

# THE UNIVERSITY FOOD TRANSITION



## WHAT TOOLS CAN WE PROVIDE?

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<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>

# ***THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FOOD PROJECT***

## **Designed to:**

- Raise awareness of common food-related issues and challenges
- Support international students' adjustment to buying, preparing, and eating food at University
- Develop a student-facing online resource providing a 'self-serve' menu of practical and informative food-related materials

**= FOOD INDUCTION TOOLKIT**

Funded by

**UKCISA GRANTS SCHEME  
FOR INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION**

<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>

# METHODOLOGY & TOOLS

- Literature review
- Desk-based research
- Questionnaire
- Student engagement: Focus groups & discussion sessions
- Competitions
- Social media activity
- Blog

**+ SUPPORT FROM STUDENT PROJECT ASSISTANT**

# LITERATURE REVIEW

- Food acculturation is a **dynamic and multifaceted process**, and one affected by factors that can be individual, cultural and external. (Hartwell et al 2011)
- International students are likely to **experience changes** to their diet and have new dietary experiences. A range of factors affect these dietary practices, from health concerns to price, time, and availability of certain foods. (O'Sullivan and Amirabdollahian, 2016)
- Food is an issue of **central importance** to the life and adjustment journey of many international students, though there may be limitations to what HE institutions can do (Brown, 2009)



# OTHER UNIS

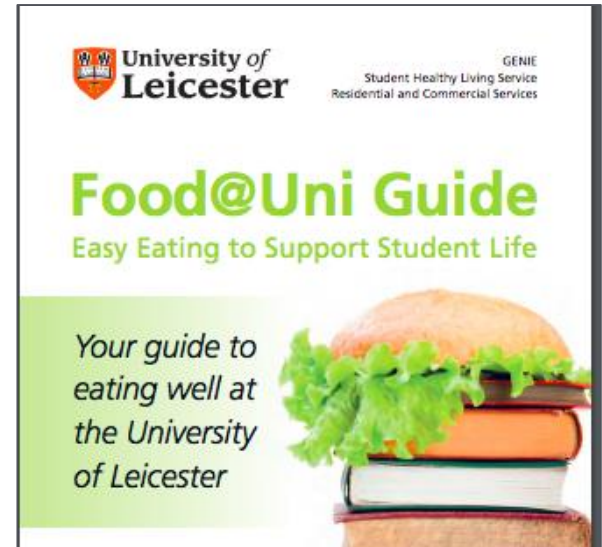


## Food shopping guide

You can use this food shopping guide to help budget for your living costs while studying in Aberdeen. You'll find information about supermarkets, local shops and eating out within easy reach of the University's central area to help you make the right choices.

### Top tips!

- *Buying food on a weekly basis can keep costs down and avoid waste.*
- *Sharing food shopping with flat mates or friends can save time and money.*
- *Most supermarkets offer an online ordering and delivery service for a small charge.*
- *Just before supermarkets close they often offer discounts on foods that have a short life-span.*
- *Frozen fruit and vegetables are just as healthy as fresh; they can be kept in the freezer and are often cheaper too.*
- *Student discounts are often offered at restaurants and takeaways so always check.*
- *Preparing fresh meals is cheaper than buying pre-prepared meals or takeaways.*



### Food and Drink

Coming to the UK is an exciting endeavour and without doubt you will want to indulge in all the culture that Britain has to offer. So why not start with the food?

#### Eating and drinking customs

Eating or drinking out might seem simple, but if you are unfamiliar with UK customs, you may be in for a few surprises! Here's a list of things to remember:

- Whenever possible, make a reservation before going to a restaurant. Always book for large groups and discuss any special requirements with the restaurant in advance.
- If you order water, you may be brought bottled water that you'll have to pay for. Ask for tap water to keep your bill down.
- If you're feeling full, you can ask to get your leftovers to take away. Most restaurants are happy to oblige.
- It's not rude to flag a waiter down when you want something or to request the bill.
- Many restaurants have a 10% tip added to the bill already (look out for "service included" on your receipt), so there is no need to tip extra unless you want to.
- In most pubs you have to go to the bar to order your food and drinks.
- Pub opening times depend on the conditions of their alcohol licence, but are usually between 11am and 11pm.

pub is not allowed to serve drinks after closing time and you must stop drinking 20 minutes after closing.

