

WALLEYE FISHING

Quick Guide



Tailored Tackle®
Fishing Kits & Combos

Lure Quick Sheet

Deep Diving Crankbait



Target near shore structural transitions like drop offs and points (8-15 Ft). Steadily retrieve & cover water. Add split shots for deeper depths.

Casting

Troll over expansive, consistent structure like mud flats and mid-lake reefs. Use planar boards at 8-15 Ft, weighted trolling rigs at 20+ Ft

Trolling

Neon Disc Worm Jig



Great for targeting river Walleyes in back-water sloughs with submerged cover. Bump and thud against trees with this bright profile.

Casting

Jig in large 3-5 Ft swoops in stained water to call in Walleye. More action drives the disc rings to vibrate, calling in Walleye from afar.

Drifting

Jig + Curl Tail Grub



Search for Walleye in stained water along rocky shorelines ideally around points and bends. Feel the rocks thump each time you drop.

Casting

Drift through elevated mid-lake structures like humps and sunken islands. Bounce right off the bottom, pause often and twitch.

Drifting

Paddle Tail Swimbait



Swim 2-3 Ft off the bottom near shore, stopping abruptly to let the shad fall to bottom and pause. This mimics a wounded baitfish.

Casting

Great for clear water lakes when baitfish are balling deep. Search for schools of bait in deeper basins, positioning your drift over them.

Trolling

Worm Spinners



Drift or slow troll (< 1 mph) along the edges of weed lines in the Fall, or along mudflats and reefs in the Summer. For shallow Wall-eyes < 15 Ft, use a walking weight for more sensitivity. In depths > 15 Ft, or a heavy chop, weight your spinner with a bottom bouncer.

Slip Bobber Rig



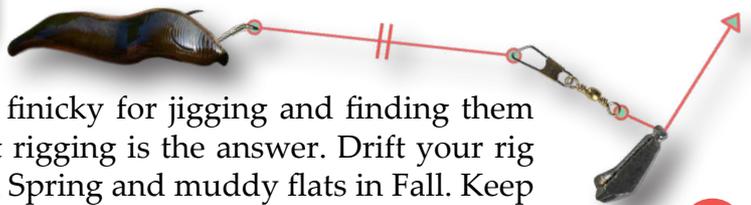
Set your depth by clipping on the depth finder and submerging your rig. Shift the tie up on your line until the bobber sinks only 2-3 Ft in the water. Bait your hook and cast out. Let the wind take your bobber ~30 Yds away to cover more distance. Any further and you will be set to the wrong depth. When you have a hit, let the fish take the bobber all the way down before setting the hook. Reset your depth and change your bait every 30 Min, and after every catch. See step by step rigging instructions in the following section.

Live Bait Jigs

The quintessential Walleye setup, jigging live bait along structural features catches fish. Hook on a leech near the sucker to a 1/8 Oz jig, or a minnow by the nose to a 1/4 Oz jig. Fish in 10-30 Ft of water, bouncing these baits along the bottom. Let them hit the ground, lift back up and pause. Ideal for rocky, muddy, or sandy bottoms without snaggy weeds. You can pitch your jig by casting and retrieving. However, the most popular method is to drift your jig along the bottom, start 6" off and lift then drop every ~15 seconds.



Live Bait Rig



When Walleye are too finicky for jigging and finding them is a challenge, live bait rigging is the answer. Drift your rig along rocky bottoms in Spring and muddy flats in Fall. Keep your line taut, feeling the bottom. Set the hook after 2-3 taps.

Walleye Basics

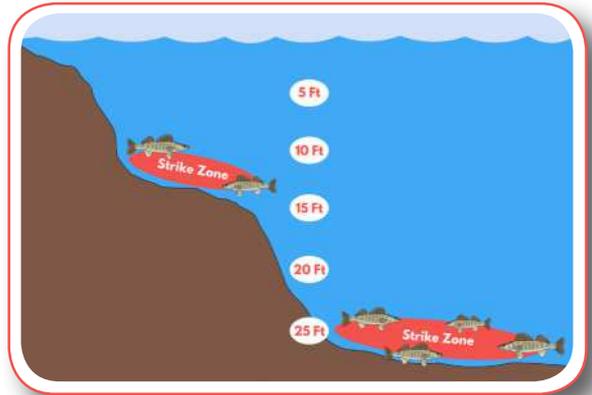
Walleye are a highly sought after species popular in the Midwest, Upper-Northeast, and Upper-Northwest known for their challenge as a sport fish as well as premium table fare. Emphasis on "Upper" - they like the cold.

