

# BANGKOK

SPRING & SUMMER GUIDE 2011



## The best places to eat, sleep and play in Bangkok this spring and summer

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# INTRODUCTION



TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 40 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you'll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com).



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## PACKING TIPS

1. Bangkok has "three seasons—hot, hotter and hottest. **Be prepared for hot and steamy weather.** In March through May, temperatures can soar into the 100s and stifle even the heartiest of travelers."—TripAdvisor Member
2. During the wet season between May and October, "at times—but not all the time—the rain comes down in buckets, and the thunderstorms can be dramatic. But if you are visiting during this time of year, **don't bother to bring a raincoat**—it will be too hot to wear it. **Carry an umbrella with you at all times** and be prepared to take your shoes off and wade, and you'll be fine."—TripAdvisor Member
3. "Have some **dress sense**—how you dress in Thailand is quite important. You'll notice that Thai women are very **modest** in public—they usually swim fully clothed."—TripAdvisor Member
4. "Read Robert Cooper and Nanthapa Cooper's tome, **Culture Shock! Thailand: A Survival Guide to Custom and Etiquette**, which will prepare you for everything, including an audience with the King of Siam."—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

## Inside BANGKOK

Bangkok, the capital of Thailand since 1782, is a relatively new capital city; however, it is bursting with a mixture of old (stunning temples and shrines, the Grand Palace, reclining Buddhas) and new (skyscrapers, the Skytrain rail line, luxury accommodations). The energy in the city is tangible, with bustling street markets, high-end shopping, the notorious shows, late-night clubbing and early morning almsgiving.

Yet despite the frenetic atmosphere, you don't have to look far for the meditative and tranquil feeling that many associate with the Buddhist city. Let yourself go limber during a massage at Wat Pho, float your tension away on a boat cruise along the Chao Phraya River or delight in the local food at one of the many street stalls.

# Top VIEWS



## BANGKOK'S BEST VIEWS

Is that vertigo or have you just had one too many martinis? You won't know for sure at **Sirocco**, an open-air bar on the 64th floor of a skyscraper. "Ohh, what I can say here? It's unbelievable and beautiful—I can see the whole of Bangkok City at night."—TripAdvisor Member, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Sky Bar at Sirocco, State Tower, 1055 Silom Road, 2 624 9555**

"**Wat Arun** is simply a sight for the senses. Look up close at the bits and pieces of the Wat—they are decorated by seashells and bits of porcelain. The views from the top are very lovely and make the narrow and steep climb up all that much more worthwhile."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

**Temple of the Dawn (Wat Arun), Tha Tien Pier, Chao Phraya River, 2 465 5640**

Try a view of Bangkok from the water. "I was lucky enough to take a three-day trip up river on the **Manohra Song**. The ship and crew pampered all six guests with luxury. Quality food, service and cabins. Each couple has their own guide when the boat docks, to escort you to many interesting venues."—TripAdvisor Member, Pennsylvania

**Manohra Song, Marriott Bangkok Resort & Spa, 257 Charoennakorn Road, Samrae Thonburi, 2 477 0770**

## Where to PLAY

### TOP 10 Attractions

1. Baipai Thai Cooking School, 150/12 Soi Naksuwan, Nonsee Road, 2 294 9029
2. Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaeo), Grand Palace Complex, Na Phra Lan Road
3. Temple of the Reclining Buddha (Wat Pho), Sanam Chai Road and Maharaj Road, 2 225 9595
4. Grand Palace, Na Phra Lan Rd, Maharaj Pier, 2 224 1833
5. Temple of the Dawn (Wat Arun), Tha Tien Pier, Chao Phraya River
6. The Golden Mount (Wat Saket), Boripihat & Bamrung Muang Roads, 2 694 1222
7. Chao Phraya River
8. Skytrain (Rot Fai Fah), Siam Square (Central Station), 2 222 0175
9. Siam Niramit, 19 Tiamruammit Road, Huay Kwang, 2 649 9222
10. Erawan Shrine, 494 Rajdamri Road



## FAMILIES

"We poured scented water and dropped baht coins into jugs around the **Reclining Buddha**. The kids really enjoyed it."—TripAdvisor Member, Syracuse, N.Y.

