Summary

Gambling participation in the European Netherlands: survey 2026

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Management summary

Background

In the Netherlands, gambling is subject to regulation. The policy – concerning online gambling in particular – is regularly updated. For example, a ban on untargeted advertisements for (especially) online gambling has been in force since 2023. The new Regulation on Gaming Limits and Conscious Gambling Behaviour (Rsbs) took effect on 1 October 2024, with the Responsible Gaming Policy Rules being revised at the same time. On 14 February 2025, furthermore, the State Secretary for Legal Protection published a new vision of gambling, in which protecting all citizens from the risk of negative effects of gambling is the main point of departure. In order to monitor the developments in the gambling behaviour of Dutch citizens, the State Secretary asked the WODC to conduct a survey of gambling participation and at-risk gambling behaviour among Dutch citizens, as a follow-up to its surveys in 2024 and 2025.

Aim

The aim of the present survey is to provide insight into:

- The proportion and number of Dutch citizens participating in various forms of gambling[1] (at a physical location and online) and the extent to which they are exhibiting at-risk gambling behaviour[2];
- The trend in the gambling behaviour of Dutch citizens from 2024 onwards.

Caribbean Netherlands

The gambling policy and the vision of gambling also apply to the Public Entities of Bonaire, Saba and St. Eustatius. Therefore, the Ministry of Justice and Security asked the WODC also to collect data on (problematic) gambling behaviour in the Caribbean Netherlands in the 2026 survey, with due regard for the local context. This survey was conducted as a separate sub-study, the results of which will be published at the end of 2026.

Methodology

For the purpose of this survey, a questionnaire was drawn up which largely corresponds with the questionnaire used in 2024 and 2025. The questionnaire contains questions about participation in various forms of gambling during the 12 months preceding the survey; locations where people gamble and how much money they spend; at-risk gambling behaviour; and more in-depth questions about online gambling, Holland Casino, arcades and gambling advertisements.

13,193 Dutch citizens aged 16 years and over were approached via the I&O Research Panel. In addition, 943 panel members who were known to have one or more children aged 16 or 17 years were asked to have their son or daughter complete the questionnaire. The data was amassed over a period running from 27 March to 19 April 2026. In the end, 6,948 Dutch citizens took part in the survey. A weighting was applied to the data on the characteristics sex, age, level of education, region and migration background to ensure that the results for those characteristics are representative of the Dutch population aged 16 years and over. Differences between groups were tested for significance ($p<.05$). Only statistically significant differences are mentioned

[1] The definition of gambling has been drawn from the definition used in 'De nieuwe nulmeting' (Breuer & Intraval, 2021). It encompasses games that see participants betting money with a view to possibly winning money or other prizes. The following forms of gambling are covered: lotteries, lottery scratchcards, bingo, slot machines, poker, casino games, betting on horse races and on sporting events. A distinction is made in this regard between online gambling and gambling at a physical location (such as in a casino).

[2] The PGSI (Problem Gambling Severity Index, Ferris & Wynne, 2001) has been used for the purposes of assessing the extent of at-risk gambling. This is a questionnaire consisting of nine questions used to assign people to one of four risk categories: (1) non-problem gambler; (2) low-risk gambler; (3) moderate-risk gambler; or (4) high-risk gambler. See also Appendix A.

in the report. Statistically significant differences are indicated in the text through words such as 'increase or decrease', 'higher or lower than', 'more or less than', etcetera. The results of this survey are based on self-reporting. In interpreting these results, therefore, we need to take the features inherent to self-reporting into account, such as the role of memory and the possibility of socially desirable answering.

Key findings of the survey

- In 2026, the prevalence of gambling participation (66%) is lower than in 2025 (69%) but the same as in 2024 (65%). This also applies to gambling at physical locations (2026: 34%; 2025: 37%; 2024: 34%) and online gambling (2026: 9%; 2025: 12%; 2024: 10%).
- According to the PGSI, most of the Dutch citizens who gambled in the past 12 months are in the non-problem gambler group. Eleven percent can be classified as low-risk gamblers. Compared with last year, the group of non-problem gamblers has decreased (from 87% to 84%), while the group of low-risk gamblers has increased (from 7% to 11%).
- One in twenty gamblers (5%) satisfies the criteria for moderate-risk gamblers (3%) or high-risk gamblers (2%). The proportion of moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers is considerably larger among people who participated in *online* gambling in the past 12 months (18%).
- The self-reported rate of channelling has remained unchanged since last year. One quarter (26%) of online gamblers said that they did not know whether the website they used was legal (licensed) or illegal (unlicensed). Two thirds (67%) indicated that they used only licensed websites. Seven percent said that they (also) visited unlicensed websites at times.

