puffins, guillemots, and various other seabirds, the island may be best known for attracting acclaimed outlaw Grettir Ásmundarson, who lived and died on Drangey Island. The hot-tempered, red-haired Grettir was the son of a Viking, and his life story is told in *Grettir's Saga*, the first literary reference to Drangey Island. Grettir was blamed for a fire that killed several men and he was condemned to outlawry, meaning that he could be killed without penalty and that others were forbidden from helping him. The fugitive took cover with his brother and his slave on the isolated island for nearly 20 years, but was eventually killed by his adversaries on top of Drangey's rocky cliffs.

### BOOKING IS EASY!

#### 1) CALL TO REGISTER OR USE THE ONLINE REGISTRATION FORM

Call us at 1-800-419-3443. Our friendly customer service team is ready to assist you Mon—Fri, 9:00AM—5:00PM (EST). Or, you can complete the [online registration form](#) anytime.

#### 2) WE WILL CONFIRM YOUR REGISTRATION BY EMAIL

Within 24 hours you will receive an email confirmation of your registration along with some additional information and an invoice for the deposit due.

#### 3) RETURN THE PAPERWORK AND PAY YOUR DEPOSIT

Simply review the registration documents and pay your deposit within 14 days to finalize your booking.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)

### SAVE WITH SOJOURN COMBINATIONS!

Save \$250 per person and receive a free transfer between locations when you book two consecutive sojourns.

THIS TOUR COMBINES WELL WITH:

[ANGLO-SAXON BRITAIN](#)  
[SHAKESPEARE'S ITALY](#)

*“The absolute most amazing vacation I've ever been on...”*

—Jessica H., San Francisco, CA

## WEATHER & CLIMATE

In Iceland, the average daytime temperature around the coast during August is 50-55°F (10-12°C). A warm summer day would have temperatures around 68°F (20°C). Average daily sunshine in August is 5-6 hours and during the summer months the nights are bright. On clear days you have 24 hours of daylight and even the midnight sun near the Arctic Circle. However, the weather is extremely changeable and unpredictable so you should always be prepared for the unexpected.

*“We seemed to get special treatment everywhere we went. This made a good tour a fabulous tour.”*

- Richard H., Myrtle Beach, SC



The other-worldly landscape near Lake Myvatn in Northeast Iceland

## Tour Map



Legend	
<span style="color: blue;">.....</span>	Journey by coach
<span style="color: orange;">———</span>	Journey by boat
<span style="color: yellow;">———</span>	Horse trek
<span style="color: red;">●</span>	Overnight stop
<span style="color: white;">○</span>	Intermediate stop

You Stay in Scenic Locomes Across Iceland		
City/Town	Region	Nights
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Reykjavik	Capital	2
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Borgarnes	West Iceland	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Sauðárkrúkur	Northwest Iceland	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Lake Mývatn	Northeast Iceland	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Höfn	East Iceland	1
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Hvolsvöllur	South Iceland	1

# Lodging



## City Center Hotel—Reykjavik

This sophisticated boutique hotel is located at the heart of Reykjavik's historic center. All of the main sites as well as shopping, dining, and nightlife are within just a few steps. Each of its comfortable guest rooms is completely soundproofed and offers a tranquil abode from the bustle of the vibrant city. The hotel's central location makes it an ideal base from which to explore Reykjavik.



## Hótel Tindastóll—Sauðárkrókur

Recently renovated to include contemporary décor, Hótel Tindastóll is one of the oldest hotels in Iceland, first opening its doors in 1884. The rooms are named for the icons of Icelandic history and literature including the poet Hallgrímur Pétursson and the outlaw Grettir Ásmundarson. It is said that in 1944 the singer Marlene Dietrich stayed in one of the historic rooms here.



## Hótel Fljótshlíð—Hvolsvöllur

Hótel Fljótshlíð is a modern country-house hotel set on a working farm with sweeping views across the verdant Fljótshlíðarvegur Valley to the Þórsmörk Mountains, stunning Seljalandsfoss waterfall, and Eyjafjallajökull Volcano. Its on-site restaurant features a delicious farm-to-table menu and guests can relax in the gracious lounge or enjoy tranquil walks along the scenic country roads.

For a complete list of lodging on this tour, please visit [www.scholarlysojourns.com](http://www.scholarlysojourns.com).