**Temple of the Reclining Buddha (Wat Pho), Sanam Chai Road and Maharaj Road, 2 225 9595**

Komodo dragons! Sumatran rhinoceros! Elephant rides! Find them at the **Dusit Zoo**. "It was a good way to pass an afternoon with the children."—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Dusit Zoo, 71 Rama 5 Road, Dusit, 2 281 2000**

Ever seen a milking? A snake milking, that is! At the **Red Cross Snake Farm**, "the demonstration of the extraction of venom from poisonous snakes and the handling, out-of-cage display and educating talk on snakes such as the King Cobra, Thai cobra, python, etc., is quite interesting for children."—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

**Red Cross Snake Farm, 1871 Rama IV Road, 2 252 0161**



## ROMANCE

"If you're looking for something other than sightseeing and shopping, the **Baipai Cooking School** is definitely a must. We got to cook and eat what we made as the lesson went on, and both of us had fun cooking together."—TripAdvisor Member, Scotland

**Baipai Thai Cooking School, 150/12 Soi Naksuwan, Nonsee Road, 2 294 9029**

"The **Peninsula Spa** is the best I've experienced. The service is wonderful, from making the booking to the treatments to the relaxation room for post treatment. Absolutely romantic in setting and decor."—TripAdvisor Member, Japan

**Peninsula Spa by ESPA, Peninsula Hotel, 333 Charoennakom Road, Klongsan, 2 861 2888**

Hopeless romantics are advised to "try **Vertigo**, the roof restaurant/pub at the Banyan Tree Hotel. That is, if you can find a seat, since it's pretty popular. Great view, cool wind, great romantic atmosphere—you won't regret it!"—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

**Vertigo, Banyan Tree Hotel, 21/100 South Sathon Road, 2 679 1200**

# Where to PLAY



## BUDGET

The **Temple of the Emerald Buddha** “is a huge, incredible riot of glittering gold and color. Pictures cannot do it justice. Definitely a must-see in Bangkok.”—TripAdvisor Member, Turkey

**Temple of the Emerald Buddha (Wat Phra Kaeo), Grand Palace Complex, 2 222 0094**

“If you’re looking to get away from the sterile shopping centers, make time to wonder around **Chinatown**. There are many small alleys, so you never know what you might find.”—TripAdvisor Member

**Chinatown**

“You never know what you might find.”

“If you’re willing to spend some time comparing vendor’s items and do your homework, you can come away from the **Chatuchak Market** with some good deals at the end of your day. Good street food, at the end of the Skytrain line and very easy to reach.”—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

**Chatuchak Market, adjacent to Chatuchak Park**



## ADVENTURE

Gore-lovers should check-out Thai’s national pastime, **Muaythai (Thai Boxing)**. The pre-match rituals, music and gambling are a great warm-up. But be warned: “The fighting is real, so this spectator sport is not for the faint of heart.”—TripAdvisor Member, Devon, England

**Muay Thai (Thai Boxing), Lumpinee Stadium, Rama IV Road, 2 251 4303**

“If you want to witness another side of Thai life, **Absolute Explorer Tours** runs a wonderful day trip to the countryside around Bangkok. The cycling is very easy, along pathways, tracks and very quiet tarred roads. Frequent stops are made, and the guides give great insight into country life.”—TripAdvisor Member, Hollywood, U.K.

**Absolute Explorer Tours, 99/1 Udomsuk 43-45, Sukhumvit Soi 103, 87 077 9696**

**Kiwi Fishing Bangkok** sets up your fishing expedition “for comfort, with everything you need to relax and enjoy the day, even down to the tea and coffee, ohhh and the hammock! The first bait was not even in the water 10 seconds and the fishing was on! I proceeded to land giant Mekong catfish one after the other. The pace just didn’t stop!”—TripAdvisor Member

**Kiwi Fishing Bangkok, Bung Sam Lan Lake, Bangkok, 85 109 6979**

“...not for the faint of heart.”