Depth

Walleyes are most commonly caught in the depth range of 13-20 Ft, but their overall range is 7-30 Ft. The range is dependent on temperature, seasonally and daily. In the spring and fall, Walleyes will frequent shallower areas, spending the majority of their time in 10-15 Ft of water. Mornings and nights, when it is cooler, they will be in the higher end of the spectrum (10-12 Ft) while during day they will typically be in the lower end of the spectrum (13-15 Ft). Hot summer months cause Walleye to push deeper (20-25 Ft), moving lower towards 20 Ft at night and 25 Ft during the day. When summer cools down into Fall it is prime time to be targeting Walleye. They are going to be ranging in depths between 15-20 Ft and are feeding actively in preparation for winter.

Strike Zone

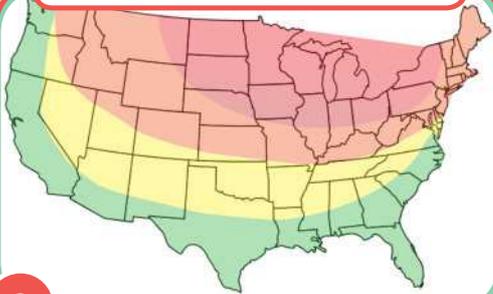
Walleye most often hug the bottom regardless of depth or location. Therefore, your bait needs to be presented 6 inches - 2 Ft. off the bottom ("Strike Zone"). The challenge of Walleye fishing is being able to present a lively bait within that Strike Zone while depth, structure and general conditions change.



Seasonality

Walleyes, near the top of the food chain, respond to the effects caused by the bottom of the food chain. As available sunlight rises in spring, plankton begin to activate, baitfish spree on the new food source, and the shock to food supply drives Walleye crazy! A similar effect takes place in Fall when the bottom of the food chain begins to regress, causing a flurry of consumption before winter. Fishing for Walleye is hot whenever there are abrupt changes in the food supply. These changes occur in Spring & Fall.

Density of Walleye Population



Location

Finding structure is usually the key to targeting Walleye. **The three most common structural features are: shore line points, mid-lake humps, expansive flats & reefs.** Walleye typically like to position themselves according to structure features for ambush points and navigation. The rocky points are your primary location for spring, deeper mid-lake humps in summer, and insect breeding flats in the fall.

How To Fillet a Walleye

(1) Lay the Fish on its side so that the spines are facing you. **(2)** Locate the side fin and slice down from the side fin back towards the spine, deep enough to pass the meat.



(3) Turn the knife horizontal and cut front to back, just above the spines. **(4)** About halfway back, poke the knife carefully through the fish and continue cutting towards the tail. **(5)** Apply pressure, slicing back forth against the spine until you reach the tail.



(6) Open up and carefully cut around the ribcage from the top to the bottom, in an arc towards the belly. **(7)** Cut in a straight line along the belly until you reach the tail. **(8)** Do not slice off the side of the fish yet. Flip it over, still attached to the tail.

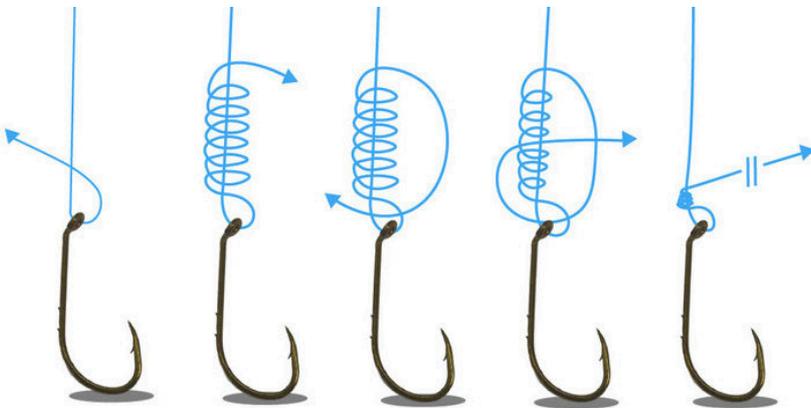


(9) Press the tail down with your fingers, slice down at the edge of the tail until you reach the skin. **(10/11)** Lay your knife flatly angled towards the skin, and carefully shave against the skin back and forth. After the fillet is removed, repeat on the opposite side.