#### Top 3 British dishes

**1 Roast dinner (Sunday roast)**  
This is traditionally what's eaten and served in pubs all over the country at Sunday lunchtime. It involves roast meat, roast potatoes, at least two different kinds of vegetables, gravy and Yorkshire puddings (which are confusingly not sweet!) You can get a roast in almost any pub on a Sunday, but you'll usually need to book in advance.

#### 2 Fish and chips

"Fish and chips" is battered cod and chips with salt and vinegar. It's the classic English take-away food and the traditional national food of England. The best fish and chips are found near the coast, so maybe take a road trip to Brighton!

#### 3 Full English breakfast

AKA (Also Known As) a fry-up! This quintessentially English breakfast normally involves any combination of toast, sausages, fried mushrooms, eggs, baked beans and bacon. Most people don't have it everyday, but might indulge at the weekend! You can try it yourself in almost any traditional cafe (also sometimes called "greasy spoons").

#### Pubs and alcohol

In England, pubs are a common way to relax, celebrate or simply meet up with friends. Although all pubs will have a bar, they're not exclusively for drinking; many serve food and put on events, such as the traditional pub quiz. It's absolutely fine to go along if you don't drink alcohol.

"Off licences" are small shops that have a licence to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises.

You might see signs in shops reading "Under 25? Don't worry, you don't need to be 25 to buy alcohol in UK, but rather this means that if you look under 25, you will be asked for ID (ID stands for 'identification', and in this case refers to an official document with a photo of you and your date of birth on it).

Some central London bars and pubs ask for ID from everyone wishing to enter, regardless of age. Bear in mind that if you don't have ID, you may be turned away.

Police in London can stop people from drinking alcohol in public and confiscate it almost anywhere. Transport for London (TfL) also has a ban on drinking alcohol or carrying open containers of alcohol on public transport. However, alcohol is often served on mainline train services travelling out of London.

**Useful links and contacts:**  
British recipes: [bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/britain](http://bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/britain)



# QUESTIONNAIRE

- **25 questions with a primary focus on student opinions, feelings and concerns about food**
- **Distributed through UoR and six UK universities**
- **170 Responses received**
  - **106 from UoR**
- **Answers revealed a range of views, expectations and experiences**

# RESPONDENTS

- Respondents from **41 countries**, including **67 from China**
- **52 men / 102 women**
  
- More than half (n=85) have **lived in the UK for less than 1 year**
- The majority live in **halls of residence** (n=98)
- The majority **do not have dietary restrictions** (n=116)



# FINDINGS

**65% of respondents did not have concerns** about food prior to their arrival in the UK (n=104).

## AND

- Almost **30% are unhappy** with the food they eat at Uni to some extent (n=44 )
  - (47% felt neutral; n=75)

## BUT

- Over 60% found that **their diet and/or eating patterns had changed** since arrival (n=98)
- **Over 95% of respondents feel food is important** to the transition experience of international students.(75 somewhat; 76 very)



# FINDINGS

- The most important factor in enjoyment of a meal is:
  - **Taste/Quality** of the food (n=142 very important)
  - **Price** (n=86 very important)
- The top source of information for any food-related matters (eating, shopping, cooking) is
  - **Other students** (n=59 very useful)
- **University web pages** are the least useful source (n=38 not useful)

# FINDINGS

- In answer to the question whether the University could do **anything to** help students with any food-related matters, we received 90 free text responses. **The top answers were:**
  - **NO, nothing (19)**
  - **Improve the variety of food** in some way (21)
- Respondents indicated mixed perspectives on British food:

**Q: How do you feel about British food?**

*Good ... Too sweet, too salty, too oily ...*

*Tasteless ... Amazing ... Expensive ... Best breakfast*

*... Cold ... Delicious ... Just OK ... Boring ...*

*Needs more vegetables ... What is British food?*

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**Two competitions** to engage students across the University and to enhance awareness of different food cultures:

- **Food photos**
  - #myrdgstudentmeal
- **Student recipes**
  - #myrdgstudentrecipe

## #*MyRdgStudentRecipe*

Enter our student recipe competition  
and show off your cooking skills  
Competition ends 18<sup>th</sup> May 2018

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<p><b>Name of recipe</b> <i>You name it!</i></p> <p><b>Country of origin</b> <i>Anywhere in the world!</i></p> <p><b>Difficulty</b> ●●●○○</p> <p><b>Ingredients</b> • *** • ***</p> <p><b>Directions</b> • ... .. • ... ..</p>	 <p><b>Steps:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Choose</b> your recipe</li><li>2. <b>Pair</b> it with a photo</li><li>3. <b>Share</b> it on our page using <b>#MyRdgStudentRecipe</b></li></ol> <p><b>There will be prizes!</b></p> <p>More details are on our <a href="#">Facebook</a> page Like us at: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/InfStudentFood">https://www.facebook.com/InfStudentFood</a></p>
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An initiative brought to you by the [International Student Food Project](http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/)  
<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>

# #myrdgstudentmeal





# #myrdgstudentmeal

Thai traditional food, Khao Yum. It's very famous meal in the southernmost province of from Thailand. It is plenty of nutritions such as carbohydrate from rice, protein from fish, lipid from sausages and both vitamin and mineral are from coconut fried and vegetables. Yummy!!!





# #myrdgstudentmeal



As a student, cooking our own food to eat for many meals saves time and saves money. Here is my stir-fried noodle from last night dinner, now in my lunch box and will be part of my today dinner.

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Discussion sessions with students:

- Students' Union officers and societies
- Individual students
- Pre-sessional and IFP students

## LOVE FOOD?

*Join the International Student Food*



*Help us build a one-stop online resource to assist new students with shopping, cooking and eating at*

### *Join our team*

Would you like to shape the project? Can you share your food knowledge, stories, advice, and favourite recipes? Are you willing to ask other students? **Check out our social media** to keep updated with our meetings and events:

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/IntStudentFood>

**Twitter:** [@IntStudentFood](https://twitter.com/IntStudentFood)

**Blog:** <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>

### *Participate in our questionnaire*

<https://tinyurl.com/yctyurw4>

For further information contact Dr Liz Wilding:  
[studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk)

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Targeted sessions: Food Chat

- Regular one-hour lunchtime sessions
- Actively promoted as a conversational opportunity to Pre-sessional students (though open to all)
  - General discussion on food
  - Addressed concerns/questions
  - Elicited advice/suggestions for new students
  - Anything else of interest

## Food Chat



Come join our open chat sessions in SACLL to talk about food. Share your questions, experiences, stories and advice with other students and with members of the *International Student Food Project*.