Gambling participation

In the Netherlands, 66% of the population aged 16 years and over participated in at least one game of chance in the 12 months preceding the survey (Figure 0.1). This pertains to the period from March 2025 to March 2026. Some of these people only took part in a lottery (32%). If this group is disregarded, we see that 34% of the Dutch population gambled in the past 12 months. Three in ten Dutch citizens (30%) participated in at least one game at a physical location, while one in ten Dutch citizens (9%) participated in at least one online game.

In absolute figures, the number of past-year participants in gambling (including lotteries) lies between 9.5 and 9.8 million (95% confidence interval). The number of people who gambled online is estimated to be between 1.2 and 1.4 million.

Table 0.1 – Percentage and number of gambling participants among the Dutch population (16+)

	Point estimate (%, number)	95% confidence interval (%, number)
Participation in one or more instances of gambling (lotteries, at a physical location or online)	66% (9,707,000)	65%-67% (9,543,000 – 9,872,000)
Participation in one or more instances of gambling, but not just playing a lottery	34% (4,979,000)	33%-35% (4,815,000 – 5,143,000)
Participation in gambling at a physical location (excluding lotteries)	30% (4,470,000)	29%-31% (4,311,000 – 4,630,000)
Participation in online gambling	9% (1,366,000)	9%-10% (1,265,000 – 1,466,000)

Table 0.2 shows that in 2026 men participated more often in one or more instances of gambling (at a physical location or online) than women. There are also differences where age range is concerned: the proportion of gamblers is lowest among people aged 16 and 17 (42%) and increases in accordance with age

(55%-70%). Compared with Dutch citizens educated at 'hbo' or 'wo' level (61%), a greater percentage of Dutch citizens educated at 'vmbo'/'mbo1' (70%) or 'mbo2-4' level (69%) reported that they had participated in gambling in the past year. The same goes for Dutch citizens without a migration background (68%) compared with Dutch citizens with a European (62%) or non-European (61%) migration background.

The picture is different for gambling at physical locations and online gambling, especially when we look at age. Gambling at physical locations is more popular among people aged 16 to 49 (35%-44%) than among people aged 50 and over (18%-26%). The same goes for online gambling, with participation reported by 11%-17% of Dutch citizens aged 16 to 49 and by 4%-6% of Dutch citizens aged 50 and over.

Table 0.2 also shows that more Dutch citizens educated at 'mbo2-4', 'havo' or 'vwo' level (33%) gambled at a physical location than Dutch citizens educated at 'vmbo' or 'mbo1' level (27%) and respondents educated at 'hbo' or 'wo' level (29%); while more Dutch citizens without a migration background (32%) did so than Dutch citizens with a migration background (24%-27%). For online gambling, the proportion of gamblers is also higher among people educated at 'mbo2-4', 'havo' or 'vwo' level (10%) than among people educated at 'vmbo' or 'mbo1' level (8%). There are no differences when we look at migration background.

Table 0.2 – Percentage and number of gambling participants among the Dutch population (16+)

	Gambling participation	Participation in gambling at a physical location (excluding lotteries)	Participation in online gambling
Total	**66 %**	**30 %**	**9 %**
Male	68 %	29 %	11 %
Female	64 %	31 %	7 %
16-17	42 %	35 %	13 %
18-20	55 %	42 %	17 %
21-23	58 %	44 %	12 %
24-34	62 %	39 %	16 %
35-49	69 %	36 %	11 %
50-64	70 %	26 %	6 %
65+	68 %	18 %	4 %
Vmbo, mbo1	70 %	27 %	8 %
Mbo2-4, havo, vwo	69 %	33 %	10 %
Hbo, wo	61 %	29 %	9 %
No migration background	68 %	32 %	9 %
Non-European migration background	61 %	27 %	9 %
European migration background	62 %	24 %	8 %