Rigging a Slip Bobber

1. Thread 2-3 Ft of line through the slip tie's tube and slide the tie off the tube. Pull the tube off the line, holding the tie in place.
2. Pull on both tag ends until the slip tie is lightly snug on your line.
3. Thread on a neon bead, this keeps your line from chaffing against the slip bobber. Then thread on your Slip Float, neon side first.
4. Push your bobber against the bead + tie, tighten the tie tight enough to stop the bobber but still loose enough to move up and down your line with finger pinched pressure. Clip the tag ends down to 1/2".
5. Tie on your hook with a Clinch Knot. (See Below)



How to Tie a Clinch Knot

6. Pinch on a 3/0 Split Shot Sinker about 1-2 Ft above the hook so your Slip Float stands straight in the water.
7. Push the slip tie up or down to set depth.
8. We recommend Worms, Minnows or Leeches for bait.



Working a Slip Bobber

The Bait

Start with smaller crappie/flat head minnows (2-3") hooked by their lips. If using a larger size or a larger body type bait like a shiner minnow (3-4"), hook through the back body just before the tail. For leeches, hook right below their sucker just once. For Nightcrawlers, halve them, hook the end 2-3 times over, balling it up, and then leave 1.5-2" trailing at the cut end.

The Presentation

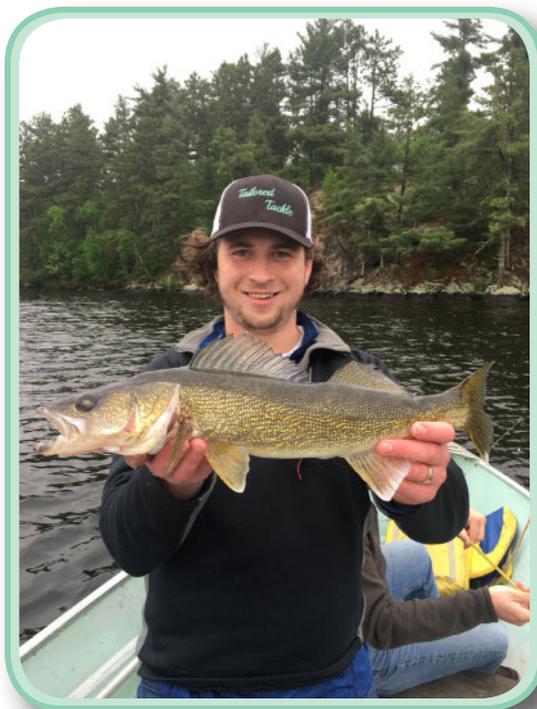
Place the setup rig in the water and adjust the slip-tie up your line so that the distance between the slip-tie and the hook is 1-1.5 Ft above the depth. This will allow you to cast the rig to the area of your desired depth (most often 13-20 Ft depth) while also allowing your bait to sink to the Strike Zone (6 In - 2 Ft off the bottom). Slip bobbers are best used letting the bait present itself in a lively fashion. Let your bobber sit in the correct depth for 5-10 minutes. If no bite occurs, continue to cover more water, check your bait and depth, then repeat.

The Bite

Often Walleyes will do their notorious "Tap-Tap" before they commit to the bait. This will make the bobber go halfway under on Tap #1, halfway to 3/4' of the way down on Tap #2, and then a slow dive of the bobber down and sideways.

The Hook Set

Once the bobber is diving downwards, allow the Walleye to "take your bait" for 15 seconds. Reel in slowly, removing the slack from the line, but not so much so that you connect with the Walleye immediately. Once taut, you need to set the hook by pulling on the taut line, raising your tip of the rod by about 3/4 of a foot from the current position towards your shoulder and reel.



Clip a depth-finder onto your hook to quickly set a slip bobber depth

Fishing with Jigs

Jigging bait for Walleye is the second most versatile setup for new and average anglers and often the most popular way to target Walleye by seasoned veterans.

