

ABSTRACT

Successfully executed modern kitchen ideas will balance what looks good with what works well, so it pays to do your research on both. A good kitchen designer can advise on layout, storage and appliances, but be prepared to think through every little detail early in the process, from utilities to your modern kitchen lighting options. The positions of services such as water supply, drainage, ventilation, lighting and outlets all need to be decided before the kitchen is installed. Make sure nothing's missed with this guide to how to design a modern kitchen.

TOP KITCHEN DESIGN STYLES

From contemporary to cottage, today's most popular looks inspire beautiful kitchen designs.



Long gone are the days when kitchens were dreary workspaces, hidden behind closed doors. Today's kitchens are central to everyday living and special-occasion

entertaining, often doing double duty as family rooms, offices and media centers, as well.

"The kitchen is truly the focus of the home today," says New York-based interior designer Andrew Suvalsky. "A great kitchen design will give essential clues to how the rest of the home can and should develop."

To meet the growing demand for showstopping kitchens, manufacturers now offer cabinets, countertops and fixtures in all of today's most popular design styles, from Old World to modern, city chic to country cozy. And your options aren't limited to what you'll find in the kitchen showrooms, either. Andrew and many other designers also turn to antiques stores, high-end furniture makers and salvage resellers when sourcing kitchen projects.

Whether you're designing your kitchen to match the decor of other rooms, or planning your whole home's look around the kitchen, you can make it a beautiful reflection of your personal style.

Country Farmhouse

Open and inviting, country kitchens allow you to enjoy the feeling of a weekend getaway right in your own home — even if you're smack in the middle of suburbia. Farmhouse tables and furniture-like cabinetry are popular conventions, and an eclectic mix of finishes helps create a comfortable, lived-in look. Country colors range from primary red, yellow and blue to aged tones of cream and pale yellow; whatever hues you favor, mixing rather than matching is the country way to go.

Modern

Sleek, sexy and sophisticated, the modern kitchen is designed to keep clutter to a minimum. Reflective surfaces and high-tech materials are central to the most modern kitchen, and exotic woods add a touch of luxury without frills or fabric. Iconic midcentury seating, including Bertoia stools and chairs by Eames and Cherner, are often chosen for a classically modern look; seating made of Lucite and highly polished woods is often chosen for a more current interpretation of the style.

Cottage Charm

Whether the space is large or tiny, cottage kitchens are designed to feel cozy and enveloping. With their homespun touches and imperfect finishes, cottage-style kitchens are always one of a kind and serve as the perfect backdrop for offbeat art and collectibles. If you're an avid flea marketer, this style will allow you to turn your weekend

finds into everyday pleasures. To marry serious cooking with whimsical style, look for high-end appliances in white or retro colors.

Contemporary

Where function meets family friendliness, you'll find the contemporary kitchen. The look is a carefully curated mix of materials: new and old, casual and polished. And because cooking with company has replaced cooking for company as the entertaining ideal, today's kitchen has plenty of room for hosts and guests to work and interact. Add gourmet cooking equipment, comfortable, durable seating and lots of open space for a kitchen perfectly suited to 21st-century living.

Mediterranean or French Country

Imagine a small hotel in the South of France, or a contessa's villa on the Amalfi Coast. The colors are sun-dappled. The surfaces are elegantly timeworn, and the atmosphere is pure romance. To replicate that Mediterranean ambiance anywhere, look for Provencal fabrics in rich tones of russet, cobalt and ochre, warm-toned wooden cabinetry, and handmade ceramic accessories. Rough-hewn textures, copper pots and rush seats add the final touches.

Coastal

Whether you live at the beach or just wish you did, you can count on cool shades of blue, green, white and sand to create a vacation-time mood. Seagrass and wicker seating are casual, comfortable and coastal. Fabrics and flooring designed to stand up to wet bathing suits make coastal-style kitchens easy to care for, and window treatments that allow for maximum sunlight will have everyone in let's-get-to-the-beach mode bright and early.

Old World

If you yearn for a time when materials were solid and craftsmanship was king, Old World design will embrace you in history and luxury. Look for dark mahogany finishes with lots of carving and detail, countertops with ogee or bullnosed edges, and stone or wooden floors. Add historical accessories and heavy fabrics, and enjoy time travel comfortably in your own home.

