



Royal
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One place, two identities

A self guided walk around Mynydd Epynt in Wales



Explore an ancient Welsh mountain plateau

Find out about different upland ecosystems and rare species

See evidence of the hill farming communities that once lived here

Discover why the military chose this place as a training area

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks





Contents

Introduction	4
Route overview	5
Safety notice	5
Practical information	6
Detailed route maps and stopping points	8
Important information about navigation	10
Alternative route	10
Directions	11
Credits	17

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Cover image: The open moorland of Mynydd Epynt © Marianna Dudley

One place, two identities

Explore a spectacular mountain plateau in mid Wales

Discover an ancient Welsh mountain plateau and a modern military training area.

Here sheep roam freely on artillery ranges, red kites soar above troops on exercises, and the sound of the wind is punctuated by booms from mortars.

You'll be quite safe, though, as you follow part of the Epynt Way footpath around the perimeter of Sennybridge Training Area (SENTA).



Soldier moving across peat moorland on SENTA
Stuart Bingham © Crown Copyright

It's an opportunity to find out what makes this upland environment special and what kind of habitats thrive here. Along the way there is evidence of the communities that lived here for generations and made a living from sheep farming in this exposed and isolated place.



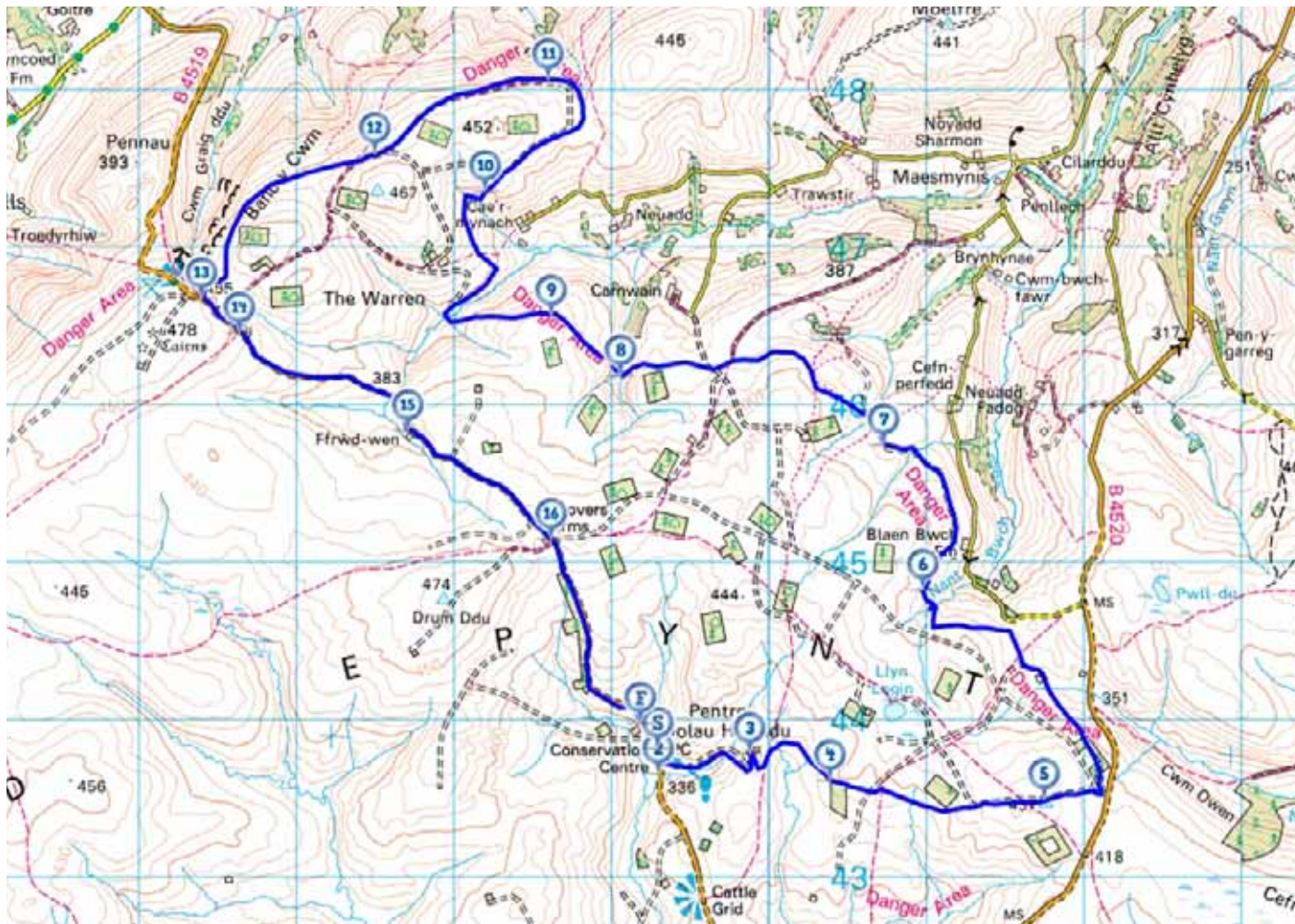
The open and largely treeless moorland
© Jenny Lunn