TripAdvisor members have posted more than 6,000,000 photos on the site. The good, the bad and the very candid. It’s almost like being there!



## EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL

“No other place gives you a comparable idea of the beauty, simplicity and sophistication of the Thai domestic arts.”

**Jim Thompson House** is “very inspiring and educational.”—TripAdvisor Member, Los Angeles, Calif.

**Jim Thompson House, 6 Soi Kasemsan 2, Rama I Road, 2 216 7368**

At **The Grand Palace**, “there’s glitter and gold everywhere you look. There are a million details not to be overlooked.”—TripAdvisor Member, The Netherlands

**The Grand Palace, Na Phra Lan Road, Maharaj Pier, next to Wat Phra Kaeo Temple Complex, city center, 2 224 1833**

“...glitter and gold everywhere you look.”

The **Vimanmek Mansion** “is open to the public with guided tours. In the morning and afternoon, there is a 30-minute display of Thai dancing and Thai boxing. Each differently styled building holds different national collections.”—TripAdvisor Member, United Kingdom

**Vimanmek Mansion, Ratchawithi Road, 2 628 6300**



## RELAXATION

“Separate from the temple itself and around the back lay the **monks’ quarters**, where quiet lanes house monks praying and going about their daily work. There’s even a basketball court where, sometimes, you see monks shooting hoops in their brilliant orange robes.”—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

**Monks’ Quarters at Wat Pho, Chetupon Road**

“From the moment you walk into **Dahra**, the hustle and bustle of the city are gone, and you feel a wonderful warmth and ambiance. Everyone is very professional. I’ve never seen my husband so relaxed!”—TripAdvisor Member, Thailand

**Dahra Beauty & Spa, Triple Two Hotel, Silom Soi 18, 2 235 4811**

Visit the sights in a more leisurely fashion with a one-day river pass. “The **CHEAPEST** way is just to jump on a **Chao Phraya Tourist Boat** and take it up the river. Jump off at any stop that looks interesting.”—TripAdvisor Member, Berlin, Germany

**Chao Phraya River Tourist Boat, Sathorn Pier, Central Pier, 2 623 6001**

# What's the TOUR

## How to Get Around



“You can **hire a local tour guide** for any particular site you wish to visit. They are easy to find outside each site. Your hotel concierge can arrange a guide, but you will pay more and won't necessarily have a better time.”—TripAdvisor Member

“We found that each site had a brochure in English, so a guide isn't required for a positive experience. Sometimes it's **best just to walk around** at your own pace and take in the sights, sounds and smells on your own.”—TripAdvisor Member

“If you're in a **minibus or taxi**, tell the driver you'll tip him if he keeps the speed below 90/100 kph!”—TripAdvisor Member

“The **Skytrain** is the best. The stations are well manned with lots of security, shops and friendly staff who speak English. The trains are on time, very fast, clean, air-conditioned, cheap and easy to navigate. We used the train to get everywhere and loved it!”—TripAdvisor Member

“**Tuk tuks**, the small bicycle-like touring vehicles, are very cheap and sometimes a little faster to snake through traffic, but the smog can be a killer. When you take a tuk tuk, always agree on a price before you start your journey, and a small tip goes a long way.” —TripAdvisor Member

### BANGKOK THAILAND

TARIFF 2006





# WHERE to eat



## FAMILIES

If the kids (or the adults!) are longing for a taste of home, head to the old, reliable **Hard Rock Café**. "It has a good bar, great bartenders, good band."—TripAdvisor Member, Utah

**Hard Rock Café, 424/3-6 Siam Square Soi 11, Pathumwan, 2 251 0797**

"My husband and our 2 teenagers had a nice lunch **Bankara Ramen**. The food was tasty and the soup bowls were huge. I loved the condiments on the table. Lots of choices on the menu, too."—TripAdvisor Member, Tahlequah, Okla.

**Bankara Ramen, Sukumvit 39, Wattana, 2 662 5162 3**

At **Crepes & Co.**, you'll find "delicious crepes with savory and sweet fillings, as well as several Mediterranean and North African dishes."—TripAdvisor Member

**Crepes & Co., 18/1 Sukhumvit Soi 12, 2 653 3990**

Want more information on Bangkok? TripAdvisor.com offers free weekly e-mail updates filled with new deals, reviews and articles for Bangkok or any other destination you choose.