## YOUR TOUR LEADER

A specialist in both medieval literature and fantasy, Michael Drout is Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Study of Medieval at Wheaton College in Norton, MA. He received his Ph.D. from Loyola University in 1997 and also holds M.A. degrees from Stanford (journalism) and the University of Missouri-Columbia (English literature) and a B.A. from Carnegie Mellon. He was awarded Wheaton's Faculty Appreciation Award (2002) and Prentice Professorship (2003-2008) for his teaching and has been a Millicent C. McIntosh Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Institute. Drout is also the editor of *J.R.R. Tolkien's Beowulf and the Critics* (which won the Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Inklings Studies for 2003), and the *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia* (2007), and is co-editor and co-founder of the journal *Tolkien Studies*. His many books include *How Tradition Works: A Meme-Based Poetics of the Anglo-Saxon Tenth Century* (2006), *Drout's Quick and Easy Old English* (2012), *Tradition and Influence in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (2013), and *The Lexomic Analysis of Beowulf* (2016). He has also recorded 13 programs for The Modern Scholar series, including *A Way With Words IV: Understanding Poetry*, which was a finalist for a 2010 Audie Award. His current research includes work on computer-assisted statistical analysis of texts that has been supported by three grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. His website is <http://michaeldrout.com>.



Seljalandsfoss—one of Iceland's most iconic and visually-stunning waterfalls

# Tour Details & Registration Information

## VIKINGS & SAGAS: AN ICELAND ODYSSEY

### 2018 DEPARTURE

August 5-12, 2018 (Sojourn #1171832)

### PRICE

\$4,695/person (double occupancy)

\$5,495/person (single occupancy)

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ONLINE](#)

### TOUR BEGINS

Reykjavik, Iceland

### TOUR CONCLUDES

Reykjavik, Iceland

### OPTIONAL AIR PACKAGE

From \$1,298/Person\*

\*Air package includes round-trip, economy airfare, airport transfers in Iceland and 100% travel assurance. Price subject to change until booked.

### REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

#### TO REGISTER

**Call us: 1-800-419-3443**—We are ready to assist you Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM (EST).

**Visit us at: [www.scholarlysojourns.com](http://www.scholarlysojourns.com)**—Here you will find an online registration form as well as a printable version.

#### PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Due within 14 days of registration: \$500/person deposit

Due 90 days prior to departure: Balance

#### TRAVEL INSURANCE

Scholarly Sojourns highly recommends that all of our tour participants purchase travel insurance to protect their trip. We will send further information once you have been confirmed on a sojourn.

#### PRICE INCLUDES:

Eight-day travel program of sightseeing, activities, and discussions led by Michael Drout; 7 nights accommodation in select, 4-star hotels (all with private bath); 7 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners, 2 receptions; visits, excursions and all other activities described in the day-to-day tour summary; all entrance fees; tour guides; ground transportation; the services of a dedicated Scholarly Sojourns Tour Director who accompanies the tour group; all gratuities (except for hotel porters). **Included meals are indicated in brackets following each daily description: B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner; R = Reception.**

#### PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

Airfare; airport transfers; meals not indicated in this detailed itinerary; beverage options other than water, wine, beer, or soft-drinks with group meals; local transportation by bus, taxi, metro or light rail; passport or visa fees and necessary photos; immunizations; excess baggage charges; airport taxes; travel insurance, medical, hospitalization, or evacuation costs; gratuities for hotel porters; laundry; other personal items, including incidental hotel charges; any other item not specifically indicated.

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE INFORMATION

#### MEETING LOCATION AND TIME

The meeting point for this sojourn is the Blue Lagoon Spa which is easily accessible from Iceland's main international airport, Keflavik. Those making their own air travel arrangements should choose a flight arriving between 5:00 AM and 10:00 AM on Sunday, August 5, 2018. This will give you time to travel to the Blue Lagoon where you will rendezvous with your Scholarly Sojourns Tour Director and other tour participants for the 12:00PM transfer to our hotel in Reykjavik.

#### CONCLUSION AND DEPARTURE

Your sojourn concludes at approximately 1:30 PM on Sunday, August 12, 2018, upon the group's return to Keflavik International Airport. If making your own flight/travel arrangements, please allow for enough time to check in prior to your flight's departure.

#### EARLY ARRIVAL OR LATE DEPARTURE

Scholarly Sojourns is happy to assist you with booking additional nights prior to the start of your tour or following its conclusion. Often we are able to secure better rates than are available to the public.

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