



# Bolivia



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Michael Grosberg, Brian Kluepfel, Paul Smith

## PLAN YOUR TRIP

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Welcome to Bolivia  | 4  |
| Bolivia Map         | 6  |
| Bolivia's Top 12    | 8  |
| Need to Know        | 14 |
| If You Like         | 16 |
| Month by Month      | 18 |
| Itineraries         | 20 |
| Bolivia Outdoors    | 24 |
| Regions at a Glance | 30 |

## ON THE ROAD

### LA PAZ & AROUND.. 34

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>La Paz</b>       | <b>36</b> |
| Valle de la Luna    | 66        |
| Mallasa             | 66        |
| Valencia & Mecapaca | 66        |
| Muela del Diablo    | 67        |
| Valle de las Ánimas | 68        |
| Cañón de Palca      | 68        |
| Chacaltaya          | 69        |
| Tiwanaku            | 69        |

### LAKE TITICACA. .... 73

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| Copacabana              | 75 |
| Copacabana to Yampupata | 84 |
| Isla del Sol            | 85 |
| Isla de la Luna (Koati) | 90 |
| Huatajata               | 91 |
| Islas de Wiñaymarka     | 91 |
| Isla Kalahuta           | 92 |
| Isla Pariti             | 92 |
| Huarina                 | 92 |

### THE CORDILLERAS & YUNGAS..... 93

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Cordillera Real</b>                  | <b>95</b>  |
| Huayna Potosí                           | 96         |
| Condoriri Massif                        | 97         |
| Ancohuma                                | 98         |
| Illimani                                | 100        |
| <b>The Yungas</b>                       | <b>100</b> |
| Coroico & Yolosa                        | 100        |
| El Choro Trek                           | 107        |
| Takesi Trek                             | 109        |
| Yunga Cruz Trek                         | 112        |
| Chulumani                               | 112        |
| Around Chulumani                        | 114        |
| Caranavi                                | 115        |
| Guanay                                  | 115        |
| El Camino del Oro (Gold Digger's Trail) | 115        |

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Sorata   | 117        |
| Mapiiri Trail  | 121        |
| Aucapata & Iskanwaya                                 | 122        |
| <b>Cordillera Apolobamba</b>                         | <b>123</b> |
| Charazani  | 123        |
| Área Natural de Manejo Integrado Nacional Apolobamba | 127        |
| Lagunillas to Agua Blanca (Curva to Pelechuco) Trek  | 127        |

### SOUTHERN ALTIPLANO..... 130

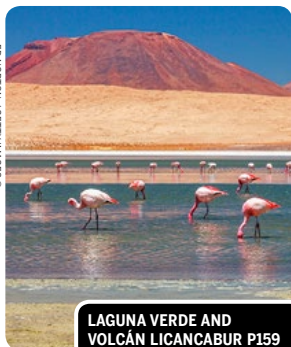
|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Oruro &amp; the North</b>             | <b>131</b> |
| Oruro                                    | 131        |
| Curahuara de Carangas                    | 142        |
| Parque Nacional Sajama                   | 143        |
| Salar de Coipasa                         | 146        |
| <b>Uyuni &amp; the Southwest Circuit</b> | <b>146</b> |
| Uyuni                                    | 147        |
| Salar de Uyuni                           | 153        |
| Los Lípez                                | 158        |
| <b>Tupiza &amp; Around</b>               | <b>161</b> |
| Tupiza                                   | 161        |
| Around Tupiza                            | 166        |

### CENTRAL HIGHLANDS ..... 169

|                                  |            |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Cochabamba</b>                | <b>171</b> |
| <b>Around Cochabamba</b>         | <b>183</b> |
| Parque Nacional Tunari           | 183        |
| Quillacollo                      | 184        |
| Tiquipaya                        | 184        |
| Inca-Rakay                       | 185        |
| <b>Eastern Cochabamba Valley</b> | <b>185</b> |



CARNAVAL IN ORURO P131



LAGUNA VERDE AND VOLCÁN LICANCABUR P159

# Contents

## UNDERSTAND

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Laguna Angostura . . . . .          | 185        |
| Tarata & Huayculli . . . . .        | 186        |
| Incallajta . . . . .                | 186        |
| Totora . . . . .                    | 187        |
| Mizque . . . . .                    | 187        |
| Parque Nacional Torotoro . . . . .  | 188        |
| <b>Sucre . . . . .</b>              | <b>191</b> |
| Tarabuco . . . . .                  | 204        |
| Cordillera de los Frailes . . . . . | 205        |
| <b>Potosí . . . . .</b>             | <b>210</b> |
| <b>Around Potosí . . . . .</b>      | <b>222</b> |