Traditional

Turkey on Thanksgiving, ham on Christmas Eve and chocolate chip cookies after school. A traditional kitchen is the perfect backdrop for a life that centers on family,

friends and holidays — but its clean, comfortable look is welcoming 365 days a year. Paneled or glass doors on cupboards contribute timeless style, and latched or icebox hardware is often added for period detail. White tiles add a clean look and help reflect light, and artisanal or vintage-look light fixtures add special touches.

MODERN KITCHEN DESIGN

Get the info you need on modern kitchen design, and prepare to give your kitchen an up-to-date facelift.



Modern kitchen design is sometimes broadly categorized as any style that's less traditional and more contemporary—but in fact, all modern design has specific roots in terms of its time period, style and inspirations.

Modern design started around World War I and generally featured flat surfaces, geometric forms, and little or no ornamentation or adornments. Modern kitchen cabinets, for example, are often defined by a sleek, angular and simple design, featuring little or no hardware, flush doors and flat surfaces. In the current era, modern kitchen design is part of a larger trend which has embraced midcentury modern

design and furniture, which introduced bold angles and curves to the design landscape. Midcentury modern design—generally recognized as originating in the Nordic countries in the mid 20th century—has now been incorporated into many modern kitchen designs.

Whereas traditional kitchen styles often focus more of their design on natural materials for cabinets, countertops, floors and furniture, modern kitchen designs depart from this aesthetic fairly frequently, often featuring man-made materials like laminate, ceramics and molded plastics. That's not to say that modern kitchens can't, shouldn't or don't feature man-made materials—they almost always do, and often to great effect. Granite countertops, sleek hardwood floors and expertly designed wooden furniture featuring the signature curves and angles of modern design can often be found in modern kitchens.

Accessories and other design flourishes can build on a modern kitchen theme. Cabinet doors may be replaced with frosted glass or a sleek laminate or wood veneer to create a modern look. Mixers, blenders, coffee makers and other accessories are available in bold colors and unique designs that seem positively science fictional. Cookware, utensils and flatware are all available with a modern twist, both in terms of design aesthetic and bold, up-to-date colors.

Flooring and tile work in modern kitchens tend to follow the overall aesthetic, adhering to the clean lines and relative simplicity recognizable in the broader design. Tile floors or backsplashes of slate or granite in geometric patterns are common, as are subway tiles used for simple, elegant backsplashes.

Finally, furniture choices can contribute greatly to any modern kitchen design. Tables, stools, chairs and benches are available in an array of angular and flowing designs. Materials like wood, plastic and metal are employed in a modern or industrial style, often featuring bold and bright colors that can add great visual interest to any elegant and efficient modern kitchen design.

MAKE YOUR KITCHEN LOOK EXPENSIVE

Your kitchen is one of the most-used rooms of your home, so why not decorate it so that it's a place where you actually enjoy spending time? Keeping a few small strategies in mind will help you turn your food prep space into an expensive looking spot that you'll fully enjoy spending time in, even if you're simply preparing to run the dishwasher.

Display Some Art



"It makes the space feel thoughtful and like an extension of the rest of the home instead of 'just' a kitchen with cabinets, countertops, and appliances," designer Caroline Harvey says. Of course, you won't want to spend a ton on artwork that will be displayed in an inherently mess-prone area.

Digital downloads that you can reprint or thrifted pieces are therefore smart choices for this heavily trafficked space.

And why not go for a food or drink theme while you're at it? This can be done in a tasteful manner without looking cheesy (promise!).

Search for vintage-inspired fruit prints or even frame menus from your favorite bars and restaurants from your travels. These simple touches will bring a smile to your face even while completing the most mundane cooking tasks.

Think About Lighting



Harvey considers light fixtures to be "an easy and impactful way to make a kitchen feel more expensive" and says they're worth the splurge. "It is the one place I always tell my clients to spend their money—lighting makes a space!

Large gold lantern pendants and chandeliers elevate kitchens from ho-hum to 'wow." Placing a small lamp on your countertop is also sweet—and functional. Mini lamps are having a major moment these days, and you can create a stylish vignette by placing one beside a stack of cookbooks.