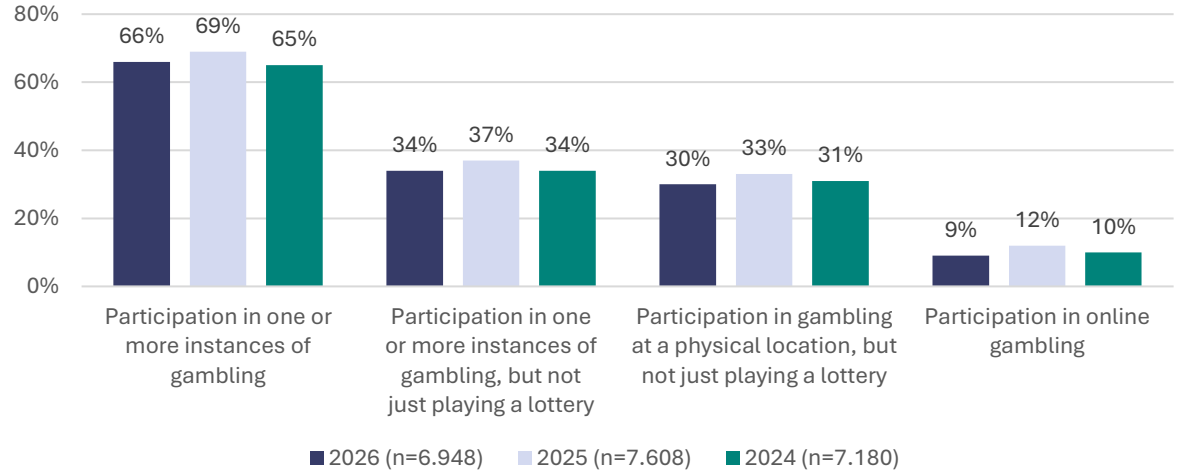
Lotteries are by far the most common form of gambling: more than half of Dutch citizens (54%) participated in them in the past 12 months. This is followed at some distance by the purchase of lottery scratchcards in a shop or via www.krasloten.nl (19%). Next there are three games played at physical locations: bingo (8%), slot machines (5%) and casino games (5%), and one online form of gambling: online betting on sporting events (3%).

Developments in gambling participation

In 2026, the prevalence of gambling participation is the same as it was in 2024 and lower than in 2025. This goes for all forms of gambling taken together, but also for gambling at physical locations and online gambling individually (Figure 0.1).

Figure 0.1 – Gambling participation since 2024

Base: all Dutch citizens.

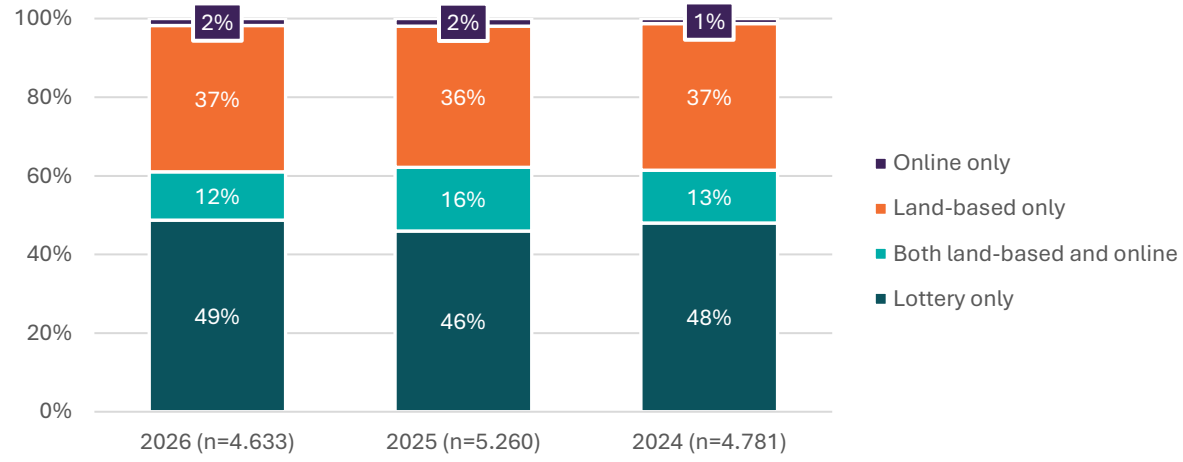


Ratio between participation in lotteries, gambling at physical locations and online gambling