The Setup

Remove the jig's eyelet paint covering the hole in which you will thread your line. Do so by taking a similar sized jig and scraping the paint with the tip of its hook, removing the base layer of paint. Pushing through the eyelet with the hook, rotate the piercing hook back and forth once initially through. Pierce once more from the opposite side, rotating again to thoroughly clean. Tie your line directly to the eyelet of the jig. Use a 1/8 Oz jig for smaller profile bait (2-3"), or a 1/4 Oz jig for larger profile baits (3-5"). Florescent/bright colors are important for Walleye.



The Bait

Start with a crappie/flat head minnow in the 2-3" range hooking through the lips (closer to the head). A comparable approach would be a leech about 2" when dry and about 3-4" when extended in water. If targeting larger Walleyes, jigging a 3-5" golden shiner on a 1/4 Oz jig is the correct approach. If live bait is unattainable or you prefer a more advanced approach, review the Artificial Plastics section.



Fishing with Jigs

The Presentation

Similar to the slip bobber rig, your goal is to have the bait presented in a lively manner within the Walleye Strike Zone about 6 In -2 Ft off of the bottom (most often 13-20 Ft depth). If fishing from a boat, you will have more control on depth. Drop your jig until it hits bottom, reel your line in 1-2 cranks so you're right off the bottom. Lift the tip of your rod about 1 Ft then let the jig drop back down (jigging). Lift and drop every 5 to 10 seconds, keeping your line taught. Cover water with a trolling motor set at .5-.75 mph or allow your boat to drift with the wind/current. If you are on a shore/dock or an anchored boat, cast your jig and bounce it along the bottom. Make sure to pause 10 seconds after each jig.

The Bite

Jigging is more aggressive. Often a Walleye will still take the bait with a classic "Tap Tap," but half the time the Walleye will smoke the bait with a straight tug due to the aggressive presentation of jigging. Allow 2-3 bites for the Walleye to take the bait on a tap. If it is a hard pull, do your best to keep the line taut, move your rod forward with the fish for a moment then set the hook.



Crankbait

This is your searching mechanism. If you have the luxury of 2 rods it is good to have 1 set up with a crankbait and another with a slip bobber.

If you are not sure where to start, you can cover a lot of water with a crankbait,

then once you find some fish, switch over to your slip bobber to key in. Cranks are also a good option if you are fishing from a shore or dock and would like to catch a Walleye but are open to multiple species. This technique is most often used for Bass and Pike, so you are sure to get a mixed bag when casting crankbaits.



The Setup

Tie a smaller snap swivel directly to your line, open the snap swivel and thread through the metal split ring. Be sure to securely lock the snap back in place. While less hardware is beneficial and you can tie your line directly to the split ring, the snap swivel helps prevent your line from catching with treble hooks. Depending on the thickness of your line, a snap swivel lets the crankbait rattle and wobble more effectively.

The Presentation

The most common technique is driving the lure down a few feet, then pausing to let the crank float back up (“cranking the bait”). This is best performed in shallow water during the evening when Walleye move in close. The other approach is a slow and steady retrieve, keeping the crankbait near the Strike Zone as much as possible. You can get the crankbait deeper by adding split 3-5 split shots up your line in 1 Ft increments. Once you hit the bottom, steadily retrieve, knocking your lure against the ground. If you are fishing in 13-15 feet of water you can also troll the crankbait behind the boat with no additional trolling gear. Let your line out for about 50 Ft behind the boat and troll at a pace of 1-1.5 mph. This method can be done from kayak or paddle boat as that is generally the speed you will paddle at. Trolling at depths deeper than 15 Ft requires more advanced trolling gear and methods.

The Hook Set

With this aggressive approach, you should be setting your hook on the first sense of a bite. Either the Walleye has clobbered it or it hit the body of the crankbait. You want to do your best to secure the treble hooks in or around the Walleye’s mouth. An immediate hook set is the most effective method for either bite. If you miss, crank down a few feet and pause for a re-strike.