Arrange a Bar Station

No longer is it acceptable to stash all of your alcohol and entertaining supplies on top of the fridge like you did during your college days. "A curated bar area is another way to make a kitchen look and feel upscale," Harvey explains. "There is something fancy about nice wine and liquor bottles, a crystal decanter, gorgeous stemware, and bar accessories."

If you like to entertain frequently, designate a small drawer for special cocktail napkins, paper straws, coasters, and the like. Having these festive touches on hand will make even the most impromptu of happy hours feel a little more luxe.

Mix Your Metals

Give yourself permission to switch things up. "By mixing metals, such as stainless steel appliance with brushed brass plumbing fixtures, or black hardware with a great accent colored stove, gives your kitchen a curated feel instead of a store bought set feel," designer Blanche Garcia says. "Think [in terms of] fashion, you wouldn't wear a matching set of earrings, necklace, and bracelet. This feels much more custom."

Tackle Cabinet and Drawer Pulls

This is a quick fix that will make a lasting impact. "Oversized cabinet pulls give weight to the space and immediately upgrade inexpensive cabinetry," Garcia says. Best of all, this is a renter friendly upgrade as well—just store the original pulls somewhere safe so that you can put them back prior to move-out. Then, when you're ready to move on from your current digs, pack up the hardware you purchased and bring it with you to your next place.

Decant, Decant, Decant

Toss unsightly bags and boxes and decant items such as coffee grounds and cereal into aesthetically pleasing glass jars. Note: this setup won't just look pretty, it will also prevent, uh, critters from making their way into your snack stash (it happens to the best of us!). If you feel like going the extra mile, print out labels to keep track of exactly what you're placing in each jar. Organization has never felt so good.

Keep the Space Clean

A clean and maintained kitchen is an expensive looking kitchen. Don't let dirty dishes and plates pile up, go through your cabinets and part with chipped plates or cracked glassware, and stay on top of expiration dates for food and condiments. Even if your kitchen is small or part of a temporary space, treating it with a little love will work wonders in making the space shine.

Upgrade Your Day-to-Day Product.

Pour dish soap into a chic dispenser so that you don't have to stare at a blah bottle with an uninspiring logo, replace raggedy dish towels with some fresh finds, and stop

stashing utensils in that empty oatmeal jar once and for all. Treating yourself to aesthetically pleasing yet functional pieces will help your kitchen appear more sleek.

HOW TO DESIGN A MODERN KITCHEN



The answer to the question of how to design a modern kitchen is to consider all the elements of the room along with its overall look.

Designing a kitchen starts with inspiration but, like any kitchen, a modern version must provide adequate storage space, sufficient countertops, and fit all the necessary appliances in a layout that makes preparing meals easy and practical, and accommodates everyone who shares the room.

Our guide includes the steps to follow in designing a modern kitchen plus guidance from the experts.

Where Do I Start When Designing A Modern Kitchen?

A new kitchen is always an investment, so be clear about your budget, allowing for features such as modern kitchen island ideas. Window shop and see what good ideas pop up in the high end showrooms, but doing the math will guide you to a shortlist of potential companies within your range.

Visit as many showrooms as you need to. Open doors, check the quality and talk to showroom staff about their design and installation processes.

When you like what you see, book an appointment with a planner or designer. You may see just the one or perhaps several. And don't be put off if you like the furniture but aren't clicking with the person – ask to see someone else on the team.

A large white kitchen with gray stone flooring and gloss dining table illustrating how to design a modern kitchen.



If you're planning a home addition that includes a kitchen, bear in mind that you really do need to be layout-ready stage before services go in, and having a kitchen designer onboard early on allows for small tweaks in the build that might deliver big wins.

How Do I Design A Modern Kitchen Layout?

A good place to start is to list the things that do and don't work about your current kitchen; your designer will also want to understand how you live, what you cook, what you store, who does the cooking and how you shop, in order to integrate the right kitchen storage ideas and appliances.

Designing a modern kitchen featuring a pale gray scheme with glossy cabinetry and a long island with bar stools.



'In a smaller or more awkward space, it is important to ensure storage is planned carefully and maximized to its full potential, says Andrew Story, head of product development at Roux Kitchens.

'Full-length cabinets, deep drawer organization and pull-out storage are much more viable options than traditional shelving, while bi-fold units make workflow in the kitchen smoother as they can be left open during food prep and cooking.'

There are tried and tested kitchen layouts that work with spaces of all shapes and sizes, and a good designer will have worked with them all.

