Review Article

# Investigation of the effect and relationship of vegan cuisine on gastronomic culture

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#### **Abstract**

Nutrition, which is a physiological need, is directly related to gastronomy and is affected by many factors, including geographical, cultural, environmental, climatic, and socio-economic factors. Today, there are many popular diets and veganism, which has become a lifestyle and philosophy by spreading all over the world, is one of the best examples of these diets. With the spread of veganism, vegan cuisine has started to emerge it is not possible to use animal products in this kitchen. For this reason, food groups shall be well positioned in the menus or recipes created. The purpose of this research was to ascertain the role and significance of veganism and vegan cuisine in gastronomy, as well as their effects and relationship to it. The descriptive analysis method, one of the qualitative research designs, was used in the study, and the results were categorized and interpreted based on their themes. As a result of the descriptive analysis applied to the findings, the importance, role, and effect of veganism in gastronomy were divided into two main themes: (1) vegan cuisine; (2) vegan culture. In addition, four subthemes were identified: (1) the vegan restaurant; (2) the relationship of vegan cuisine with health; (3) the relationship of veganism with art; and (4) the relationship and effect of veganism on gastronomy. Although veganism is a concept derived from vegetarianism, it has taken a long way in a very short time and started to create new cuisines with vegan culture.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Nutrition, which is a physiological need, is directly related to gastronomy. It is one of the basic needs of humanity and changes depending on personal preferences. Different geographies have unique cultural structures. These cultural structures had been developed over time to produce personal preferences in people's nutrition. Many factors can affect nutrition. These are geographic, cultural, environmental, climatic, and socio-economic factors (1).

There are many popular diets available today (2). Veganism, which has spread worldwide and has become a lifestyle, is one of the best examples of these diets. Those who choose this diet are called vegans. The word "vegan" means "one who does not eat animal products" and was derived from the word "vegetarian" by Donald Watson in 1944 (3). Vegan nutrition is not just a type of diet; it is a perspective and philosophy of life. Animals, in their minds, did not exist for humans to benefit from. Vegans, who have a deep respect for animals, argue that they should not be used for our pleasure (4). This diet, which is directly related to nature and living things, has its own rules. Veganism, which is a sub-branch of vegetarianism, does not accept any animal products and defends plant-based nutrition. They do not consume both animal products and products of animal origin. This lifestyle, which is reduced to plant-based nutrition, can adversely affect human health when it is not supported with the necessary nutrients. For this reason, vegan nutrition shall be created with balanced menus, and precautions shall be taken due to health problems that may arise over time (5).

The demand for vegan nutrition is increasing worldwide and is on the agenda. Over time, sub-branches have been created according to the type of nutrition in the vegan diet, which has become widespread. These regulations and the prevalence of veganism have created vegan cuisine, and meals are cooked with plant-based foods without using animal products. It is impossible to see animal products in this kitchen. Therefore, food groups shall be well positioned in the menus or recipes that are created. Recipes shall be created from plant-based foods equiv-

alent to the nutritional values of animal foods. Thus, deficiencies in nutritional values that may occur in people who eat vegan are prevented. Additionally, the fact that the food and beverage cooks, who are educated and knowledgeable in these matters, will entertain the vegan guests (6).

Gastronomy covers many kitchens and is directly associated with vegan culinary culture. The geography of vegan culinary culture, the foods cooked under the aegis of vegan cuisine, and the people who have made vegan nutrition a lifestyle have made gastronomy more and more vegan. The usual recipes prepared in the kitchen have been adapted for vegans. Vegans have tried and developed foods that can be substituted for one another. This has created a new workspace in gastronomy. The vegan culinary culture can be further developed under the recent technology and facilities of nowadays (7).

In this research, the relationship between vegan cuisine culture, which has a wide range from the past to the present, and the field of gastronomy has been examined. This study aims to understand the place of veganism in gastronomy and to determine its effects on gastronomy.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

#### Historical Development of Veganism

It can be argued that veganism has a very ancient historical background due to religious and spiritual reasons. It can also be said that vegans, who choose to live by avoiding the use of animal products as much as possible, have existed at this stage of history. However, the transformation of veganism into a concept that occurred in the twentieth century was born out of vegetarianism (8). It is not exactly known when vegetarianism emerged historically. When the relationship between eating style and religion is examined, it is shown that there is a connection between religion and veganism. Vegetarianism is dominant in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism, which are ancient religions (9).