## **SOUTH CENTRAL BOLIVIA & THE CHACO . . . . . 223**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>South Central Bolivia . . . . .</b>  | <b>225</b> |
| Tarija . . . . .  | 225        |
| Inter-Andean Valleys . . . . .  | 233        |
| San Jacinto Reservoir . . . . .   | 234        |
| El Valle de la Concepción . . . . .   | 234        |
| Reserva Biológica Cordillera de Sama . . . . .                                      | 236        |
| Padcaya & Chaguaya . . . . .  | 237        |
| Reserva Nacional de Flora y Fauna Tariquía . . . . .                                | 237        |
| <b>The Chaco . . . . .</b>  | <b>237</b> |
| Yacuiba . . . . .   | 237        |
| Parque Nacional y Área Natural de Manejo Integrado Serranía del Aguaragüe . . . . . | 238        |
| Villamontes . . . . .   | 239        |
| Camiri . . . . .  | 240        |

## **SANTA CRUZ & GRAN CHIQUITANIA . . . . . 242**

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Santa Cruz . . . . .  | 244 |
| Buena Vista . . . . . | 254 |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Parque Nacional & Área de Uso Múltiple Amboró . . . . . | 256        |
| Santa Cruz to Samaipata . . . . .                       | 259        |
| Samaipata . . . . .                                     | 259        |
| La Pajcha . . . . .                                     | 265        |
| El Nido de los Condores . . . . .                       | 265        |
| Vallegrande . . . . .                                   | 265        |
| La Higuera . . . . .                                    | 267        |
| <b>Gran Chiquitania . . . . .</b>                       | <b>267</b> |
| Jesuit Missions Circuit . . . . .                       | 268        |

## **AMAZON BASIN . . . 276**

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>Chapare Region . . . . .</b>           | <b>280</b> |
| Villa Tunari . . . . .                    | 280        |
| Parque Nacional Carrasco . . . . .        | 282        |
| Puerto Villarroel . . . . .               | 283        |
| <b>Western Bolivian Amazon . . . . .</b>  | <b>283</b> |
| Rurrenabaque . . . . .                    | 284        |
| Parque Nacional Madidi . . . . .          | 290        |
| San Borja . . . . .                       | 291        |
| Reserva Biosférica del Beni . . . . .     | 292        |
| San Ignacio de Moxos . . . . .            | 293        |
| <b>Eastern Bolivian Amazon . . . . .</b>  | <b>295</b> |
| Trinidad . . . . .                        | 295        |
| Santuario Chuchini . . . . .              | 301        |
| <b>Northern Bolivian Amazon . . . . .</b> | <b>301</b> |
| Santa Ana de Yacuma . . . . .             | 301        |
| Barba Azul Reserve . . . . .              | 302        |
| Los Lagos . . . . .                       | 303        |
| Guayaramerín . . . . .                    | 304        |
| Riberalta . . . . .                       | 306        |
| Riberalta to Cobija . . . . .             | 307        |
| Cobija . . . . .                          | 307        |

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Bolivia Today . . . . .</b>      | <b>310</b> |
| <b>History . . . . .</b>            | <b>312</b> |
| <b>Life in Bolivia . . . . .</b>    | <b>321</b> |
| <b>Indigenous Culture . . . . .</b> | <b>323</b> |
| <b>The Natural World . . . . .</b>  | <b>327</b> |

## SURVIVAL GUIDE

|                                 |            |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Directory A–Z . . . . .</b>  | <b>332</b> |
| <b>Transportation . . . . .</b> | <b>344</b> |
| <b>Health . . . . .</b>         | <b>352</b> |
| <b>Language . . . . .</b>       | <b>357</b> |
| <b>Index . . . . .</b>          | <b>369</b> |
| <b>Map Legend . . . . .</b>     | <b>379</b> |