Galley Layouts For Modern Kitchens

Modern kitchen design featuring a galley layout in a sleek white scheme with wooden open shelving.



Long narrow rooms suit the classic galley kitchen layout – one or two long stretches of cabinets. This is one of the most ergonomic designs and it is popular in modern open plan set ups.

U-Shaped And L-Shaped Layouts For Modern Kitchens

A contemporary U-shaped kitchen with blue and red cabinetry and pale plaster pink statement wall.

Other popular layouts are U-shape kitchens and L-shape kitchens, with both suiting squarer rooms. Again, this can be set within a larger room.

The trusty work triangle that puts sink, hob and refrigeration within easy reach of each other still holds true, and works in all of these layouts.

Designing a modern kitchen illustrated in a forest green scheme with wooden flooring, a taupe kitchen island and white countertops.

But with bigger spaces come other concerns. Clear and obvious flow through the space is important, as is safety and keeping children and guests away from hotspots.

The range or cooktop and wall ovens need countertop space nearby for hot dishes and utensils.

Most kitchen companies supply some form of CAD drawing to help visualize a layout in 3D.

Where Should I Put My Kitchen Appliances?

When placing key features such as sink and hob, view can be important, with island sinks and hobs popular with cooks who like to chat as they prep.

With the key elements in place, storage can be designed around each work station, with pan drawers next to the cooking appliance and the trash can close to the sink.

White saucepan draws illustrating modern kitchen design in a white scheme.

Again, services such as water supply and drainage will dictate where wet appliances can go, and the work flow should dictate what sits next to what.

Think about how you use the kitchen – for example, it's good to have pan and tableware storage near the dishwasher for ease of unloading.

With the kitchen used for living and entertaining, there is a growing desire for utility rooms to take the mess and workings of the kitchen away, freeing dining and entertaining spaces from the noise of washing machines and dishwashers.

Designing a modern kitchen illustrated in an all blue scheme with wooden flooring and a small dog by the door.

'The open plan kitchen should be as much about aesthetic as it is about functionality,' says Tony Wilson, head of kitchen channel at Grohe(opens in new tab). 'The emphasis is on minimalism and clear sightlines, uninterrupted by bulky appliances or clutter on the countertops

'Kettle hot water taps are becoming increasingly popular in copper, brass, nickel and in graphite to meet the growing demand for dark-toned and industrially styled kitchens.'

What Colors And Styles Are On Trend For 2022?

Kitchen trends currently focus on organic and natural finishes such as rich wood, burnished brass, natural stone and a mix of textures.

Designing a modern kitchen, in a turquoise scheme with herringbone wood flooring and a mix of metals and textures.

As we spend so much time in our kitchens, we want them to look less functional, hiding practicality behind tall pantry doors or disappearing to another room altogether – utilities and walk-in pantries have never been so desirable. And the furniture that remains is beginning to look like furniture, with table style islands and perhaps a hint of a glamorous bar.

Scrolling through pictures of kitchens and making a moodboard of your favorite ideas is the best way to inspire your remodel and keep up to date with the latest trends.

Designing a modern kitchen, illustrated in a dark gray scheme with uplit marble kitchen island and marble countertops and wall.

Smooth modern surfaces such as composite quartz (ground minerals in resin) remain popular as they are naturally anti-bacterial and easy to wipe clean. Kitchen color ideas are still dominated by the dark and moody, with rich wood, rough texture and deep shades of blue and green. We seem to be feeling bolder than ever with accent colors and finishes in our favorite room.

What Should Be Included In A Modern Kitchen?

A modern kitchen should include cabinets that are sleek in their design. Team these with a countertop in materials such as marble or granite, or quartz, which can reproduce the look of natural stone, but is easier to maintain.

Appliances should have the same fuss-free appearance as the cabinets and counters if on show, but integrating them will keep the look of the room streamlined.

SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE YOUR KITCHEN LOOK MORE MODERN

You've probably heard this factoid before: The kitchen is the most used room in the house. It's where you lovingly prepare family meals, bake birthday cakes and sneak a secret cocktail so you can make it through Christmas dinner without snapping at your mother-in-law. It stands to reason that if you spend the most time in one room, you should actually like the way it looks.