Of the group of people who participated in at least one game, nearly half (49%) only took part in a lottery. More than one third (37%) gambled only at physical locations, while a small group (2%) gambled *exclusively* online. The rest (12%) did so both at physical locations and online (Figure 0.2). Since 2024, there has been no fundamental change in the ratio between lottery participation, physical gambling and online gambling. The group that gambles only online has increased, though, from 1% to 2%. In 2025, the number of people gambling both at physical locations and online went up, whereas the number of lottery participants went down. In 2026, however, the ratio is again comparable with that of 2024.

Figure 0.2 – Ratio between gambling at a physical location and gambling online since 2024

Base: Dutch citizens who participated in at least one game in the past 12 months.



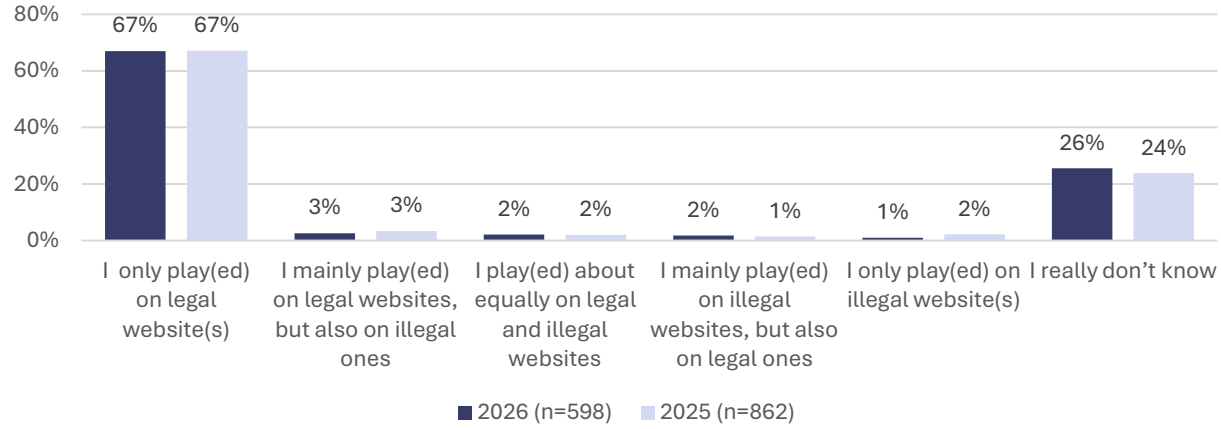
Online gambling: accounts and channelling

Respondents who had participated in online gambling during the year preceding the survey were asked a number of follow-up questions, on subjects such as gambling accounts and the type of website they had used: legal (licensed) or illegal (unlicensed).

The creation of an account is compulsory on all licensed Dutch websites. As in earlier surveys, gamblers with one account form the largest group (43%). In 2025, the proportion of gamblers who indicated that they had no account increased from 10% to 14%. This proportion remained at a comparable level in 2026, at 15%. The self-reported rate of channelling also remained unchanged in comparison with the previous survey (Figure 0.3).[3] Two thirds of the online gamblers indicated that they used only licensed websites. In addition, 7% said that they also visited unlicensed websites at times.[4] A relatively large proportion of gamblers (26%) still do not know whether the websites they use are legal or illegal.

Figure 0.3 – Do you gamble online on legal or illegal websites?

Base: Dutch citizens who participated in online gambling in the past 12 months.



[3] *As there was a change of formulation between 2024 and 2025, it cannot be established on the basis of this survey whether the rate of channelling has changed in relation to 2024.*

[4] *Because of rounding differences, the percentages shown in the graph add up to eight percent rather than the seven percent mentioned in the text.*

High-risk gambling behaviour

The number of gamblers exhibiting at-risk gambling behaviour was calculated using the Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI, see Table 0.3).

