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SAM VEASNA CONSERVATION
TOURS



Giant Ibis

Tour Name: Custom Birding Tour with Christian from Belgium

Date(s) of Tour: 7th – 16th February 2026 (10 Days)

Tour Guide / Leader: Hang Oeung

Number of Clients: 1 pax

Introduction

Cambodia is one of Southeast Asia's most rewarding and underexplored birding destinations, offering an extraordinary diversity of habitats within relatively short travel distances. From coastal mudflats and lowland evergreen forests to remote mountain ranges and vast grasslands, a carefully designed route through the country provides opportunities to observe some of the region's most sought-after and endemic species. This journey begins and ends in Phnom Penh, forming a circular birding expedition through Cambodia's richest ecosystems.

The adventure starts at Phnom Penh International Airport, the main gateway into the country. While primarily an arrival point, the surrounding wetlands, agricultural fields, and river systems already hint at Cambodia's bird diversity. From here, birders travel south toward the charming riverside town of Kampot, a relaxed provincial town framed by limestone hills and coastal plains. Just beyond Kampot lies Kep Thmey, a productive coastal mudflat and saltpan area where wintering shorebirds gather in impressive numbers. Here, birders can scan for species such as plovers, sandpipers, godwits, and terns, including regional specialties like the White-faced Plover among mixed flocks of migratory waders.

From the coast, the journey shifts dramatically inland toward Phnom Aural, Cambodia's highest peak. This rugged Cardamom Mountain landscape offers a completely different birding experience. Evergreen forest, bamboo stands, and montane habitat provide refuge for highly sought-after species such as Cambodian Laughingthrush, Chestnut-headed Partridge, White-tailed Robin, and Large Niltava. Trekking into Phnom Aural is both physically demanding and exceptionally rewarding, immersing birders in pristine habitat far from urban development.

Descending from the mountains, the route continues to Pursat, a transitional province between forested uplands and lowland plains. The surrounding grasslands and agricultural mosaics can hold elusive species such as Chinese Grassbird, making it an important stop for those targeting specialized grassland birds.

Further northeast lies Kampong Thom, home to the Chong Doung Community conservation area. This region of seasonal wetlands, dry forest, and rice paddies is one of the most important strongholds for the critically endangered White-shouldered Ibis. Community-based conservation efforts here provide birders not only with excellent viewing opportunities but also a chance to support local livelihoods tied to habitat protection.

Continuing onward, the open plains of Preah Hoot offer classic Southeast Asian grassland birding. This area is globally significant for the endangered Bengal Florican, especially during the breeding season when males perform aerial displays above the

grasslands. Raptors, buntings, and grassland specialists further enrich the experience in this expansive and dramatic landscape.

From there, birders move into the northern dry forests of Russey Treb, one of Cambodia's most celebrated birding sites. This community-protected forest is famous for Giant Ibis sightings at forest pools, along with White-rumped Falcon, Collared Falconet, and a variety of woodpeckers and babblers. Russey Treb represents a conservation success story, where local engagement directly protects habitat for some of the rarest birds in Southeast Asia.

The journey then reaches the Mekong River at Kratie, a scenic riverside province known for its sandbars and flooded forests. Here, birders search for Mekong Wagtail along the river's edge while also enjoying sightings of the endangered Irrawaddy Dolphin in the Mekong's deep pools. The riverine habitat adds yet another ecological dimension to the tour, contrasting beautifully with forest and grassland environments visited earlier.

Finally, the expedition returns to Phnom Penh, where lowland scrub, wetlands, and peri-urban habitats can still produce exciting species such as Cambodia Tailorbird. Ending where it began, this comprehensive route showcases Cambodia's remarkable bird diversity, blending coastal wetlands, mountain forests, grasslands, dry dipterocarp forest, and mighty river ecosystems into one unforgettable birding journey.