## ROMANCE

"We ate at **Thiptara** on our first night in Bangkok, and it was a very pleasant introduction to Thailand. The service was friendly, the food was excellent and the venue beautiful. It was lovely watching the boats go by on the river."—TripAdvisor Member, Castle Hedingham, U.K.

**Thiptara, The Peninsula Hotel, 333 Charoennakorn Road, 2 861 2888**

"Located on the top floor of the Oriental Hotel, the **Normandie's** dining room offers fabulous views of the Chao Phraya River and its fantastically lit boats. We had a great meal, great service and really enjoyed the elegant atmosphere."—TripAdvisor Member, Moscow, Russia

**Le Normandie, Mandarin Oriental, 48 Oriental Ave., 2 659 9000**

"You will enjoy the view of the city with a very romantic dinner" at **Sirocco**, on the 64th floor of State Tower. "They have a live band. The food is fine. You should make a reservation about one month in advance."—TripAdvisor Member, Bangkok

**Sirocco, 1055 Silom Road, State Tower, 2 624 9555**

"Just go for it!"

## BUDGET

"For cheap and lovely Thai food, we tried **Polo**—famous for their fried chicken. We had a whole chicken served with flakes of fried garlic on top, very yummy. For a family of four, it cost us only 280 Baht for lunch. We ate in the open air part although they have a/c dining as well."—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

**Polo Fried Chicken, 137/1-3 Soi Polo, Wireless Road, Lumpini, 2 655 8489**

"My favorite place to eat is the food court at the **Emporium**. A bit upscale but loads of choices. One seating area has views over the Queen's Park next door."—TripAdvisor Member, Phuket, Thailand

**Emporium Food Court, Emporium Shopping Centre, 5th Floor, 622 Sukhumvit Road, Klongton, Klongtoey**

"The **Queen of Curry** is basic but very clean and has good food. We had great satay and exceptional chicken penang curry. With two large beers, it was still a bargain! Do not hesitate—just go for it!"—TripAdvisor Member, Liverpool, U.K.

**Queen of Curry, 49 Charoenkrung Road Soi 50, Bongrak, 86 559 7711**

# WHERE to eat



## HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

Vegetarian cuisine is the specialty at **May Kaidee's**, a local chain consisting of three restaurants and a cooking school. "Low-key and some of the best Thai food you'll ever eat. And vegan!"—TripAdvisor Member

**May Kaidee's, 33 Samsen Road Soi 1, 89 137 3173 (main location)**

Yes, you read the name right: It's **Cabbages and Condoms**. "The food was excellent. It's nothing smutty, just to promote condoms being as readily available as cabbages!"—TripAdvisor Member, Knebworth, Hertfordshire, England

**Cabbages and Condoms, 10 Sukhumvit Soi 12, 2 229 4610**

"As a vegetarian, I find it hard to eat Thai food, usually being limited to only a couple of menu items. **Na Aroon** was a real find! The menu was amazing, the ambiance lovely and the food very tasty."—TripAdvisor Member, Melbourne, Australia

**Na Aroon, Ariyasom Villa Hotel, 65 Sukhumvit Soi 1, 2 254 8880 3**

"...traditional Thai music and dancing."

## HIDDEN GEMS

If ambiance is important, head to **Eat Me**, where the artistic surroundings complement light Thai meals, such as "carrot soup with coconut cream, double cherry duck with cranberry mashed potatoes and mixed asparagus, zucchini and broccoli."—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

**Eat Me, Soi Pipat 2, 2 238 0931**

Escape the bustle at **The Mango Tree**, a quiet retreat with a garden. It's "an amazing restaurant" with "great food with traditional Thai music and dancing."—TripAdvisor Member, Newcastle, England