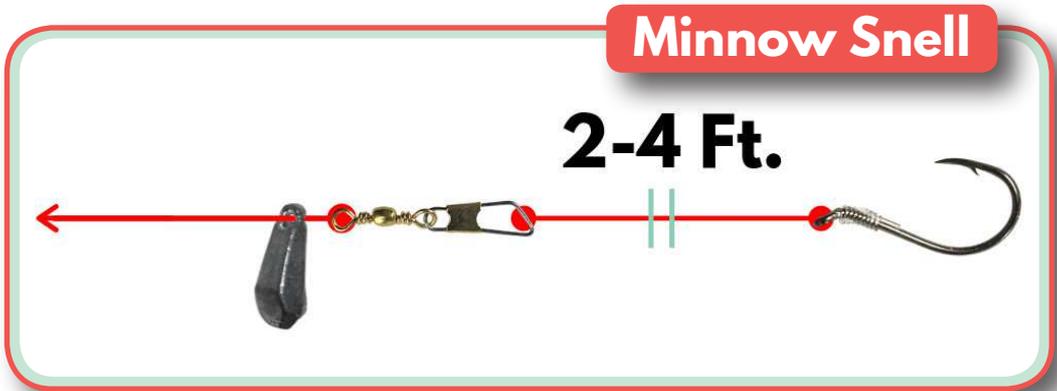
Live Bait Rig

This is a combo approach that allows you to cover a lot of water like jigging, but delivers the finesse presentation credited to the slip bobber approach. Unfortunately, this technique is best served on a boat. All other tactics available in the Tailored Tackle Walleye Kit can be used on boat, shore, or dock.

The Setup

Minnow Snell: Thread your line through a 1/4 Oz walking weight with the numbered side facing down, away from your rod tip so that the bent foot portion of the weight is arched downward. Tie your line to the barrel of a snap swivel. Open the snap swivel and thread through the Snell loop of a live bait rig.

Worm Harness: Snap your worm harness snell into a 1/2 Oz bottom bouncer designed specifically for dragging spinners along the bottom and letting them spin consistently in the strike zone.



Bait Type

Minnow Snell: With a natural flash, the minnow Snell is a monofilament leader with a single octopus hook #4. Most commonly rigged with a crappie or flat head minnow about 2-3", thread the hook through the lips, enabling a lively presentation. This presentation is delivered by the bait itself, swimming 2-4 Ft behind the walking weight dragged along the bottom.

Worm Harness: This rig utilizes a blade and beads to add flash to a Nightcrawler dragged along the bottom. This rig has two #2 octopus hooks in order to present the full form of a Nightcrawler without risking a missed bite. On the first hook nearest the blade/beads, thread the head of the Nightcrawler twice over to secure it. Allow the night crawler to stretch out and pierce it once halfway down.

Live Bait Rig

The Presentation

Minnow Snell: Drifting in appropriate conditions with wind and chop pushing your boat at around 0.5-1 mph is ideal for this technique. The slow drift can also be manufactured by the lower settings of a trolling motor. The slower speed will allow you to cover water while also enabling the live minnow to naturally swim around and above the bottom's debris. Keep your line taut, feeling the walking weight against the floor of the bottom to ensure you are at the appropriate depth.

Worm Harness: In order for the blade to consistently spin for flash you will need to troll the bait with a trolling motor at 1-1.5 mph depending on conditions. Always maintain a speed that allows you to tick against the bottom with the bouncer. Keep your line taut, monitoring for taps that differentiate from the bottom ticks.

Worm Harness



The Hook Set

Both rigs will have a similar bite and hook set. This takes advanced experience as it is often confusing and difficult to differentiate between the weight knocking and pulling against the bottom versus an actual Walleye bite. The difference is subtle and called a tap. A tap is an abrupt vibration through the tip of your rod down to the line in your reel. While bottom debris simply thumps and pulls against your rod tip, a tap can be felt in your reel hand as it vibrates through the line.

The first tap is often followed by a second tap, the "Tap-Tap". When a tap occurs, wait until the second tap. After the second tap let your bail open and count to 5. Reel the line taut until it is about to connect with the Walleye. Once the tension peaks, set the hook.

Artificial Plastics

If you are a beginner or average angler, use live bait when targeting Walleye. They are finicky and most often need a very finesse, realistic approach. However, we recommend artificial plastics and provide them in our Walleye kit for some common circumstances.

Not everyone has immediate access to live bait and we want to give our customers everything they need to get started from a tackle perspective. Second, some bodies of water have a bountiful amount of distinct species that can pester your live bait approach, preventing any shot at a Walleye. Lastly, some amazing bodies of water have robust Walleye populations and utilizing soft plastics can help target the largest, most aggressive fish.