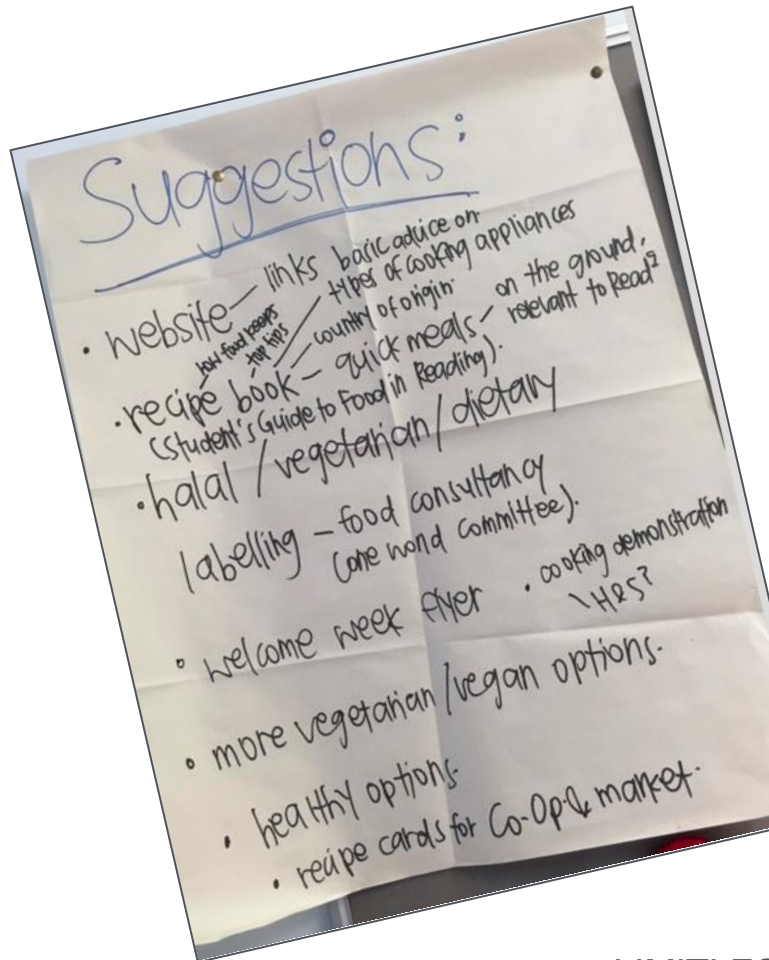
Wednesday 25 April	12.00 – 12.45
Wednesday 2 May	12.00 – 12.45
Friday 4 May	12.00 – 12.45
<b>Friday 18 May</b>	<b>12.00 – 12.45</b>
Wednesday 23 May	12.00 – 12.45

**Food provided!**

The *International Student Food Project* aims to help international students with shopping, cooking and eating at Reading

For further information contact Dr Liz Wilding  
[studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk](mailto:studentfoodproject@reading.ac.uk)

# WHAT DID OUR STUDENTS SAY?



# STUDENT TRANSITION

Rate your food experiences during your first month as a Reading student

1 Very bad	2	3	4	5 Very good
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Comments given with ratings:

[2] I was not used to the food and it was practically tasteless

[2] There are many different flavours which were unknown to me

[2] It is expensive (to) eat outside and I don't like (to) cook myself

[3] At first it was difficult for me to find good food

[4] (I) cook myself



# CONCERNS

The concerns expressed were **varied and diverse**. They included:

- Food prices too high
- A lack of information about Halal food
- A perception England had too much cold food
- A lack of variety and/or of familiar food
- Uncertainty about where to shop, and about how to do internet shopping

# STUDENT ADVICE

Bring more cash.  
Bring more ingredients from home.  
Search before coming.  
Ask more.  
Don't have too high expectations.  
Train your cooking skills before coming.

Learn how to cook.  
Search online where to shop.  
Talk to friends and new people.  
and ask them for information.

Cook on your own.  
Search before you come.  
Download Deliveroo.  
Learn if you do not know how to cook.  
Find out how to get around good restaurants in town.  
Find out what you like in the Co-op.

# STUDENT SUGGESTIONS

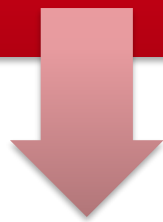
**Our students felt that the University could provide more practical support and advice on everyday food matters, such as:**

- Recipe cards
- Cooking demonstrations or classes
- Healthy eating sessions
- Other food-based activities
- Maps/advice on how to find shops and supermarkets
- Guides to online shopping in the UK
- Pre-arrival ideas on cooking equipment and kitchen appliances