Highlights

- Chestnut headed Partridge
- Large Niltava
- White-tailed Robin
- Cambodia Laughingthrush
- Cambodia Tailorbird
- Giant Ibis
- White-shouldered Ibis
- Bengal Florican
- Mekong Wagtail
- Great Slaty Woodpecker
- White-rumped Falcon

Day 1: Arrival & Transfer to Kampot

I departed Siem Reap at 5:00am for the long drive to Phnom Penh International Airport, arriving around midday. After a short lunch break near the airport, I waited for my client whose flight (scheduled 2:40pm) was delayed by about one hour. We finally left the airport at 5:30pm and began the journey south toward Kampot Province.

We arrived in Kampot Town at approximately 8:25pm. Dinner was enjoyed at Phnom Khaev Restaurant near the famous Durian Roundabout before I dropped my client at Twin Hotel at 9:00pm. I then checked into a nearby guesthouse close to the local market for the night.



Phnom Penh Independent Munument

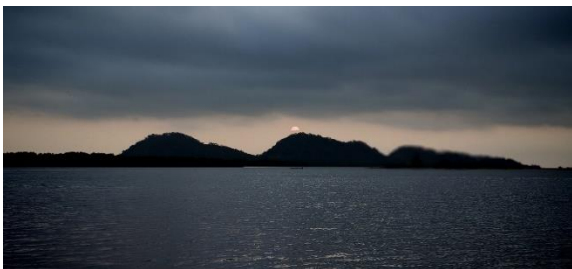


Kampot Roundabout

Day 2: Kep Thmey Shorebirds & Transfer to Oral Mountain

We picked up the client from the hotel at 5:45 AM and drove directly to Kep Thmey for shorebirding activities. The main target was the White-faced Plover, but unfortunately we were unable to locate it. However, the mudflats were very productive, and we recorded many species including Eurasian Curlew, Bar-tailed Godwit, Terek Sandpiper, Black-bellied (Grey) Plover, Siberian Sand Plover, Tibetan Sand Plover, Great Crested Tern, Gull-billed Tern, and Caspian Tern. After a short coffee break at 7:30 AM, we continued birding for another hour before returning to Kampot for breakfast at a local noodle soup restaurant. We then visited the local market to purchase supplies for three nights and four days in the forest before heading toward Phnom Aural (Oral Mountain).

After more than four hours of driving, we arrived at Mr. Chhim's house, the community chief, at 2:00 PM and enjoyed a late but satisfying lunch. At 3:00 PM, we continued by local tractor to the mountain foothill and began trekking to the first camp. Along the trail, we observed Chestnut-headed Bee-eater, Greater Coucal, Rufescent Prinia, Ornate Sunbird, Asian Fairy Bluebird, Mountain Hawk-Eagle, Grey-eyed Bulbul, Bamboo Woodpecker, and Cambodian Flowerpecker. We reached the first camp around 5:00 PM and settled in for the night. After refreshing with cool water, the local guide and I prepared dinner, getting ready for the next day's birding adventure.



Kep Thmey's Site



Gull-billed Tern

Day 3: Oral Mountain – Climb to Second Camp

We woke at 5:30 AM and began birding around the camp. In the early morning, we heard Great Eared Nightjar and Collared Owlet, and observed several sunbirds, bulbuls, and Cambodian Flowerpeckers. At 7:30 AM, we continued climbing toward the second base camp. Moving slowly through bamboo forest allowed us to encounter White-rumped Shama, Banded Kingfisher, Pin-striped Tit-Babbler, Great Hornbill, White-bellied Erpornis, and more bulbuls.

We arrived at the second camp around 12:00 PM and rested for lunch. At 3:00 PM, we climbed about 100 meters higher in search of the endemic Cambodian Laughingthrush. Despite hearing its calls clearly around us, we were unable to see the bird. We returned to camp at 6:00 PM for dinner, and before sleeping, I heard the haunting call of a Mountain Scops-Owl in the forest.



Shopping at local Market



Dinner at 1st Camp (Aral Mt)

Day 4: Aural Mountain – Target Success!