# Itineraries



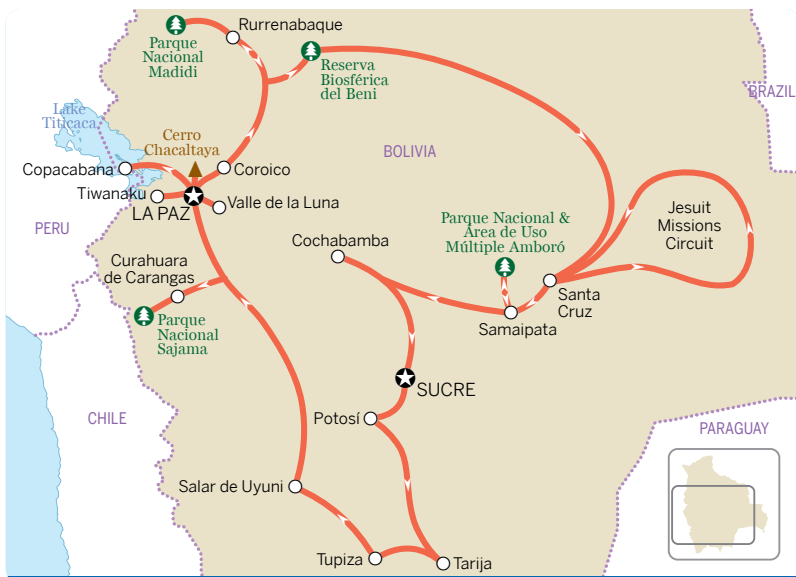
**2**  
WEEKS

## Best of Bolivia

This bare-bones itinerary will take you to the best of Bolivia – from colorful markets to stark salt plains to a city in the sky – at a head-rattling pace.

Start out with a day of acclimatization in **La Paz** visiting the markets. History buffs can take a side trip to **Tiwanaku**. From La Paz, head to **Lake Titicaca**. Allow up to three days on the lake to take in the sites of Copacabana and Isla del Sol and continue your acclimatization. From there, circle down the altiplano (via La Paz) to the **Salar de Uyuni** for a bone-chatteringly cold three-day jeep tour. You can often extend your trip to take you to the former territory of Butch Cassidy in the pleasant cowboy town of **Tupiza**.

Swing up to **Potosí**, a starkly beautiful Unesco World Heritage city, situated at 4070m, where you can visit the mint and mines. After a day or two, head to the white city of **Sucre** to hang out with students in grand plazas. Return to La Paz via **Cochabamba**, taking in the views along the way. On your last day in La Paz, consider a day of museum-hopping or take a mountain-bike ride down the World's Most Dangerous Road to **Coroico**.

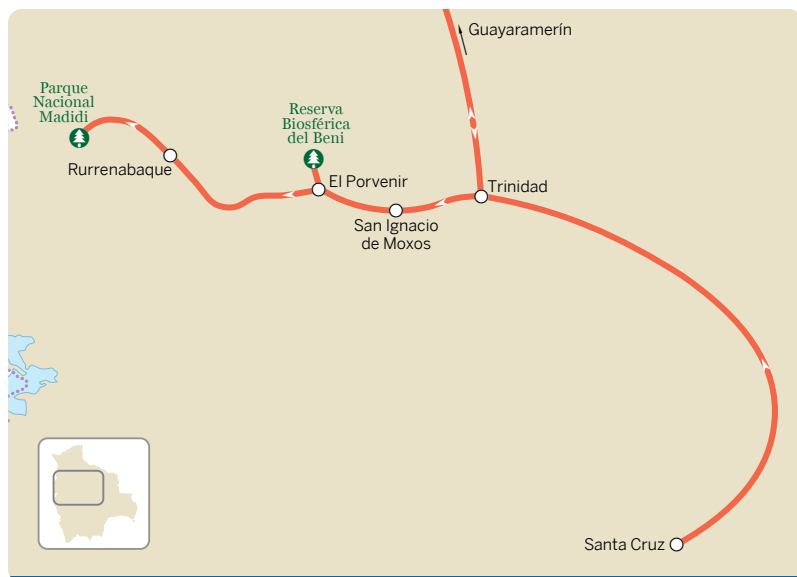
5  
WEEKS

## The Whole Country

Set aside a month or longer to acclimatize to the high altitude, take in one of Bolivia's signature treks, climb a peak, do a mountain-bike trip or simply dive into Bolivian culture.