Discover why this treeless and open terrain was requisitioned for military use and what training takes place today.

A change in legislation encouraged in the MOD to grant greater public access to its land. This walk takes advantage of this.

It's an exhilarating walk of dramatic landscapes and spectacular views with some surprising stories along the way.

Route overview



Safety notice

This walk takes place in an active military training area so you might see or hear soldiers on training exercises. Don't be afraid of them, but neither should you interrupt their training activities.

It is safe to walk in this part of the training area as live ammunition is not used here but if you do see some military debris on the ground please **DO NOT** touch it, move it or take it away.

Up to date information about firing times is available online:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sennybridge-firing-notice>

Practical information

Location	Mynydd Epynt, Powys, Wales
Start and finish point	Epynt Visitor Centre, B4519 The nearest village is Upper Chapel, postcode LD3 9RG
Getting there	<p>Car – On the B4519 about 10 miles north of Brecon and 6 miles south of Garth; free car parking at the Epynt Visitor Centre.</p> <p>Train – The nearest station is Garth (Powys) about 6 miles away which is served by four trains a day (two on Sundays) that run between Shrewsbury and Swansea on ‘The Heart of Wales Line’. However, there is no public transport connecting the railway station with the start of the walk.</p>
Directions by road	<p>From Brecon – Take the B4520 out of the town and follow for about 9 miles. Shortly after passing through Upper Chapel turn left along the B4519 which is signposted Garth and Llangammarch Wells. Follow this road for about 2 miles until you reach the Visitor Centre on the right.</p> <p>From Builth Wells – Take the B4520 out of the town for about 7 miles. Just before reaching Upper Chapel turn right along the B4519 which is signposted Garth and Llangammarch Wells. Follow this road for about 2 miles until you reach the Visitor Centre on the right.</p> <p>From Garth – Garth is on the A483 which runs between Builth Wells and Llandovery. Take the B4519 which is signposted Upper Chapel. Follow this road under the railway bridge and over the River Irfon. It then climbs steadily for about 2 ½ miles to Garth Viewpoint. Follow the road for a further 3 miles across undulating moorland until you reach the Visitor Centre on the left.</p>
Walk distance	12 miles
Level	Challenging – A long walk, much of it across rough terrain, with some steep ascents and descents.