After breakfast at 5:30 AM, we resumed our mission. We successfully saw Chestnut-headed Partridge twice, although only briefly. Cambodian Laughingthrush continued calling nearby but remained hidden. We climbed higher in search of White-tailed Robin and Large Niltava. Along the trail, we observed Eared Pitta, Long-tailed Broadbill, and Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo. Eventually, we were rewarded with excellent views of both White-tailed Robin and Large Niltava—two key target species.

Throughout the day, we repeatedly searched for Cambodian Laughingthrush without success. After lunch, we tried again and again. Finally, around 4:00 PM, after a quiet ten-minute wait, I noticed movement in the bushes. I quickly alerted my client, and at last, we had clear views of the Cambodian Laughingthrush. It was a very exciting and emotional moment for both of us.

We later descended back to the first camp, arriving at 6:30 PM for dinner and overnight stay.



Birding Activity at Aural Mt

Day 5: Aural Mountain to Pursat

After breakfast, we descended from the first camp to the car park, arriving around 9:00 AM. We then drove toward Pursat Province. Lunch was taken in Kompong Chhnang along the way. We arrived in Pursat at approximately 1:30 PM, checked into the hotel, and rested for the remainder of the day without further activities.



Sunset View at Aural Mt



After Birding Activity

Day 6: Pursat to Kompong Thom – White-shouldered Ibis

We checked out at 5:30 AM and headed to Bakan grassland for Chinese Grassbird. Arriving at 6:30 AM, we walked only five minutes from the car before successfully spotting our target species. After breakfast near town, we continued our journey through Kompong Chhnang Province, using the Kompong Laeng ferry to cross the Tonle Sap River.

After lunch at M'lop Thnot Restaurant, we drove to Chong Doung in Kampong Thom Province in search of White-shouldered Ibis. We were delighted to observe two individuals feeding in a rice field. In the evening, we proceeded to Stoung Town for overnight stay.



Chinese Grassbird's Site



White-shouldered Ibis

Day 7: Bengal Florican & Transfer to Russey Treb

We departed at 5:30 AM for Preah Hoot community to search for Bengal Florican. After meeting the local guide at 6:30 AM, we explored the grassland for two hours and saw the Florican twice in flight, although lighting conditions were poor. Other highlights included Yellow-breasted Bunting, Striated Grassbird, bee-eaters, and Pied Harrier.

We then traveled toward Russey Treb Community, stopping for lunch near Beng Mealea. We arrived at Russey Treb around 2:00 PM and checked in. Afternoon birding around the Giant Ibis pond was unsuccessful, so we returned to the lodge for dinner.



Preah Hoot Grassland



Bengal Florican

Day 8: Russey Treb – Giant Ibis & Frogmouth

At 5:30 AM, we waited inside the hide near the pond. Fortunately, at 6:35 AM, a Giant Ibis appeared and fed for about ten minutes before flying away. It was an unforgettable sighting.

Later, we searched for White-rumped Falcon and Collared Falconet. We successfully observed a female White-rumped Falcon but were unlucky with the falconet. Additional sightings included Chestnut-capped Babbler and Changeable Hawk-Eagle.

In the evening, we watched Pin-tailed Snipe, Little Ringed Plover, Red-throated Pipit, and Spotted Redshank. After sunset, we located Blyth's Frogmouth, concluding an excellent day.



Giant Ibis



Blyth's Frogmouth

Day 9: Russey Treb to Kratie

After breakfast, and before departure, I showed my client a Barn Owl. We then drove about three hours to Kratie Province. Upon arrival, we went directly to the Mekong River to search for Mekong Wagtail and Irrawaddy Dolphin. Over two hours, we observed Mekong Wagtail, White-rumped Munia, Dark-necked Tailorbird, Wire-tailed Swallow, Grey-throated Martin, Pied Kingfisher, and several Irrawaddy Dolphins.

After lunch in Kratie town, we checked into the hotel and rested for the afternoon before dinner at 7:00 PM.