The Setup

Plastics should be used with jig heads so you can deliver the lure into the strike zone. For smaller plastics (3-4") apply to a 1/8 Oz jig, for larger plastics (4-5") apply to a 1/4 Oz jig. Pierce the plastic from the base of the head, threading the body of the plastic until the head reaches the base of the jig head. Finally, pierce the hook back out from the plastic so that it is laying horizontal with the jig head and the hooks gap is exposed. Tie directly to your monofilament or fluorocarbon line.



The Presentation

To give the artificial action, you need to cast and retrieve the jig. Finding the correct cadence and speed is challenging. Try a variation of approaches while keeping the jig in the Strike Zone (6 In -1 Ft from the bottom). Let your bait down to the bottom, then with a slow and steady speed to retrieve tick it against the ground. Alternatively, you can jig it in 1-3 Ft bounces like a live bait, however lessen your pause time as the lure requires more action.

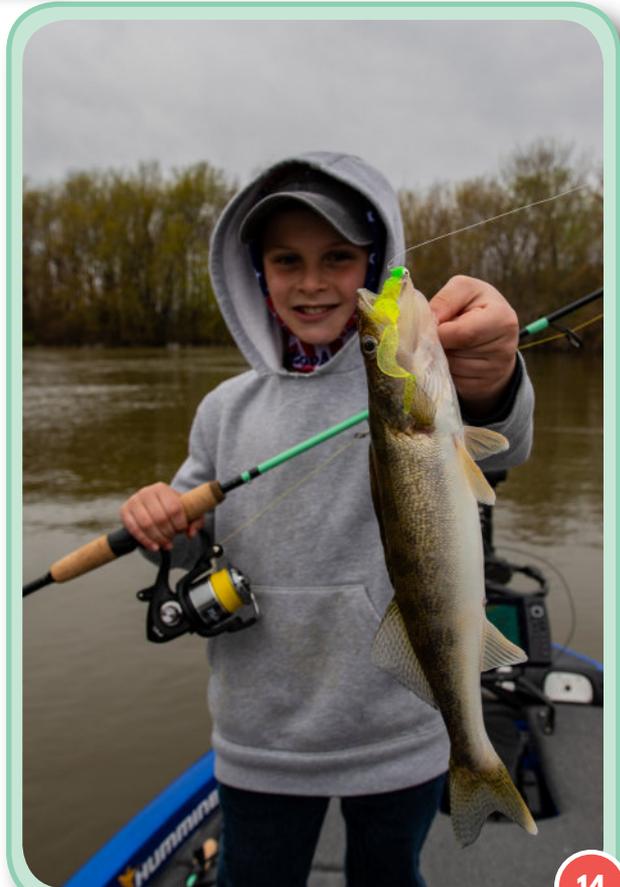
The Hook Set

In this scenario, you will be targeting the more aggressively feeding fish. Set the hook immediately on big thumps and any double taps. If you get a hit and it doesn't stick, do not stop your previous cadence. The artificial will not look appealing if you stop because you are creating the lifelike action by your jiggling and momentum. You will land more fish continuing the presentation even if you lose some after the first bite.



Landing & Handling

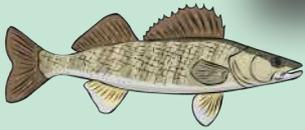
Walleye are a deeper fish species so handling with care is important. Only fish for Walleye deeper than 40 Ft if you are planning to keep your catch, otherwise they will likely not resuscitate. If netting your fish, keep them submerged, using the net as a corral. Remove the lure while the Walleye is in the water. Try your best to only keep them out of the water for 30 seconds to take photos. Do not put your thumb or fingers in the Walleye's mouth, they have razor sharp teeth. Hold them by the handle outside their gill or by cupping under their belly. To release, submerge with your right hand under the belly, using your left hand to sway their tail until they kick off on their own.



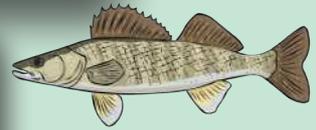
Walleye Fishing Kit



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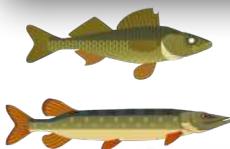
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