Terrain	The route follows a mixture of gravel tracks, defined footpaths, undefined footpaths across rough ground, and tarmac roads. It can be boggy in places and there are some streams to ford.
Conditions	Most of the walk is on a mountain plateau which can be windy and exposed; the weather can change quickly so take suitable clothing and footwear.
Best time of year	This walk is suitable all year round but we only recommend doing it in fair weather conditions when visibility is good as the route crosses some open moorland with few landmarks for navigation.
Opening times	The Epynt Visitor Centre is unmanned but it is unlocked every morning by the MoD and closed again at night.
Suitable for	<p>Dogs – Keep under close control or on a lead because sheep roam freely along the entire route</p> <p>Wheelchairs and pushchairs - A short circuit from the Visitor Centre is suitable. See page 10 for details.</p>
Refreshments	There are no refreshments en route. Take plenty of provisions and water as the walk is long. The scenic dingle (Stop 8) is a good location for a picnic. Sometimes there is an ice cream van at Garth Viewpoint (Stop 13).
Toilets	There is a toilet at the Epynt Visitor Centre at the beginning and end of the walk; there are no other facilities en route.
Tourist information	<p>Brecon Tourist Information Centre Cattle Market car park, Brecon, Powys, LD3 9DA</p> <p>Builth Wells Tourist Information Centre The Groe car park, Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3BT</p>

Detail of first and last part of route



Stopping points

1. Epynt Visitor Centre
2. B4519 road by Epynt Visitor Centre
3. Observation posts
4. Corner of first plantation
5. Trig point on gravel track
6. Gate into field after crossing ravine of Nant Bwch
7. Peat bog beside track
8. Scenic valley
-
17. Epynt Visitor Centre