Here's the downside of the kitchen being the most popular room in your house. It's crammed full of people almost every waking hour of the day. Clutter piles up again before you can clear another countertop. Once-cool kitchen design elements fade and quickly grow outdated, because who has time to renovate a kitchen that's always in use?

Before your "kitchen depression" sets in, there's something you need to know. Interior design experts swear by just a few simple kitchen updates to completely transform a tired room. Try one of these simple kitchen facelifts, and you won't even recognize your favorite room the next time you cook dinner:

1. Add a fresh coat of paint

This trick is so easy even the laziest homeowner can do it (i.e., me). Painting cabinets is one of the simplest and most effective ways to update an aging kitchen, says Denise Cheshire, home stager at the Home Staging Institute. "A dark kitchen with dated wood cabinets can benefit from a fresh coat of glossy white paint."

Justin Riordan, founder of Spade and Archer Design Agency in Portland, Oregon, explains how to modernize your kitchen cabinets with a quick coat of white paint, "Wash with TSP: Be sure to wear gloves and a mask and properly ventilate the space. Prime: I recommend B-I-N primer from Zinsser. Again, wear gloves and a mask, properly ventilate the space. Paint cabinets: I think Miller Paint, Spade and Archer No. 1 in semigloss is the world's most perfect white."

2. Breathe life with flowers

Here's the perfect design tip for those reading who don't really plan on following through with any of these kitchen updates (I know who you are): Just add flowers. And

water. That's it! Kelsey Harper, florist on BloomNation and owner and designer at Flower Girl Los Angeles, explains how she keeps her kitchen feeling fresh without much effort, "Extra tall branches like cherry blossom or dogwood on a kitchen island can help feel like you've brought the outside in. I throw a few stones in the bottom to secure the branches from tipping and to weigh it down a bit."

Harper adds, "Potted orchids add elegance to any kitchen. Not to mention, watering them with a few ice cubes at the base is the easiest way, and you'll never forget if they're near the freezer."

3. Get a new backsplash

If you are going to spend cash money on one kitchen upgrade, move a brand-new backsplash to the top of your list. Even to my untrained eye, it's clear to see that a tasteful, well-installed backsplash can instantly make a kitchen look more modern — and more expensive. Erin Davis of Mosaik Design and Remodeling in Portland, Oregon, endorses updating a kitchen backsplash with modern materials. Davis tells SheKnows, "This can range from hugely popular geometric tiles in white or lighter grey tones to a sheet of glass to stainless steel. Not only are these materials sleek and modern, but they are super durable and easy to maintain. Rectilinear porcelain tiles are also a good bet. 4"x24" tiles set in a subway pattern are a great look."

Patricia Davis Brown, owner of Patricia Davis Brown Designs, qualifies, "The backsplash is the most visible material in your kitchen, and it has a big impact on the character you wish to portray. Tile backsplashes offer plenty of modern selections to choose from and are a great choice."

4. Replace hardware

When you think of kitchen hardware as your kitchen's jewelry, as Davis Brown sees it, replacing old knobs actually becomes fun — you're just shopping for some new kitchen accessories. Davis Brown says, "Replacing the hardware can take 10 years off an old kitchen. Hardware is the jewelry to the cabinets. Just by replacing a traditional, ornate handle with a sleeker, more modern one will change the look of your kitchen." Cheshire adds, "New cabinet hardware, such as chrome cup pulls, can be a nice update for not a lot of money."

There's still hope if you're strapped for cash and are in desperate need of a hardware update. Liz Toombs, owner of Polka Dots & Rosebuds Interiors, recommends, "If you're on a tight budget, spray-painting existing hardware saves money while still giving you a whole new look."

5. Rethink storage

You may scoff at the idea that making upgrades to your cabinets can transform the look and feel of your kitchen, but according to Laura Nicosia, organization guru at ShelfGenie, these subtle storage changes can make or break your kitchen appeal. Nicosia recommends starting by removing cabinet stiles. She explains, "Some base-cabinets will include a stile, or the vertical piece of wood that extends from the top of the cabinet to the bottom, dividing the cabinet in two halves. This can interfere with storage and prevent easy access to heavy or bulky appliances. Skilled installers can remove the stile and attach it to the inside of the cabinet door, freeing up more space and improving access. This will allow for the installation of Glide-Out shelving that spans the entire width of the cabinet and will easily store more appliances."