The first written texts about vegetarianism were available in ancient Greece, and there were different opinions about not eating meat at that time. These thoughts were about not only avoiding

killing living things and but also protecting animals. Empedocles, one of the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers, also advocated vegetarianism and thought that not killing living things was a virtue. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras' defense of reincarnation is also thought to be related with vegetarianism. Pythagoras is regarded as the father of vegetarianism by philosophers and scientists of his time and later (10).

Vegetarian artists, philosophers, and scientists were encountered during the Renaissance period, and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was one of them. Inspired by ancient philosophers, 19th-century philosophers and, scientists maintained a vegetarian diet and considered vegetarianism when their views on animals and living things were compatible with humanism (11).

The first vegetarian society was established in England in 1847, followed by the American Vegetarian Society in 1860 and the German Vegetarian Society in 1867. After these societies were established, other associations were established in different countries. The term "vegan" was coined by British activist Donald Watson (1910-2005) in 1944 (12). According to the definition of The Vegan Society, veganism is as follows: "Veganism is a philosophy and way of life that seeks to exclude as far as is possible and practicable—all forms of exploitation of and cruelty to animals for food, clothing, or any other purpose, and by extension, promotes the development and use of animal-free alternatives for the benefit of animals, humans, and the environment. In dietary terms, it refers to the practice of avoiding all products derived entirely or partially from animals." According to this definition, it is seen that veganism is not just a way of eating but a philosophy of life. Additionally, it can be stated that he advocates staying away from animal exploitation. However, animals are used in many fields today, and therefore, many differences of opinion have arisen (13).

October 1 is celebrated as "World Vegan Day" all over the world. "Vegetarian Day" started to be celebrated for the first time in Turkey in 2010 with the organization of the Vegetarian Club, and on March 3, 2012, "The Turkish Vegetarian Society" was established. This association is the first and only organization for vegetarians and veg-

ans in Turkey. The world's first vegan city is Barcelona (14, 15). Veganism, which is a diet that has continued until today, has developed gradually from the past to the present. Because of different studies, it is estimated that humanity had a vegetable-based diet in the past. The main reason for this is the ancient spiritual understanding. Loving animals affects leads to loving people and that an herbal diet purifies the human soul and allows adequate nutrition without consuming meat (8).

### **Vegan Culinary Culture**

Vegans have a deep respect for animals and have made it their way of life, so there are no products of animal origin in their kitchen. Since no animal products are used in all recipes of vegan cuisine, even honey cannot be used because it is produced by bees. Since we used the milk from the cow, it is not correct to use dairy products such as cream in a vegan recipe. There are restrictions not only on animal raw materials but also on derivatives (16). For all these reasons, alternative foods have been produced for vegan cuisine. While these alternative foods can sometimes be equal to animal foods in terms of nutritional value, sometimes there may be nutrient-loss situations. Trained chefs in restaurants can fill the nutritional gap with alternative foods. Thus, guests with a vegan diet who goes to a restaurant see themselves as more valuable, the restaurant as more efficient, and they are happy. Not every customer have the same type of diet and taste, and the restaurant should be able to appeal to them. For this reason, there are always new developments in vegan cuisine (17).

Color and texture harmony in recipes prepared for vegan meals should be ensured. However, the nutrient deficiency caused by not using meat and its derivatives should be eliminated with alternative foods, and professional results should be obtained. Vegans do not consume all kinds of foods. Therefore, kitchen staff must be educated and conscious and prepare according to vegans' needs (18).

Individuals' religious beliefs in some countries also influence the culture of vegan cuisine, making it more popular in these countries. Vegan

cuisine shows different developments in each geography, and each geography has its own approximately produced foods. Plant-based foods of this type provide information about the prevalence of a vegan diet in that geography. For example, when we look at the density of vegan individuals in the world, it is higher in regions where vegetables, fruits, and rice are abundant. Individuals in countries that mostly consume legumes, grains, vegetables, and fruits, adopting the religions of Buddhism and Jainism, can easily choose a vegan life. In those countries, foods of vegetable origin suitable for vegan-style meals are also named after animal foods. This is because they are thought to have just as good a taste. Examples of these adaptations are soy patties for foods made from soy, and the liquid from soy is called soy milk (9).