Golden fronted Leafbird



Boat at Kratie

Day 10: Kratie to Phnom Penh – Cambodia Tailorbird

After breakfast, we drove more than four hours to Phnom Penh. Before entering the city, we stopped at 7NG to search for Cambodia Tailorbird. Within 30 minutes, we successfully found the species along with Common Iora, Coppersmith Barbet, Common Myna, and Plain-backed Sparrow.

We then crossed the Mekong River by ferry and enjoyed a farewell lunch at Khmer Sorin Restaurant before checking in at Duong Chan Hotel. After my client settled into the hotel, it was time to say goodbye. I then began my journey back to Siem Reap,

concluding a highly successful and memorable 10-day birding expedition across Cambodia.



Tour End at Phnom Penh

Bird List

Species Name

Scientific Name

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Indian Spot-billed Duck | <i>Anas poecilorhyncha</i> |
| 2. Chestnut-headed Partridge | <i>Arborophila cambodiana</i> |
| 3. Chinese Francolin | <i>Francolinus pintadeanus</i> |
| 4. Red Collared-Dove | <i>Streptopelia tranquebarica</i> |
| 5. Spotted Dove | <i>Spilopelia chinensis</i> |
| 6. Zebra Dove | <i>Geopelia striata</i> |
| 7. Bengal Florican | <i>Houbaropsis bengalensis</i> |
| 8. Greater Coucal | <i>Centropus sinensis</i> |
| 9. Asian Koel | <i>Eudynamys scolopaceus</i> |
| 10. Violet Cuckoo | <i>Chrysococcyx xanthorhynchus</i> |
| 11. Banded Bay Cuckoo | <i>Cacomantis sonneratii</i> |
| 12. Blyth's Frogmouth | <i>Batrachostomus affinis</i> |
| 13. Himalayan Swiftlet | <i>Aerodramus brevirostris</i> |
| 14. White-nest Swiftlet | <i>Aerodramus fuciphagus</i> |
| 15. Pacific Swift | <i>Apus pacificus</i> |
| 16. Asian Palm Swift | <i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i> |
| 17. Crested Treeswift | <i>Hemiprocne coronata</i> |
| 18. Black-bellied Plover | <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> |
| 19. Little Ringed Plover | <i>Thinornis dubius</i> |
| 20. Red-wattled Lapwing | <i>Vanellus indicus</i> |
| 21. Siberian Sand-Plover | <i>Anarhynchus mongolus</i> |

22. Tibetan Sand-Plover
23. Greater Sand-Plover
24. Malaysian Plover
25. Kentish Plover
26. Bar-tailed Godwit
27. Pin-tailed Snipe
28. Terek Sandpiper
29. Common Sandpiper
30. Marsh Sandpiper
31. Wood Sandpiper
32. Spotted Redshank
33. Common Greenshank
34. Ruddy Turnstone
35. Barred Buttonquail
36. Small Buttonquail
37. Oriental Pratincole
38. Gull-billed Tern
39. Caspian Tern
40. Whiskered Tern
41. Great Crested Tern
42. Asian Openbill
43. Painted Stork
44. Little Cormorant
45. Glossy Ibis
46. White-shouldered Ibis
47. Giant Ibis
48. Chinese Egret
49. Little Egret
50. Chinese Pond-Heron
51. Eastern Cattle-Egret
52. Great Egret
53. Medium Egret
54. Gray Heron
55. Purple Heron
56. Black-winged Kite
57. Crested Serpent-Eagle
58. Mountain Hawk-Eagle
59. Changeable Hawk-Eagle
60. Eastern Marsh Harrier
61. Pied Harrier
62. Rufous-winged Buzzard
63. Eastern Barn Owl
64. Oriental Scops-Owl
65. Asian Barred Owllet
66. Collared Owllet
67. Red-headed Trogon