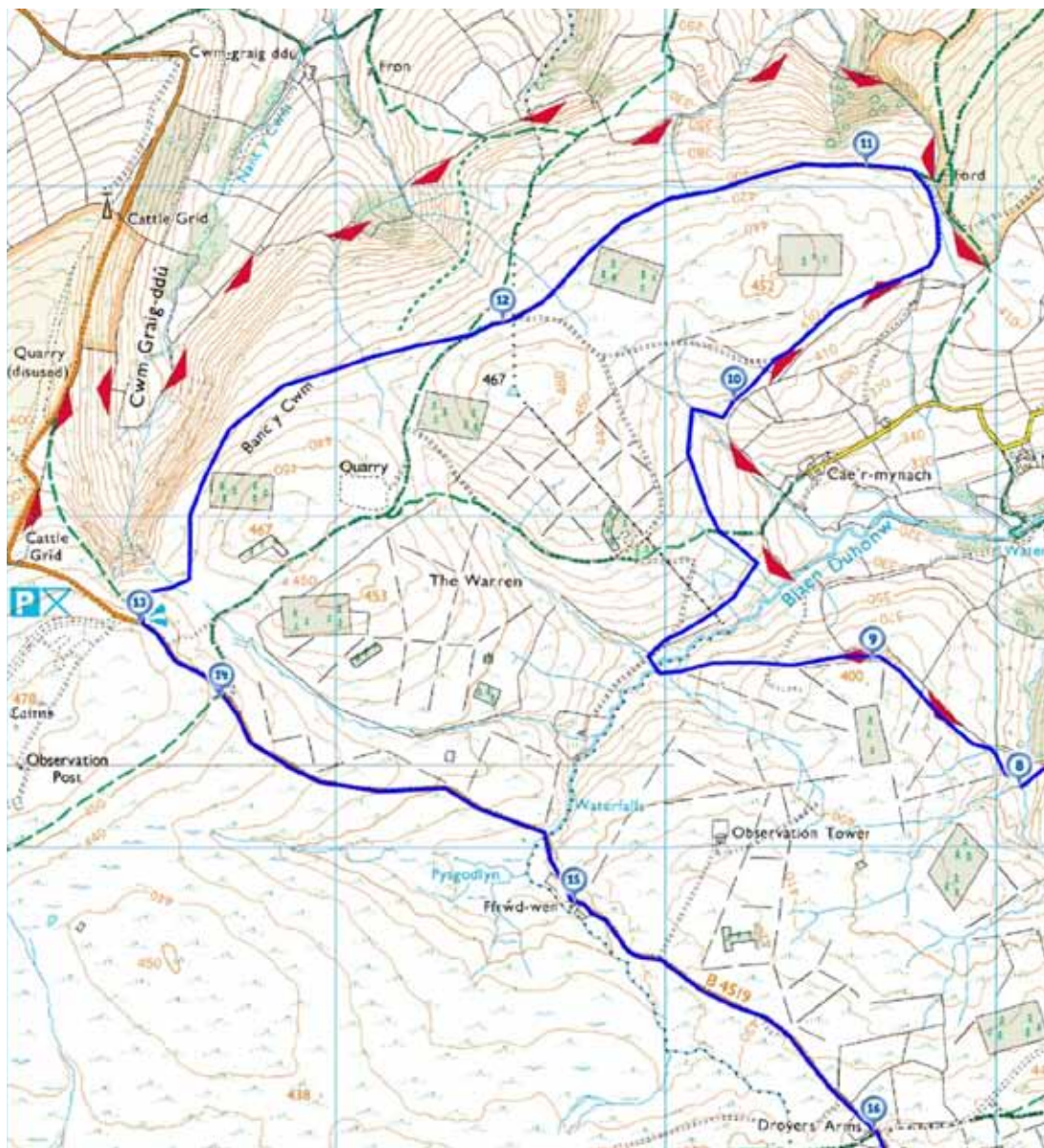
Grid reference

SN 993 438
 SN 993 437
 SN 999 438
 SN 004 436
 SN 018 435
 SN 010 448
 SN 008 457
 SN 991 462

SN 993 438



Detail of middle section of route



Stopping points

- 9. Hillside above Blaen Dunhow valley
- 10. Hillside above Cae'r Mynach farm
- 11. Track at top of escarpment
- 12. Track along top of escarpment
- 13. Garth viewpoint
- 14. B4519
- 15. Ffrwd-wen, B4519
- 16. Drovers Arms, B4519

Grid reference

- SN 986 466
- SN 982 474
- SN 987 481
- SN 976 476
- SN 964 467
- SN 967 465
- SN 977 458
- SN 986 451

Important note about navigation

Most of the walk (Stops 3 to 13) follows the **Epynt Way**. Although this is a designated route, it is not shown on Ordnance Survey maps and there are not always clear footpaths on the ground.



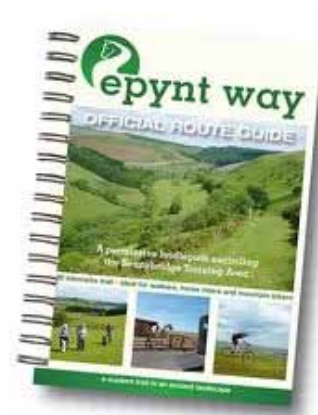
Wooden marker posts are located every 100 to 200 metres along the route to guide you.

Six figure grid references are also provided for each stopping point.

We strongly recommended that you obtain maps and directions for the Epynt Way in advance.

The **Epynt Way Official Route Guide** can be purchased from the local Tourist Information Centres (Brecon or Builth Wells) or directly from the Epynt Way Association for £4.99.

Alternatively you can **download** the maps and directions from http://www.epyntway.org/route_from_1_to_2.htm



Alternative route

For those with less time, limited abilities or who prefer an easier walk, we recommend a short **1 mile circuit**.

Follow the track from the Visitor Centre (Stop 1) up to the observation posts (Stop 3) from where there is an excellent view of the surrounding landscape.

This route along a track has a gentle gradient and is suitable for all ages and abilities, including wheelchairs and pushchairs. There are also 3 sets of picnic tables and information boards along the way.

It is also possible to **drive** the last part of the walk route in reverse from the Visitor Centre (Stop 17) to Garth Viewpoint (Stop 13). Along the way you can stop at the Drovers Arms (Stop 16) from where you can appreciate the openness of the moorland. There is a parking area as well as picnic tables at the viewpoint.

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions in the boxes below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Sennybridge Training Area

Epynt Visitor Centre

Directions 1

When you are ready, go down the driveway of the Visitor Centre and over the cattle grid. Stop by the road and listen to Track 2.