Jennifer Adams, host of Home & Lifestyle on OWNZONES, will do you one better: "Try open shelving to add a fresh look to your kitchen. This is a particularly good option if you have brightly colored plates and bowls, since you'll get to show them off."

6. Trade in old appliances

For those who have extra reno money to spare and want to improve their home's value, updating old appliances is just what the interior designer ordered. "Stainless steel appliances are not only the most practical and versatile, but they are an expected standard in any up-to-date kitchen," says Olga Adler of Olga Adler Interiors.

Adams calls appliance upgrades a vital "splurge" that can benefit your kitchen style for years to come. When you consider the fact that high-quality appliances are both useful and easy on the eyes, Adams' advice just makes sense: "I highly recommend splurging on luxe appliances, such as a large industrial stove. Not only will this completely change the feel of the kitchen, but it also adds quite a bit of utility!"

BEST WAY TO CLEAN YOUR KITCHEN AND MAKE IT LOOK MODERN

Four industry pros plot the steps to speed your routine and guarantee a thorough clean.

Counters

Clear the counters of anything that doesn't belong: straggling mail, cookbooks, and permission slips awaiting signatures.

Sink

Fill the sink with hot water and a few squirts of dish soap. Drop in items that need soaking, like the crisper drawer, the dish rack, and the microwave turntable.

Refrigerator

Empty the refrigerator, tossing anything that has expired. Throw dirty food storage containers into the sink to soak. Working from top to bottom, wipe down the shelves with a paper towel or a rag spritzed with a nontoxic all-purpose cleaner.

High Zones

Dust the high zones, knocking dirt and debris to the floor, where they will be swept up later. Using a telescoping duster, start right above the sink and work your way around the room, cleaning upper corners, light fixtures, and tops of cabinets. Don't forget the top of the refrigerator. You're ready to move on when you're back at the sink.

Upper Cabinets

Clean the upper cabinets and anything else on the walls, including a mounted microwave. Spray the microwave interior with an all-purpose cleaner and let sit for two minutes. With a damp, soapy cloth, wipe down the exterior. (If it's stainless steel, use a cloth moistened with diluted white vinegar, instead of soapy water, to clean any fingerprints.) Next, wipe the doors and the pulls of the upper cabinets and anything else (frames, hooks, vent grates) you encounter as you circle the room. With a fresh damp, soapy cloth, wipe down the backsplash if you have one.

Microwave

Go back to the microwave. Your two minutes are up. Wipe the solution from the inside using a dry cloth. It's OK if crumbs fall onto the stove or the floor.

Stovetop

Spray the stovetop with an all-purpose cleaner and let it sit for a few minutes. For stubborn stains, add a powdered scrub that won't scratch. We like Bar Keepers Friend (\$5, amazon.com).

Wipe the stovetop with a clean, dry cloth and, again, just let crumbs fall to the floor. It's more efficient to get them at the end. When you're finished, swap out the cloth to keep grease from transferring to another surface.

Dishwasher

Did you know that over 45% of Australian households have a dishwasher, and 29% use their dishwashers daily? Dishwashers are highly efficient machines that help eliminate all the dirt and gunk from your dishes and make them shine and sparkle. But over time, and especially in areas with high hard water content like Adelaide, your dishwasher will develop thick calcium and magnesium deposits.

These will look like thick white or greyish clumps on the insides of your dishwasher. This is because when hard tap water comes in contact with the heat in your dishwasher, it solidifies the calcium and magnesium in the hard water.

These deposits then stick to the bottom and insides of your dishwasher and are called limescale or hard water deposits. This can hamper the working of your machine, and thus you must clean and descale your dishwasher as soon as possible.

Coffeemaker

Clean the coffeemaker, toaster, stand mixer, and other small appliances from top to bottom, using glass cleaner or a multisurface formula (spray the cloth rather than the appliance) or a cleaning wipe. Dip drip trays or crumb catchers in the sink's leftover warm, soapy water, then rinse and dry.

Countertops

Scrub the countertops with small, circular motions, using a cleaner formulated for your surface.

CONCLUSION

From updating finishes and materials to bringing in color, illumination, and space, there are options abound for your outdated kitchen. Pick out what's right for your home and give your kitchen that modern face-lift it deserves.

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