Anarhynchus atrifrons
Anarhynchus leschenaultii
Anarhynchus peronii
Anarhynchus alexandrinus
Limosa lapponica
Gallinago stenura
Xenus cinereus
Actitis hypoleucos
Tringa stagnatilis
Tringa glareola
Tringa erythropus
Tringa nebularia
Arenaria interpres
Turnix suscitator
Turnix sylvaticus
Glareola maldivarum
Gelochelidon nilotica
Hydroprogne caspia
Chlidonias hybrida
Thalasseus bergii
Anastomus oscitans
Mycteria leucocephala
Microcarbo niger
Plegadis falcinellus
Pseudibis davisoni
Pseudibis gigantea
Egretta eulophotes
Egretta garzetta
Ardeola bacchus
Ardea coromanda
Ardea alba
Ardea intermedia
Ardea cinerea
Ardea purpurea
Elanus caeruleus
Spilornis cheela
Nisaetus nipalensis
Nisaetus cirrhatus
Circus spilonotus
Circus melanoleucos
Butastur liventer
Tyto javanica
Otus sunia
Glaucidium cuculoides
Taeniopteryx brodiei
Harpactes erythrocephalus

68. Common Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
69. Great Hornbill	<i>Buceros bicornis</i>
70. Oriental Pied-Hornbill	<i>Anthracoceros albirostris</i>
71. Wreathed Hornbill	<i>Rhyticeros undulatus</i>
72. Asian Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>
73. Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>
74. Chestnut-headed Bee-eater	<i>Merops leschenaulti</i>
75. Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
76. White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>
77. Collared Kingfisher	<i>Todiramphus chloris</i>
78. Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>
79. Indochinese Roller	<i>Coracias affinis</i>
80. Coppersmith Barbet	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i>
81. Blue-eared Barbet	<i>Psilopogon cyanotis</i>
82. Green-eared Barbet	<i>Psilopogon faiostrictus</i>
83. Lineated Barbet	<i>Psilopogon lineatus</i>
84. Moustached Barbet	<i>Psilopogon incognitus</i>
85. Freckle-breasted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos analis</i>
86. Common Flameback	<i>Dinopium javanense</i>
87. Black-headed Woodpecker	<i>Picus erythropygius</i>
88. Great Slaty Woodpecker	<i>Mulleripicus pulverulentus</i>
89. White-rumped Falcon	<i>Neohierax insignis</i>
90. Blossom-headed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula roseata</i>
91. Red-breasted Parakeet	<i>Psittacula alexandri</i>
92. Long-tailed Broadbill	<i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>
93. Eared Pitta	<i>Hydornis phayrei</i>
94. Blue-rumped Pitta	<i>Hydornis soror</i>
95. Golden-bellied Gerygone	<i>Gerygone sulphurea</i>
96. Gray-chinned Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>
97. Scarlet Minivet	<i>Pericrocotus speciosus</i>
98. Oriental Cuckooshrike	<i>Coracina javensis</i>
99. Black-hooded Oriole	<i>Oriolus xanthornus</i>
100. Common Iora	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i>
101. Malaysian Pied-Fantail	<i>Rhipidura javanica</i>
102. White-browed Fantail	<i>Rhipidura aureola</i>
103. Black Drongo	<i>Dicrurus macrocerus</i>
104. Ashy Drongo	<i>Dicrurus leucophaeus</i>
105. Bronzed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus aeneus</i>
106. Lesser Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>
107. Hair-crested Drongo	<i>Dicrurus hottentottus</i>
108. Greater Racket-tailed Drongo	<i>Dicrurus paradiseus</i>
109. Blyth's Paradise-Flycatcher	<i>Terpsiphone affinis</i>
110. Brown Shrike	<i>Lanius cristatus</i>
111. Red-billed Blue-Magpie	<i>Urocissa erythroryncha</i>
112. Rufous Treepie	<i>Dendrocitta vagabunda</i>
113. Large-billed Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos</i>