2. The dividing line

B4519 road by Epynt Visitor Centre

Directions 2

Turn left onto the B4519 road. Almost immediately turn left again through a gate. Follow the track steadily uphill for about 600 metres passing two visitor viewpoints each with picnic benches and an information board.

Shortly before the track reaches its highest point, it divides. Take the left track which takes you up to a third viewpoint with picnic benches and several information boards. This is marked on the OS map as 'Observation Posts'. Stop here and listen to Track 3.

3. Upland country

Observation posts

Directions 3

Take the track away from the viewpoint along the ridge of the hill to a fingerpost. Turn left following the sign for the Epynt Way which takes you downwards to the left to cross a stream and then traverses diagonally right up the hillside for about 500 metres towards a plantation of trees. Stop when you reach the corner of the plantation and listen to Track 4.

Note: At the fingerpost, the walk route joins the Epynt Way which follows the edge of the military training area, mostly just inside the boundary fence. We will be following the Epynt Way for the next 8 miles. There are wooden posts every 100-200 metres and you should use these to guide you. Full directions are not given in this guide.

4. Forests and woods

Corner of first plantation

Directions 4

Follow the edge of the plantation and go through a gap in the stone wall at the far corner. The route then traverses grassland towards the bottom edge of the next large plantation.

After going along the bottom side of the next plantation, go round the far corner and then diagonally left up the hillside until you reach a gravel track. Turn right onto the gravel track which immediately bends round to the left.

Follow the track for about 500 metres until you reach the highest point where there is a trig point and flag post. Stop here and listen to Track 5.

5. Empty and exposed

Trig point on gravel track

Directions 5

From the trig point, follow the track downhill for about 350 metres. Where a track joins from the left, keep to the right. Immediately before the cattle grid onto the B4520 road, turn along the track on the left. Go between two plantations. At the far end you can see down the hillside where there is a pond and a building that used to be a roadside pub.

The route traverses left down the hillside for about 400 metres to a flat area of ground at the bottom. Follow the track uphill at the other side of the flat area. A short way up the track, the Epynt Way bears off to the right onto the top of a knoll. From the knoll follow the marker posts down the other side and over to the left.

The path crosses over a track and goes up the hillside to a plantation. Go through the plantation and exit at a metal gate at the far side. Go right around the plantation and follow the path across grassland to a steep ravine of Nant Bwch.

Go down the ravine, cross the bridge, and climb up the other side. Follow the path across the grassland (there may be a few streams to cross here) to a metal gate which leads into farmland. Stop by the gate and listen to Track 6.

6. Unimproved grassland

Gate into field after crossing ravine of Nant Bwch

Directions 6

Go through the metal gate and follow the path across the bottom side of the field by the ditch and hedgerow until you reach a track. Turn left along the track and follow for just under 1 kilometre. Stop where the track skirts around the left side of a bog and listen to Track 7.

7. Bogged down

Peat bog beside track

Directions 7

Continue along the track. After a short distance there is a fingerpost and the track crosses a stream. A short way further along the track the Epynt Way bears left up the hillside (shortly before a metal gate).

Follow the path up and across the hillside of mainly grass and bracken for about 1½ kilometres. It is boggy in places and there are several streams to cross. Keep following the Epynt Way marker posts and ignore the signposts for other paths and tracks. The route passes through a few modern metal gates.

After passing by the end of a plantation on the left the path descends steeply into a sheltered valley. There is a stream at the bottom and this is a pleasant spot for a break. Stop here and listen to Track 8.

8. Haunt of the horse

Scenic valley

Directions 8

When you are ready to move on, climb up the other side of the valley. Follow the path for about 500 metres as it traverses upwards across the hillside. At the highest point (marked on the map as 400 metres) near a plantation there are expansive views down the Blaen Duhonw valley. Stop here and listen to Track 9.

9. Special status

Hillside above Blaen Dunhow valley

Directions 9

Follow the marker posts as the route traverses across and steadily down the hillside. After about 700 metres you reach the bottom and cross the stream, Blaen Duhonw.