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The research aims to determine the importance and role of veganism and vegan cuisine in gastronomy, as well as their effect and relationship thereto. A qualitative research design was used in our research, and it could be defined as research in which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview, and document analysis were used and a qualitative process was followed to reveal perceptions and events in a natural environment realistically and holistically. In research designed with a qualitative method, there is an effort to understand a subject whose boundaries are determined in detail (19). In the study, descriptive analysis and content analysis methods were used. In the descriptive analysis method, the data obtained is summarized and interpreted according to the previously determined themes. The purpose of this type of analysis is to present the findings obtained in an organized and interpreted manner in a way that can be easily understood. With the descriptive analysis method, the findings were presented and interpreted as themes (20). Content analysis used in the study is a systematic examination of a text. This technique is a research technique based on making reproducible and valid inferences. The reproducibility of the research means that the same analysis can be done at different times and under different conditions.

In this context, vegan practices in the restaurant concept, vegan cuisine types and their effects on health, the relationship between vegan cuisine culture and gastronomy, and the effects of vegan cuisine on gastronomic culture have been examined and interpreted. For the accuracy of the findings of a study to be at an acceptable level, its validity and reliability must be ensured. To ensure the validity of the findings, maximum care was taken to obtain the data objectively. For the reliability of the research, the findings were given to four different researchers who are experts in gastronomy and related subjects, and similar inferences were drawn from them (21).

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As a result of the descriptive analysis, the importance and role of veganism in gastronomy were gathered under two main titles and a total of four sub-titles, given in Figure 1, and interpreted.

According to research, many things change in the lives of individuals who have adopted the vegan philosophy of life. Since veganism is not just a diet, it not only changes the eating pattern but also the person's perspective on life. However, this lifestyle has advantages and disadvantages for them, and they face many problems throughout their lives. It is the science of gastronomy that will solve these problems and shed light on the issues (22).

No matter how widespread veganism is, it is not a well-known lifestyle. This situation causes vegans to have problems in their social lives. It is also essential for the development of the science of gastronomy to be aware of the nutritional styles of the society and to carry out studies for said society (23).

The themes about the importance and role of veganism in gastronomy given in Figure 1 are examined in detail under the following headings.

### **Vegan Concept Restaurants**

Being vegan isn't just about changing your diet. Due to the deep respect, they have for animals, vegans do not only consume animal foods but also do not use animal hides, pastes, and skin

care products of animal origin, such as snakeskin. A growing number of vegan guests and tourists are encountering issues at the food and beverage establishments they visit. Due to this increase, businesses should also have the ability and capacity to take the necessary precautions and meet vegan guests. Thanks to the precautions to be taken, they can welcome vegan guests. There are restaurants for vegans and vegetarians in Turkey and various other countries. However, this may sometimes be insufficient for people who follow these diets. For this reason, a business must be at a level to meet the needs of incoming vegan guests, and especially the kitchen staff must be conscientious. In order to sustain vegan guests to come back to that restaurant again, it is very important that the service staff reflects the order well in the kitchen and that the kitchen staff strictly follows the vegan rules. Big problems arise when meat is prepared on the counter or in a pan where food of animal origin is cooked. Vegan guests should never have animal food residues on their serving plates (24).

Although vegan and vegetarian options have increased on restaurant menus in recent years, many restaurants are hesitant to add vegan dishes to their menus (25). The diversification of delicious and attractive vegan menus, which will be prepared with care by restaurants, will increase the alternatives for those who prefer this diet and love this cuisine. Thus, the satisfaction

of vegan individuals will be increased with new combinations. It will be an advantage to prepare plates for vegan guests with suitable foods and to include them on the menu. The world-renowned Burger King has added a vegetarian option, the Bean Burger, to its menu. It would be beneficial for vegans if other restaurants made similar applications and added vegan dishes to their menus (26).