**The Mango Tree, 37 Silom Soi 6, 2 236 2820**

"After visiting some temples in the area, **Chote Chitr** is a must! The place is far from fancy, but the freshly prepared food is out of this world and very reasonably priced. Whenever we visit Bangkok, my husband and I always have our first and last meal here."—TripAdvisor Member, Europe

**Chote Chitr, 146 Phraeng Phuton, 2 221 4082**

## SPECIAL EVENTS



World-renown guitarists from across the globe descend on Bangkok for the annual **International Guitar Festival**, the largest classical guitar celebration in Asia. The event features morning classes and nightly concerts with each of the festival's honorees, as well as a juniors competition. (June 16 – 19)

**Asia International Guitar Festival, Siam City Hotel, 81 854 9368, <http://www.asiainternationalguitarfestival.com>**

Our furry friends take the center stage at the **Thailand International Dog Show**. Join in the fun with prize draws, agility competitions and more, but don't miss the show because Her Majesty Queen Sirikit will be presenting the Royal Cup to the show's top dog. (June 30 – July 3)

**Thailand International Dog Show, Impact Exhibition and Convention Center, 2 833 5109, <http://www.thailand-dogshow.com>**

Pay your respects to **Her Majesty Queen Sirikit** on her birthday, when buildings and streets are decorated in celebration and the Grand Palace is adorned with colored lights. Since the Queen is also seen as the mother of the country, this is also Mother's Day and a time to honor your own mom! (August 12)

**Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's Birthday, Ratchadamnoen Avenue**

Savor the sights, smells, tastes and sounds of Chinatown along Yaowarat Road during the **Food Festival**, when vendors compete for your attentions with sumptuous culinary demonstrations and music and entertainment fill the streets. You won't remain hungry for long! (September)

**Yaowarat Food Festival, Chinatown, Yaowarat Road**

Artists and performers from the world over come together at **Bangkok's International Festival of Dance and Music**, a spectacular, passionate celebration of performing arts featuring opera, modern and classical dance, jazz, cinematic orchestra, Shakespearean drama, popular music and much more. (September 9 – October 16)

**Bangkok's 13th International Festival of Dance and Music, Ratchadapisek Road, Thailand Cultural Centre, 2 262 3456**

# Where to STAY



## FAMILIES

For “luxury and service beyond belief,” check into the **InterContinental Bangkok**. “We ate in their casual lobby dining one evening and requested something that wasn’t even on the menu for the kids, and they accommodated in their friendly Thai way.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

**InterContinental Bangkok, 973 Ploenchit Road, 2 656 0444**

“For families with children,” the **Marriott Bangkok Resort & Spa** “may be the best hotel anywhere. Check-in was not only prompt and friendly but the receptionist took our crying two year old to the Executive Lounge for a cookie, which solved his problem immediately.”—TripAdvisor Member, San Francisco, Calif.

**Marriott Bangkok Resort & Spa, 257 Charoennakorn Road, Samrae Thonburi, 2 476 0022**

“The pool area at the **Pullman** was fabulous. There was a small Jacuzzi, as well, along with a separate kids pool. The hotel even had feeding time for the fish on the hotel premises. The breakfast and dinner buffets were great—you won’t stop eating.”—TripAdvisor Member, New Dehli, India

**Pullman Bangkok King Power, 8/2 Rangnam Road, Thanon-Phayathai, Ratchathewi, 2 680 9999**

## ROMANCE

At the **Shangri-La Hotel**, “the room was very spacious, and the view was superb. Sitting on the balcony while the sun sets and watching the river traffic was very romantic. The two pools are almost an oasis set back from the river.”—TripAdvisor Member, England

**Shangri-La Hotel, 89 Soi Wat Suan Plu, New Road, Bangrak, 2 236 7777**

“My wife and I spent the last day of our honeymoon at **Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit**. There was a honeymoon cake and letter from the management waiting in our room. Excellent detail! The soothing pool area, especially the jacuzzi, is amazing in the middle of the hectic city.”—TripAdvisor Member, Helsinki, Finland

**Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit, 250 Sukhumvit Road, 2 649 8888**

“Our room at the **Peninsula Bangkok** was a perfect size for a couple, and the added balcony gave a feeling of more space. It was certainly a delight to be able to step outside in the evenings with a quiet drink and watch the barges go by on the river.”—TripAdvisor Member, Beijing, China