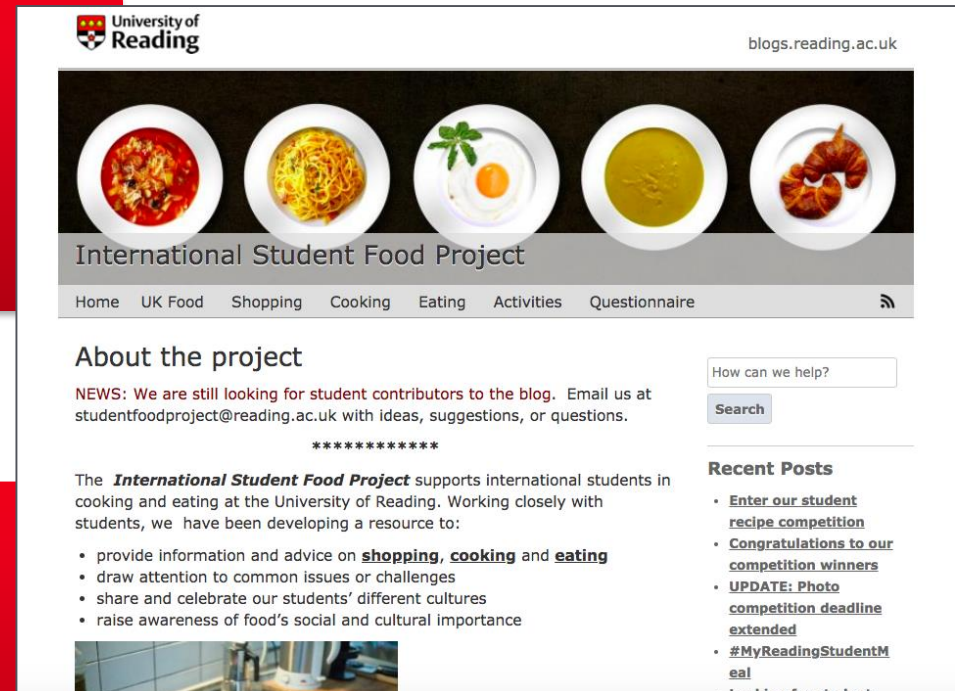


# WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Questionnaire data  
Feedback from meetings

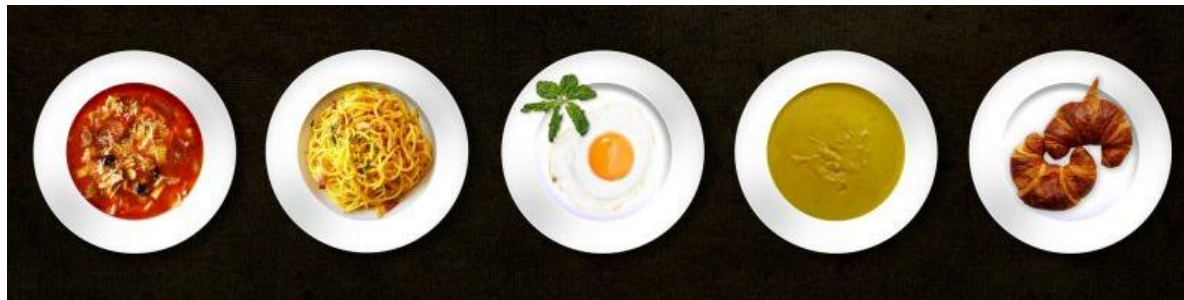


Blog / Website  
Recipe cards  
Printed induction materials  
Dissemination across the University



# BUILDING AN ONLINE TOOLKIT

- Materials now online, with more to be added soon.
- Used as ‘proof of concept’ and to build connections across diverse units at Uni, including catering, halls, welfare and support staff, academics, Students’ Union, and more.
- Being promoted to current Pre-sessional students.















- <http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>



# PRACTICAL ADVICE

## Supermarkets in Reading

-  Aldi
-  Asda
-  Co-op Food
-  Co-op Food (Campus)
-  Costcutter (Asian store)
-  Marks & Spencer
-  Morrisons
-  Sainsbury's
-  SeeWoo (酒和全記)
-  Tesco Express
-  Tesco Extra
-  Waitrose



## Halal Restaurants in Reading



### Fernando's Peri Peri

41 Oxford Rd, Reading RG1 7QG

Phone: [0118 334 3338](tel:01183343338)

[fernandosperiperi.co.uk](http://fernandosperiperi.co.uk)

### Piri Piri Chicken Hut - Reading

37 Whitley St, Reading RG2 0EG

Phone: [0118 931 0444](tel:01189310444)