Veganism, which started to become popular in the 1990s, is still considered a rare phenomenon. In the 2000s, as veganism became more widespread, vegan meals began to be served in restaurants. Nowadays vegans, who cannot find enough restaurants serving vegan food, prefer to prepare meals at home, and this prevents them from being potential customers. However, vegan meals sold in restaurants might not only appeal to vegans because of the curiosity of other customers and the fact that dieters may also want to prefer this diet. Many studies have shown that a vegan diet can also be healthy, and in this way, it can be the choice of people who are on a diet. It is reported that vegan preferences in restaurants, which have become more popular in recent years, are becoming a growing lifestyle and economic type, according to research (27).

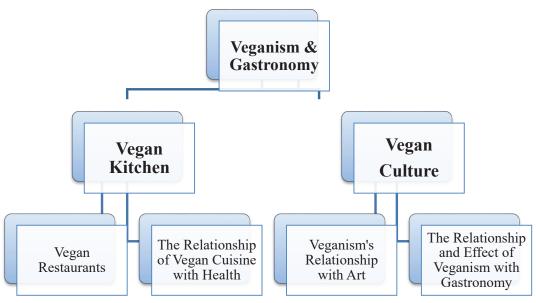


Figure 1. Themes on the importance and role of vegan cuisine in gastronomy

#### The Relationship of Vegan Cuisine with Health

To understand the relationship between vegan cuisine and health, it is necessary to first understand how vegan cuisine is shaped. In this context, three main diets that affect vegan cuisine can be mentioned: (1) Rawist argue that food should be consumed raw without cooking, thinking that it will lose its nutritional value. (2) Fruitarians or fruitists defend that it should be fed only with fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, and peppers, which can be considered a fruit in botanical terms. They believe that the consumed fruits will return to the soil and grow. (3) Zen macrobiotics feed on plant sources, and some advocate a grain-only diet (28).

Because vegan nutrition is only plant-based, it is necessary to be cautious, take precautions, and develop a health-based nutrition plan. Among the various foods, some are equivalent in nutritional value. These products can be used as an alternative, and the deficiency can be eliminated by locating the protein equivalent in animal-derived foods. However, health problems may arise as a result of not eliminating the protein deficiency (29).

According to Saintila et al. (30), individuals who eat vegan foods have low body mass indices and plasma cholesterol concentrations. Vegetables, fruits, soy products, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds, which are rich in fiber, are also low in saturated fat. Plant-based foods, which are included in beneficial and healthy food groups, actually provide great health benefits for individuals who choose this type of diet. Vegan diets should be implemented with appropriate medical or dietetic counseling, since deficiencies in protein, calcium, iron, zinc, B12 and D vitamins, fatty acids, and iodine can be seen in the diets of vegan individuals, and inadequacies can be a risk factor for the development of various diseases. Otherwise, major health problems may arise and pose a risk for vegan individuals. The most common deficiencies in vegan diets are vitamin D, calcium, protein, fatty acids, and iron (31).

#### **VEGANISM AND ART**

Veganism is essentially a way of thinking, and the identities of individuals who have this thought in the social field are also called vegan. In vegan thinking, animals are not colonized and are free. Vegan art is a term that can be used to describe all art productions created in the context of vegan vision. According to Barrett and Raskoff (32), all art forms glorify values, and every work of art, whether realistic, expressionist, or formalist, can be approached to answer these two questions: What purpose does it serve? What does he oppose? These questions played an important role in the clarification of vegan art. Gastronomy and vegan creation can be viewed as separate branches of art in this context. A chef preparing his food and presenting it on his plate is like an artist creating a painting (33).

What purpose does vegan art serve? In other words, what is the purpose of veganism in an artistic sense? It is possible to answer this question as vegan art serves the purpose of developing ideas created in the context of vegan thought through disciplines belonging to the field of visual art and conveying them through visual art disciplines. In addition, veganism aims for a world where animals are not exploited but are liberated, and for this purpose, it sees animal liberation as part of the struggle for social justice (34).