114.	Gray-headed Canary-Flycatcher	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
115.	Singing Bushlark	<i>Mirafrja javanica</i>
116.	Oriental Skylark	<i>Alauda gulgula</i>
117.	Dark-necked Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus atrogularis</i>
118.	Cambodian Tailorbird	<i>Orthotomus chaktomuk</i>
119.	Brown Prinia	<i>Prinia polychroa</i>
120.	Rufescent Prinia	<i>Prinia rufescens</i>
121.	Zitting Cisticola	<i>Cisticola juncidis</i>
122.	Golden-headed Cisticola	<i>Cisticola exilis</i>
123.	Lanceolated Warbler	<i>Locustella lanceolata</i>
124.	Striated Grassbird	<i>Megalurus palustris</i>
125.	Gray-throated Martin	<i>Riparia chinensis</i>
126.	Bank Swallow	<i>Riparia riparia</i>
127.	Pacific Swallow	<i>Hirundo javanica</i>
128.	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
129.	Wire-tailed Swallow	<i>Hirundo smithii</i>
130.	Gray-eyed Bulbul	<i>Iole propinqua</i>
131.	Mountain Bulbul	<i>Ixos mccllellandii</i>
132.	Black-crested Bulbul	<i>Rubigula flaviventris</i>
133.	Streak-eared Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus conradi</i>
134.	Yellow-vented Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus goiavier</i>
135.	Sooty-headed Bulbul	<i>Pycnonotus aurigaster</i>
136.	Yellow-browed Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus inornatus</i>
137.	Dusky Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus fuscatus</i>
138.	Davison's Leaf Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus intensior</i>
139.	Chestnut-capped Babbler	<i>Timalia pileata</i>
140.	Pin-striped Tit-Babbler	<i>Mixornis gularis</i>
141.	White-browed Scimitar-Babbler	<i>Pomatorhinus schisticeps</i>
142.	Chinese Grassbird	<i>Graminicola striatus</i>
143.	White-crested Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax leucolophus</i>
144.	Cambodian Laughingthrush	<i>Garrulax ferrarius</i>
145.	Black-collared Starling	<i>Gracupica nigricollis</i>
146.	Siamese Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica floweri</i>
147.	Chestnut-tailed Starling	<i>Sturnia malabarica</i>
148.	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>
149.	Vinous-breasted Myna	<i>Acridotheres leucocephalus</i>
150.	Great Myna	<i>Acridotheres grandis</i>
151.	Asian Brown Flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa dauurica</i>
152.	Oriental Magpie-Robin	<i>Copsychus saularis</i>
153.	Large Niltava	<i>Niltava grandis</i>
154.	Verditer Flycatcher	<i>Eumyias thalassinus</i>
155.	Bluethroat	<i>Luscinia svecica</i>
156.	White-tailed Robin	<i>Myiomela leucura</i>
157.	Taiga Flycatcher	<i>Ficedula albicilla</i>
158.	Amur Stonechat	<i>Saxicola stejnegeri</i>
159.	Pied Bushchat	<i>Saxicola caprata</i>

160.	Cambodian Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cambodianum</i>
161.	Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker	<i>Dicaeum cruentatum</i>
162.	Ornate Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris ornatus</i>
163.	Black-throated Sunbird	<i>Aethopyga saturata</i>
164.	Asian Fairy-bluebird	<i>Irena puella</i>
165.	Golden-fronted Leafbird	<i>Chloropsis aurifrons</i>
166.	Streaked Weaver	<i>Ploceus manyar</i>
167.	Baya Weaver	<i>Ploceus philippinus</i>
168.	White-rumped Munia	<i>Lonchura striata</i>
169.	Chestnut Munia	<i>Lonchura atricapilla</i>
170.	Red Avadavat	<i>Amandava amandava</i>
171.	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
172.	Plain-backed Sparrow	<i>Passer flaveolus</i>
173.	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
174.	Eastern Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i>
175.	Mekong Wagtail	<i>Motacilla samveasnae</i>
176.	Paddyfield Pipit	<i>Anthus rufulus</i>
177.	Red-throated Pipit	<i>Anthus cervinus</i>
178.	Yellow-breasted Bunting	<i>Emberiza aureola</i>
179.	Himalayan Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus saturatus/optatus</i>

Mammal List (Optional)

Species Name

1. Long-tailed Macaque
2. Northern Pig-tailed Macaque
3. Pileated Gibbon

Scientific Name

Macaca fascicularis
Macaca nemestrina
Hylobates pileatus



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