[www.periperichickenhut.co.uk](http://www.periperichickenhut.co.uk)

### Bakery House

82 London street, RG1 3PR

Phone: [0118 327 4040](tel:01183274040)

[www.bakeryhouse.co](http://www.bakeryhouse.co)

### King's Grill

16 King's Rd, Reading RG1 3AA

Phone: [0118 950 0220](tel:01189500220)

[www.kingsgrill.uk](http://www.kingsgrill.uk)

### Kobeda Palace







409/411 Oxford Rd, RG30 1HA







Phone: [0118 327 1400](tel:01183271400)

[www.kobedapalace.co.uk](http://www.kobedapalace.co.uk)

# ONLINE SHOPPING GUIDE

Guide to online shopping

		
Find out if the supermarket delivers to your address by entering your postcode.	Register an account and log in.	Book a delivery slot that suits you.
		
Add items to your basket.	Make payment using your credit card.	Make changes to your order up to midnight* before your delivery date. <small>*varies between supermarkets</small>

Supermarket						
Grocery delivery	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Free trial	1 month	12 months	1 month	No?	1 month	No
Anytime delivery pass (Mon – Sun)	12 months - £5 6 months - £6	12 months - £5.83 6 months - £8.33 Monthly - £6.99	12 months - £5.41 6 months - £6.67 Monthly - £8	12 months - £5 6 months - £5.83 3 months - £6.67	6 months - £6.99 Monthly - £7.99	Does not offer delivery pass
Midweek delivery pass (Tues – Thurs)	12 months - £2	12 months - £2.29 6 months - £2.50 Monthly - £2.99	12 months - £2.92 6 months - £3.33 Monthly - £5	12 months - £2.50 6 months - £3 3 months - £3.33	6 months - £3.49 Monthly - £3.99	
Min spend	£40	£40	£40	£40	£40	
Website	<a href="https://groceries.asda.com/delivery-pass">https://groceries.asda.com/delivery-pass</a>		<a href="https://groceries.morrisons.com/webshop/displayDeliveryPass.do">https://groceries.morrisons.com/webshop/displayDeliveryPass.do</a>	<a href="https://www.sainsburys.co.uk/shop/gb/saver">https://www.sainsburys.co.uk/shop/gb/saver</a>	<a href="https://www.tesco.com/deliverysaver/">https://www.tesco.com/deliverysaver/</a>	<a href="http://www.waitrose.com/">http://www.waitrose.com/</a>

Details above are accurate as of June 2018.

Please refer to individual supermarket's website for the latest prices and offers – terms and conditions may apply.

## NEXT STEPS

Only a **pilot project so far**, with the constraints of a limited budget and a fixed end-date. Our plans are to:

- Consolidate and finish analysis of the data and student feedback – perhaps relaunch the survey to gather more responses
- Continue building the toolkit – both online and on paper
- Continue disseminating information within UoR and more widely – influence institutional practice
- Find new ways to engage students in future activities and focus more on the social/cultural aspects of food.

## FINAL THOUGHT: HOW IMPORTANT IS FOOD TO THE TRANSITION EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS?

I always believe that food draws people together. By being able to appreciate food, we can easily create a community.

Food is culture!

It's important for your health

It depends on how picky the student is in terms of food.

Having familiar foods helps settle you in and combat homesickness, while trying local foods is part of the experience of being here

If students are not concerned about the food transition until **after** their arrival, what can we do to engage them more at an earlier stage?



# THANK YOU – ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Just arrived in Reading? Ready, set, EAT !



Tesco, ASDA, Morrisons, Waitrose... What's the difference between these supermarkets?

How do I use the oven?

Is it possible to eat healthily while at Uni?

**Find out here:**  
<http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/international-student-food-project/>

Brought to you by the  
**International Student Food Project**

## REFERENCES

Briggs, A.R.J., Clark, J, & Hall, I. (2012) Building bridges: understanding student transition to university, *Quality in Higher Education*, 18:1, 3-21, DOI: [10.1080/13538322.2011.614468](https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2011.614468)

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