From **La Paz** you can choose from a variety of day trips, including a visit to **Tiwanaku** or hiking in nearby **Chacaltaya** or **Valle de la Luna**. The adventurous can take on the Takesi or Choro treks, or ride a bike (or bus) down the World's Most Dangerous Road to **Coroico** in the Yungas. Next head north to **Rurrenabaque** and the famous **Parque Nacional Madidi** – depending on your time and budget you can get here by land, air or boat. Take the time to explore this wild, little-trodden utopia. From 'Rurre,' you can fly or take a boat to some of the more remote parks, like the **Reserva Biosférica del Beni** or simply head over to **Santa Cruz**. From here you'll kick off a multiday road trip through the **Jesuit Missions Circuit**, curling back around via Santa Cruz to the unique ruins near the cooler-than-thou village of **Samaipata** and the spectacular **Parque Nacional & Área de Uso Múltiple Amboró**. Head up to **Cochabamba** for good market buys. From there you'll start gaining some altitude as you pass through the culturally charged towns of **Sucre** and **Potosí**. After you've had your fill of these colonial masterpieces, cruise down to wine country near **Tarija** for a few days of warm weather, wine and chilled-to-perfection zen. You can then loop across to **Tupiza** for a day or two of mountain biking, while you arrange your four-day **Salar de Uyuni** trip, going the back way to avoid the crowds. On the way back toward La Paz, adventurous spirits may wish to stop near **Curahuara de Carangas**, before heading on to the high-plains wonderland of **Parque Nacional Sajama**, where hot springs and wildlife watching await.

If you've still got time, continue through La Paz to **Copacabana** for a day or two of beachfront fun on **Lake Titicaca**. Cruise over on the ferry, stopping at Isla de la Luna for an afternoon on your way to Isla del Sol. It'd be easy to spend five days here, trekking to lost valleys, ruins and small indigenous villages.



4  
WEEKS

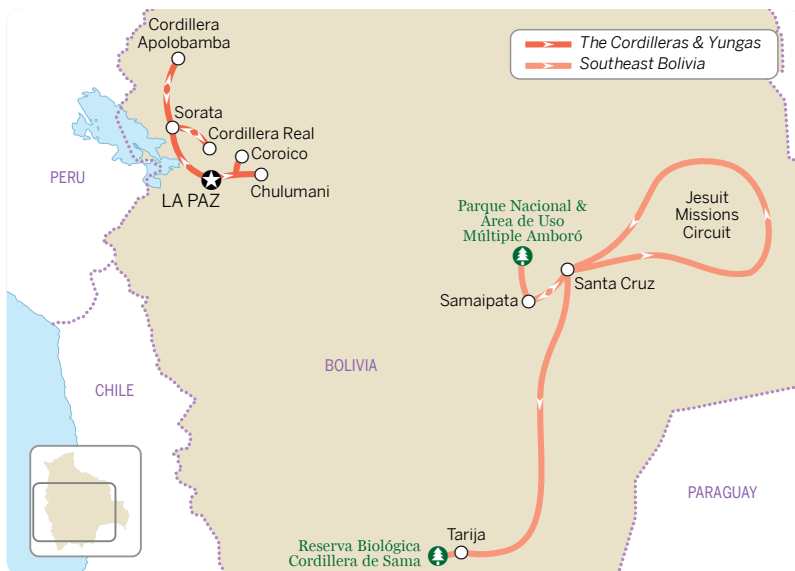
## Exploring the Amazon

Over half of Bolivia's territory lies in the Amazon, and yet this is one of the least-visited parts of the country. Waterway adventures here are good (and wet) in the rainy season, but if you plan on any type of road travel you should stick with the dry months.

Start in **Santa Cruz**, a sophisticated and cosmopolitan city with a dreamy (sometimes steamy) climate and tropical atmosphere. Dip into the urban culture for a while and party with the rich kids in the *discotecas*. From here fly or catch the overnight bus to **Trinidad**, a sleepy town with a pretty plaza. With enough time, the boat trip down the Río Mamoré from Trinidad to **Guayaramerín** is highly recommended as a way to soak up the Amazon jungle vibe. If you don't have the time, stay in town for a bit, whirling around on a motorcycle for a local fish meal, a visit to a museum or two, and a much-needed siesta or three – it gets hot.

A three-hour bus ride will take you to the Jesuit mission village of **San Ignacio de Moxos** – if possible, plan your trip around the town's colorful, not-to-be-missed festival in July. From here, wildlife-watchers should make a detour via **El Porvenir** into **Reserva Biosférica del Beni**, where the trained eye can spot up to 500 unique species of birds, including a cornucopia of herons and egrets, along with prayerful cormorants, wings spread in apparent supplication. There are around 100 different mammals in the reserve, also home to the Chimane tribe.