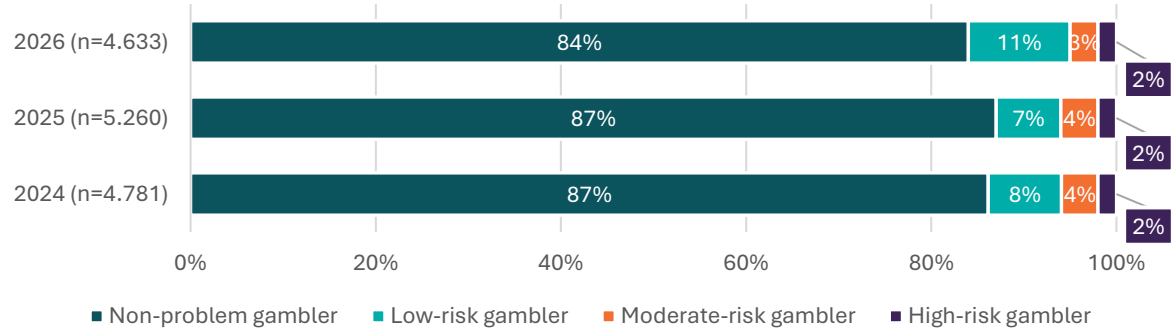
Table 0.3 – Description of PGSI and its categories

The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) is an internationally recognised and validated screening instrument. It was developed for the purpose of assessing the risk and seriousness of gambling problems among the general population. It is therefore not the same as a DSM-V diagnosis for gambling addiction. The PGSI is a self-reporting questionnaire of nine items relating to gambling behaviour and negative consequences in the past 12 months. Answers are scored on a four-point scale ('never' to 'nearly always'), which results in an overall score of 0 to 27. The overall score is therefore a weighting of both the *number* of problematic behaviours and their *frequency*. Based on the score, a person is assigned to one of the four risk categories:	
PGSI score	**Description**
0 (non-problem gamblers)	No indication of gambling problems
1 – 2 (low-risk gamblers)	Experience a low level of gambling problems with no or few negative consequences
3– 7 (moderate-risk gamblers)	Experience an average level of gambling problems with some negative consequences
8 or above (high-risk gamblers)	Experience a high level of problems; their gambling has negative consequences and may be out of control

According to the PGSI, the vast majority (84%) of Dutch citizens who participated in one or more games in the past 12 months are in the non-problem gambler group (Figure 0.4). Eleven percent are low-risk gamblers, while one in twenty satisfies the criteria for moderate-risk gamblers (3%) or high-risk gamblers (2%). Compared with earlier surveys, the group of non-problem gamblers has decreased (from 87% to 84%), while the group of low-risk gamblers has increased (from 7% to 11%). The proportion of moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers has remained the same.

Figure 0.4 – Proportion of low-risk, moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers from 2024 onwards

Base: Dutch citizens who participated in at least one game in the past 12 months.



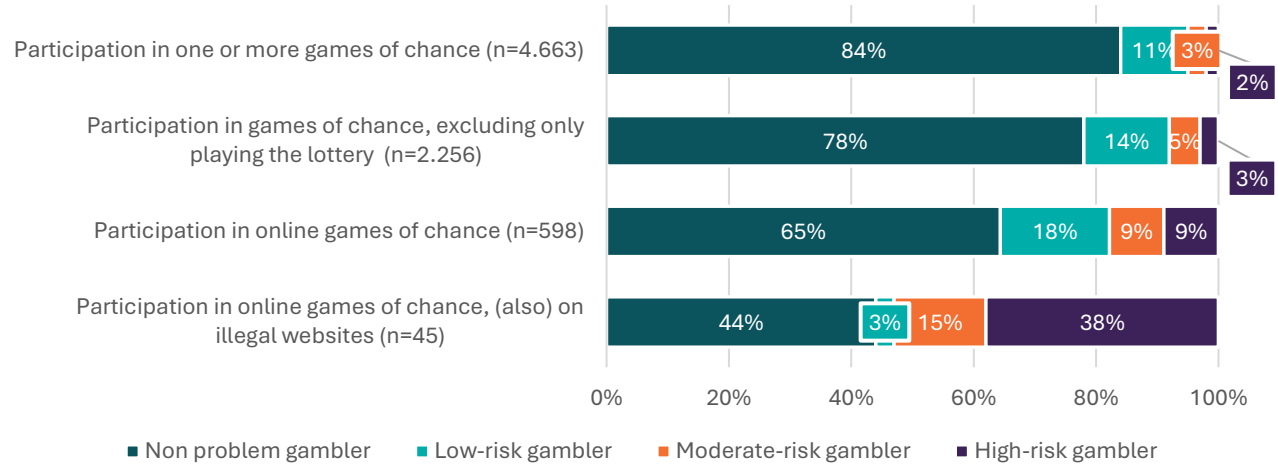
Converted to the entire population, there are 148,000 to 226,000 high-risk gamblers in 2026 (1.0% to 1.5% of the population, Table 0.4). In 2024, this range was 141,000 to 216,000 (0.9% to 1.5%). Furthermore, there are 217,000 to 372,000 moderate-risk gamblers in 2026 (1.8% to 2.5% of the population), as opposed to 275,000 to 376,000 in 2024.