**Peninsula Bangkok, 333 Charoennakom Road, Klongsan, 2 861 2888**

## BUDGET

“I cannot believe the value at the **Bangkok Loft Inn**. Super helpful staff, very good breakfast with lots of choices, complimentary airport pick up and huge, comfy beds! All in all, it gave us a great start to our trip.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

**Bangkok Loft Inn, 55 Somdet Phra Chao Taksin Road, Bangyeerua, Thonburi, 2 862 0492**

“If you’re looking for a great, clean and unique place with great staff, **Phranakorn-Nornlen** is the place for you. Decorated with a splendid vintage touch without feeling old. The hallway looks like an old Thai steet. The attention to detail is simply mind-boggling.”—TripAdvisor Member, Tel-Aviv, Israel

**Phranakorn-Nornlen Hotel, 46 Krungkaseam, Thewet Soi 1, Bangkhunprom, 2 628 8188 x90**

**Lamphu Tree House** “has much more flair than others in the price range. Our standard room by far exceeded our budget expectations. Everything was brand new, immaculately clean and, above all, very well designed with a nice traditional Thai touch.”—TripAdvisor Member, Frankfurt, Germany

**Lamphu Tree House, 155 Wanchat Bridge, Phachatipai Road, Phanakhon, 2 282 0912**

## LUXURY

The **Mandarin Oriental Bangkok** offers “professional, faultless service from start to finish. Early morning carrot juice delivered on the dot. Shoes shined daily without asking. Laundry collected and delivered without the form filling. Superb dinner on the terrace. Up-to-date room with balcony overlooking river, with an old-world feel.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**Mandarin Oriental Bangkok, 48 Oriental Ave., 2 659 9000**

At **Lebua at State Tower**, “the rooms were spacious, with lovely river views, and were a welcome respite from the rather hectic street scene. Large pool, great workout facility and amenable staff ready to respond to your every wish. As I told my wife, ‘Honey, now you know what it is like to be a rock star.’”—TripAdvisor Member, Stockholm, Sweden

**Lebua at State Tower, 1055 Silom Road, State Tower, Bangrak, 2 624 9999**

“The **Sukhothai** has been ranked among the best hotels in the world. I understand why. Not many comments are necessary to describe this perfect place in Bangkok: quiet in a noisy city, elegant and delicate.”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France

**The Sukhothai Bangkok, 13/3 South Sathorn Road, 2 344 8888**



Have questions about Bangkok? Get insider advice from local experts in our forums. The majority of questions are answered within 24 hours.



# Where to **STAY**



## HIDDEN GEMS

"I had a really good time at **Baan Sukhumvit Inn**, as if it were my own place. The staff was extremely friendly and helpful; the room, clean and comfortable. Even though the hotel is on the Sukhumvit business area road, I found it magically peaceful and attractive."—TripAdvisor Member, Fribourg, Switzerland

**Baan Sukhumvit Inn, 392/38-39 Sukhumvit Soi 20 Sukhumvit Road, Klongtoey, 2 258 5622**

"...magically peaceful and attractive."

**Old Bangkok Inn** is "a small boutique hotel with a personal touch. We stayed in the Lemongrass room, which might be not exactly spacious, but has a lot of charm. The room has a small terrace where you can forget that you are in a big, hectic city. The breakfast was huge and tasty. The staff are really nice, sweet and helpful."—TripAdvisor Member, Berlin, Germany

**Old Bangkok Inn, 607 Pra Sumen Road, Phra Nakhon, 2 629 1787**

**Baan Chantra** is "more than a hotel—it's a home away from home. What makes this place truly stand out from all the other places we've ever stayed in is the people that run it. Nothing was too much trouble. Go for the Thai breakfasts. While eating curry for breakfast may sound weird or even scary, they are really delicious. The coffee here is the best in town!"—TripAdvisor Member, Netherlands

**Baan Chantra, 120/1 Samsen Road, 2 628 6988 9**

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