Turn right up the gravel track. After a short distance the footpath bears off to the right following a more level route below the ascending track. After passing a field boundary the path climbs the hillside up to the left, past a fingerpost and through some trees. Then it traverses the hillside to the right to a small ravine.

Go carefully down the ravine and up the other side. The path then climbs steadily with a wall and field boundary of Cae'r Mynach farm on the right. Stop part way up this grassy hillside and listen to Track 10.

10. Fabulous fungi

Hillside above Cae'r Mynach farm

Directions 10

After a short distance the path joins a gravel track. Turn right along the track and follow it for about 1 kilometre. The track is relatively level and starts to curve round to the left. Stop when you have a steep escarpment and views to the North on your right side and listen to Track 11.

11. Opening up

Track at top of escarpment

Directions 11

Continue along the track along the top of the escarpment for just over a kilometre. Stop near where a track comes down from the left and listen to Track 12.

12. Epynteering

Track along top of escarpment

Directions 12

Continue along the track. After a short distance the Epynt Way veers right off the track and traverses the hillside. It follows the contour for about 1 kilometre with the spectacular Cwm Graig-ddu down to the right.

Pass the bottom corner of a plantation and follow the path up the hillside for another half kilometre to the Garth viewpoint where there are picnic benches and a car park. Stop here and listen to Track 13.

If you are in luck, there will be an ice cream van parked here and you can enjoy a well-earned rest and refreshment break!

13. Soaring above

Garth viewpoint

Directions 13

With your back to the viewpoint, turn left along the B4519 road. After a short distance where a gravel track joins the road from the left. Stop here and listen to Track 14.

Note: This is the last leg of the walk (about 3 miles) and will follow the road all the way back to the Visitor Centre. Take care as you walk along the road as some people drive rather too fast for a winding country road. Stick to the verges where possible. Also remember that the land to the right (southeast) of the road is a Live Firing Area and must not be entered.

14. Rally together

B4519

Directions 14

Continue along the road as it descends gradually. At the lowest point it crosses the headwaters of Blaen Duhonw. Follow the road upwards and round the corner until you reach a building on the right side which is marked on the OS map as 'Ffrwd-wen'. Stop here and listen to Track 15.

15. The end of an era

Ffrŵd-wen, B4519

Directions 15

Continue along the road as it ascends gradually. At the highest point where, on the right side amidst some trees, is another building which is marked on the OS map as 'Drovers Arms'. Stop here and listen to Track 16.

16. Hardy inhabitants

Drovers Arms, B4519

Directions 16

Continue along the road as it descends gradually until you reach the Visitor Centre on the left side. Stop at the Visitor Centre and listen to Track 17.

17. One place, two identities

Epynt Visitor Centre

Directions 16

Do pop into the Visitor Centre to look at the excellent information boards. You can also leave your comments about your experience of walking in the Epynt.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Marianna Dudley** for researching and writing the walk, providing the commentary and taking photographs
- **Jenny Lunn** for editing the walk materials, acting as narrator and providing photographs
- **Caroline Millar** for editing the audio files
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- The **Ministry of Defence** for permission to use images of soldiers training on SENTA
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The boundary between the military area and surrounding farmland
© Tim Cole



Clockwise from top left

The open, largely treeless moorland of Mynydd Epynt © Jenny Lunn

The Drovers Arms, once frequented by local sheep farmers, now used as a troop shelter © Graham Horn, Geograph (CCL)

A landscape of fields and hedgerows on the other side of the boundary fence © Graham Horn, Geograph (CCL)

Sheep grazing in sight of a firing range © © Marianna Dudley

Red flags signify military training in progress © Jenny Lunn

Soldier crossing a stream in Sennybridge Training Area, Stuart Bingham © Crown Copyright

If you would like to explore another military landscape, why not try the Discovering Britain walk in Wiltshire?

Military environmentalism

Discover prehistoric sites and rare species preserved on Salisbury Plain



<http://www.discoveringbritain.org/walks/region/south-west-england/salisbury-plain.html>



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