What does vegan art oppose? Vegan art opposes animal exploitation in the life practice of speciesist thought, as well as sexism and racism, as it often makes analogies with speciesism. Vegan art rejects the anthropocentric view as expressed by vegan thought and opposes the speciesist understanding that hinders interspecies equality and the right to life. The contextual opposition to vegan art will be interpreted in a way that corresponds to a postmodern understanding of art rather than a modernist understanding of art, to the point where this contextual opposition initiates and maintains dialogues that sometimes establish processes of reckoning with other concepts in terms of inclusion and exclusion (35).

## The Relationship Between Vegan Culinary Culture and Gastronomy

Gastronomy is a science that is closely related to people's nutrition, and this science that covers everything related to food is also directly related to vegan culinary culture. As people grow up, they form their diets in line with their preferences, and each individual tends towards a diet according to their taste. As the science of gastronomy, which includes and researches all edible whole foods, develops, it reveals a wider range of foods to people. Individuals who have made veganism a philosophy of life have faced some problems both today and in the past. The science that will solve these problems again is gastronomy (36).

In 1996, the European Vegetarian Union (EVU) created the vegan product symbol called the V-Label. The V-Label symbol has been used to acknowledge conscious food consumers, individuals who want to reduce their meat consumption, vegans and vegetarians, allergy sufferers to animal products, and religious groups with specific diets as target consumers (37). Nudo was the first to receive this certificate in Turkey, followed by Komagene, Eriş Un, Gloria Jean's Coffees, Kurme, Vegan Cheese, Oses, and Entabi Çiğköfte brands. Vegans, who are disadvantaged when eating out, can easily prefer restaurants that bear this label. In addition to the activities carried out in terms of gastronomic tourism, programs related to veganism are also carried out. Thanks to the V-Label symbol, the participation of vegans in gastronomy activities has been increased (28).

It is estimated that 79 million people are vegans around the world, and this number attracts the attention of the world market (38). For this reason, American companies have started to produce plant foods that can be equivalent to meat. Some companies are doing R&D studies to produce foods that look like eggs and meat from plant sources. The world-renowned brand Danone entered the vegan market in 2007. In 2011, the world's first vegan supermarket was opened in Berlin, and today it has more than ten branches. The giant fast-food chain Burger King

opened its first 100% vegetarian restaurant in Spain in 2021. The company has also announced that it will produce meat of purely plant origin. Barcelona, on the other hand, was the first vegan or vegetarian-friendly city, to launch "The Vegan City Movement". People who visit the cities participating in the vegan city movement take the leadership in recognizing and spreading vegan culture. The Vegetarian Hotels Association, on the other hand, is a pioneer in establishing and increasing the number of vegan hotels (38).

There are many recipes suitable for vegans in the culinary culture, which are formed as a result of the civilizations and accumulated cultural values that Turkish cuisine had interacted with throughout history. Turkey's geographical location and variety of products offer many options for vegans and vegetarians, such as olive oil dishes, pastries, soups, pilafs, salads, and desserts. For this reason, it can be argued that Turkish cuisine is a suitable culinary culture for vegans. All of these activities help to strengthen the relationship between gastronomy and veganism, by contributing to its growth, through their interactions (39).

# THE EFFECTS OF VEGAN CUISINE ON GASTRONOMY CULTURE

Foods form the basis of gastronomy, and people have sought many foods for nutrition, which is a physiological need, from history until the present day. Nutrition is necessary for our lives and is a never-ending activity for humanity. This search evolved over time, and the first humans had eaten whatever they came across such as carrion or grass. Over time, as humanity develops, and opportunities arise, there has been an improvement in nutrition. Gastronomy has evolved so much over time that the concept of appetite has become increasingly important. With these changes, many new meals have begun to be prepared (40).

The gastronomic culture, which includes the historical development of food and every subject related to food, has developed the perspective and philosophy of food. Different philosophical viewpoints have influenced eating habits and the foods consumed reflect one's life vision. As a result of many reasons, such as religious be-

liefs, living region, climate, social life, and financial situation, there has been a tendency toward different eating styles. These tendencies have led to the development, differentiation, and diversification of food. Although new foods have emerged in line with the developing opportunities, the food search has not ended, and their perspectives have always continued to change. Nutrition, which was seen as a basic need and necessary for sustaining life at first, started to turn into pleasure and a status indicator later on (41).