Table 0.4 – Percentage and number of moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers among the entire Dutch population aged 16 years and over, comparison 2024-2025

		Point estimate	95% confidence interval[5]
High-risk gambler	2024	1.2% (179,000)	0.9%-1.5% (141,000-216,000)
	2025	1.4% (209,000)	1.1%-1.7% (169,000-249,000)
	2026	1.3% (187,000)	1.0%-1.5% (148,000-226,000)
Moderate-risk gambler	2024	2.2% (326,000)	1.8%-2.5% (275,000-376,000)
	2025	2.8% (419,000)	2.4%-3.2% (364,000-475,000)
	2026	2.2% (322,000)	1.8%-2.5% (271,000-372,000)

At 18%, the proportion of moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers is considerably larger among people who participated in one or more online games in the past 12 months (Figure 0.5). This proportion increases further when we look at online gamblers who said that they (also) visited unlicensed gambling websites. Although this group is relatively small (7%, see Figure 0.2), more than half (53%) meet the criteria for moderate-risk (15%) or high-risk gamblers (38%).

Figure 0.5 – Proportion of low-risk, moderate-risk and high-risk gamblers among various groups of gambling participants in the Netherlands



Experiences with Holland Casino and arcades

At the moment, there are 13 official physical casinos in the Netherlands. All these are operated by Holland Casino. In addition, there are hundreds of arcades, which sometimes have the word 'casino' in their name. In the past 12 months, 5% of the Dutch population visited a branch of Holland Casino (2025: 6%; 2024: 5%).[6] Two percent visited an arcade (2025: 3%; 2024: 2%). Most people who visited Holland Casino did so once (52%) or a few times (34%) in the past year. Five percent of visitors went once or several times a week. Arcade visitors visited more frequently on average: a lower percentage visited an arcade once (43%), whereas a higher percentage visited an arcade a few times (39%) in the past year. Eight percent went weekly or more often. When it comes to the degree of problem gambling, there are differences between Holland

[5] *The percentages have been rounded to one decimal place. The confidence interval will appear asymmetrical as a result.*
[6] *Holland Casino reported a slight increase in visitor numbers in the first six months of 2024. Source: https://nieuws.hollandcasino.nl/moeizaam-eerste-halfjaar-voor-holland-casino/*

Casino visitors and arcade visitors. Of the Holland Casino visitors, 6% are moderate-risk gamblers and 7% are high-risk gamblers. These figures are higher for arcade visitors, at 13% and 16% respectively.

Duty of care of Holland Casino and arcades

Nearly a quarter of the Holland Casino visitors (23%) and arcade visitors (23%) said that the risks of gambling addiction had been highlighted to them on occasion. One in five (21% and 22% respectively) had been informed about the chances of winning. Around one in twenty visitors (4% and 5% respectively) to each type of gambling location indicated that they had been advised to seek help in the past year.

Finally

One limitation of this survey is that the results are based on self-reporting on past behaviour. Among other things, this means that responses to the questions depend in part on the extent to which the respondents were able and willing to (clearly) remember what had happened. Nevertheless, questionnaires are an efficient, accessible means of conducting research (including into prevalence) in the population. The large number of respondents increases the accuracy of the results, which enables us to make comparisons between and within sub-groups. In addition, the manner in which this survey was conducted ensured comparability of the surveys of 2024, 2025 and 2026.

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