It's a long slog from here via San Borja to **Rurrenabaque**, hammock country, from where you can set out for a couple of days on a jungle or pampas tour. One option is to get your jungle fill at the San Miguel del Bala eco-resort, just upriver from Rurrenabaque. Whatever you do, don't miss a trip to **Parque Nacional Madidi**. Bolivia's best-known national park offers a week's or a lifetime's worth of adventures in over 18,000 sq km. The park's remarkable biodiversity is best enjoyed at a slow pace, and you should leave enough time to stay in the highly regarded, community-run Chalachán Ecodge.



2 WEEKS

## The Cordilleras & Yungas

Trapped between the heights of the Andes and the Amazon, this fascinating area is a trekking, climbing, hiking and biking wonderland.

Getting here is half the fun. Trekkers can start from outside **La Paz**, traveling by foot via the Takesi or Choro treks into the heart of the Yungas. You can also get into the Southern Yungas on a butt-busting day-long mountain-bike ride down the World's Most Dangerous Road. Be sure to spend a few days at the end of your descent in the pleasant Yungas villages of **Coroico** or **Chulumani**, both of which offer plenty of day hikes, swimming options and a chilled-out traveler vibe. From there, it's back to the capital and on to climbing and trekking in the **Cordillera Real**, stopping in the cool-air, soft-spirited Andean town of **Sorata**. Adventurers could take on any number of treks from Sorata, good mountain-bike adventures or head up to the glaciated peaks of the Cordillera. If you have the time, extend your journey to the seldom-visited **Cordillera Apolobamba** for visits with lost tribes, wildcat miners and loads of deep wilderness trekking.

3 WEEKS

## Southeast Bolivia

This trip will get you away from the main tourist track and into Bolivia's warm southern comforts. Along the way there are a few trekking options, interesting cultural centers and energetic cityscapes.

Start with a few days of partying in **Santa Cruz**, Bolivia's second city. It's great fun just wandering around the streets as you soak up *camba* (lowland) culture. Next make your way out of the city for a week-long dusty adventure through the **Jesuit Missions Circuit**, a series of beautiful missions where baroque music and faith meld with the chilled-out culture of the Guaraní. Cruise back through Santa Cruz on your way to the pre-Inca ruins at **Samaipata** and tip-top wildlife watching at the **Parque Nacional & Área de Uso Múltiple Amboró**. From the park (backtracking via Samaipata and Santa Cruz) make your way down to the relaxed wine-country town of **Tarija**. After a few days in town, you can customize the tail end of your adventure, with hikes along the Inca Trail in the **Reserva Biológica Cordillera de Sama** or in any of the numerous national parks and reserves unique to the Chaco region.

# Map Legend

## Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

## Activities, Courses & Tours

- Body surfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

## Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

## Eating

- Eating

## Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

## Entertainment

- Entertainment

## Shopping

- Shopping

## Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

## Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

## Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

## Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/Subte station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

## Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

## Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

## Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

## Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book





## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITERS



### Michael Grosberg

**Central Highlands, South Central Bolivia & the Chaco** Long ago, while in graduate school in NYC focusing on Latin American literature, Michael spent a summer in Quito teaching English and working on his Spanish. His appetite whetted for South American travel, he's made many trips back to the region, including time in Bolivia, both on assignment and for pleasure. This is around the 40th Lonely Planet guidebook Michael has worked on while being based out of Brooklyn, NY.



### Brian Kluepfel

**La Paz & Around, Lake Titicaca, The Cordilleras & Yungas, Amazon Basin** Brian lived in La Paz at the cusp of the 21st century, working for the late, great *Bolivian Times*. He's since returned to interview musicians for a proposed book, *The Charango Road*. His favorite tasks on this trip were being compelled to watch gorgeous birds in the Amazon, being force-fed delicious *sonsos* against his will, walking down the Prado at rush hour and running off the side of a mountain in La

Paz (with a paraglider attached). Brian also wrote the Plan Your Trip chapters of this guidebook.



### Paul Smith

**Southern Altiplano, Santa Cruz & Gran Chiquitania** Paul, a biologist and travel writer, has been visiting Bolivia regularly since 1998 and has worked on the last three editions of the LP guide. He is fascinated by the range of cultures and environments that the country offers. Paul has worked for Lonely Planet since 2006, authoring numerous guidebooks, especially in South America, a region that he loves. He lives in Encarnación, Paraguay with his wife, Carol, and son Shawn,

Paraguay's future Lionel Messi. Paul also wrote the Understand and Survival Guide chapters of this guidebook.

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