When it comes to the search for healthy foods in the adventure of food, people have searched alternative ways to preserve their health without processed foods. Efforts to achieve healthy food continue today, but the healthiest diet is not fully understood, and there are many points of view. However, there have been many different disagreements about nutrition, and one of them is the philosophical view against animal nutrition. As a result of the historical development of vegetarianism and veganism, various varieties and perspectives on plant-based nutrition have been emerged.

Veganism initially started with not consuming any animal foods and became another study area closely related to gastronomy. It has been adopted by societies, created a new culture, and taken its place in gastronomy. The food cultures that emerged as a result of societal nutrition styles and activities are linked to the region's gastronomic geography and tourism. As long as this relationship continues, research on veganism will continue and new recipes will be developed (7).

As the number of individuals who have adopted veganism and put it into practice in their lives has increased, so has the number of studies on veganism in the field of gastronomy. According to historical development and statistics, as the vegan diet became more widespread, world brands serving under the umbrella of gastronomy began to add vegan options to their restaurants. With the rise of technology and living standards, vegan associations, food and beverage businesses that are suitable only for vegan customers have started to be opened. As a new

addition to the activities carried out in the field of gastronomy, vegan culinary culture was added, improved, and arranged over time, and alternative recipes were created to contribute to the culinary culture. Vegan culinary culture continues to develop and thrive around the world, including in Turkish gastronomy (42,7).

#### CONCLUSION

The descriptive analysis determined the significance and role of veganism in gastronomy under two main headings: (1) vegan cuisine; and (2) vegan culture. A total of four sub-titles were determined: (1) Vegan restaurants; (2) the relationship of vegan cuisine with health; (3) the relationship of veganism with art; and (4) the relationship and effect of veganism on gastronomy. The main reason why vegan restaurants are one of the two main themes and one of the subthemes of vegan cuisine is that vegan guests and tourists encounter problems in the food and beverage establishments they visit. Although there are vegan concept restaurants in the world and in Turkey, they have many shortcomings. Unfortunately, the vegan kitchen staff does not have enough competence to meet the needs of their guests. Considering the relationship between vegan cuisine and health, which is another subtheme of the main theme of vegan cuisine, the positive and negative aspects of vegan nutrition come to the fore. The disadvantage of vegan nutrition is the lack of protein, calcium, iron, zinc, B12 and D vitamins, fatty acids, and iodine that results from a plant-based diet. As a result, some nutrients must be supplemented in a vegan diet. The positive aspect of vegan nutrition is that it contributes to lowering body mass index and plasma cholesterol concentration. In addition, thanks to fibrous foods, intestinal health is positively affected. According to the theme of the relationship between veganism and art, one of the two main themes and one of the sub-themes of vegan culture is the development and transmission of ideas created in the context of vegan thought through disciplines belonging to the field of the visual arts. According to another sub-theme of the main theme of vegan culture, the relationship, and effect of veganism with gastronomy, veganism is a philosophy of life, some problems arise, and these problems can be

solved by the science of gastronomy. In addition, many gastronomic sciences should contribute to this field with R&D studies.

Although veganism is a concept derived from vegetarianism, it has made much progress in a very short time. There is not only a cuisine with a vegan culture, but there are many vegan diets in world cuisines. There are many vegan recipes in both Turkish and world cuisines, and in addition, they continue to develop. However, vegans still face some issues that have yet to be resolved. Gastronomy experts should first solve these problems and then contribute to the development of vegan cuisine. Every new study of vegan cuisine under the gastronomy umbrella will contribute to the gastronomy culture while expanding and growing it. Despite all its development, vegan food culture is not recognized enough which prevents vegans from participating in social life. Eating out is especially problematic for vegans. To solve this problem, the opening of vegan restaurants can be encouraged, and more vegan menus can be added to existing restaurants. In addition, staff working in restaurants should be trained in vegan cuisine.

Academic studies have an important place in increasing awareness of vegan nutrition. On the contrary, there are few studies on veganism in Turkey. In the studies carried out, the emphasis is on the health and ethical aspects of veganism, but the gastronomic aspect is rarely discussed in the studies. For this reason, it is important to focus on studies that are dealing with vegan nutrition and vegan products, as well as to provide trainings on veganism and vegan products by schools that provide education in the field of gastronomy.

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