



A Brief Review on Soothing Herbs: Stress Reducing Botanicals

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Abstract

"Soothing herbs: stress reducing botanicals" explores the potent world of natural remedies aimed at alleviating stress and promoting holistic well-being. It delves into the diverse range of botanicals renowned for their stress-reducing properties and their historical and contemporary significance. Herbs have been cherished for centuries across cultures for their therapeutic effects on the mind and body. This comprehensive exploration navigates through various herbal allies known for their stress-relieving qualities. From adaptogens like ashwagandha and holy basil, celebrated for their ability to regulate the body's response to stress, to calming herbs such as chamomile, lavender, and lemon balm, renowned for their soothing effects on the nervous system, this abstract unravels the science and tradition behind their efficacy. Furthermore, "Soothing Herbs" sheds light on the mechanisms of action within these botanicals, elucidating how compounds like flavonoids, terpenes, and adaptogenic elements interact with the body, mitigating stress hormone levels and fostering a sense of tranquility. Moreover, it explores their diverse forms of consumption, including teas, tinctures, essential oils, and supplements, offering practical insights into integrating these remedies into everyday life. It also investigates contemporary research validating the age-old wisdom surrounding these herbs, highlighting clinical studies and trials that support their efficacy in stress management. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of responsible usage, potential contraindications, and the significance of consulting healthcare professionals before incorporating these herbs into one's regimen. "Soothing Herbs: Stress-Reducing Botanicals" serves as an informative guide, bridging ancient wisdom with modern science, and empowering individuals to explore natural alternatives for stress relief while emphasizing the holistic approach to wellbeing.

Keywords: Adaptogenic Herbs, Botanical Solutions, Calming Herbs, Herbal Remedies

1. Introduction

Soothing Herbs: Stress-Reducing Botanicals presents a compelling journey into the world of nature's remedies, offering a profound understanding of herbal solutions tailored to alleviate the burdens of modern-day stress. This introduction sets the stage, elucidating the significance of these botanical allies and their pivotal role in restoring balance to the mind, body, and spirit. In our fast-paced lives, stress has become an almost ubiquitous companion, affecting our mental and physical well-being. Amid this backdrop, the allure of turning to nature's pharmacy for solace and relief has gained substantial traction. "Soothing Herbs" stands as a beacon, guiding individuals toward potent and time-honored herbal solutions designed to combat stress's pervasive grip. This exploration into stress-reducing botanicals is not merely an expedition into ancient traditions but also an integration of traditional wisdom with contemporary scientific validation. It delves into the historical roots of herbal medicine, tracing the lineage of herbal stress reducers across cultures, underscoring their enduring legacy and global relevance. Moreover, "Soothing Herbs" elucidates the mechanism behind these botanical stress reducers, demystifying the intricate biochemistry and physiological impact they exert. From adaptogens modulating stress response to nervine herbs calming

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1196 Brief Review on Soothing Herbs: Stress Reducing Botanicals

the nervous system, the introduction provides a foundational understanding of how these botanicals facilitate relaxation and emotional equilibrium. It doesn't exist in isolation from the evolving landscape of scientific inquiry. It aligns with recent research that substantiates the efficacy of these herbs, endorsing their role in stress management. However, it also emphasizes the importance of discernment, suggesting a balanced approach by integrating these herbal remedies under-informed guidance. In essence, "Soothing Herbs: Stress-Reducing Botanicals" isn't just a compendium of herbs; it's a testament to nature's profound healing potential, inviting readers on a transformative expedition toward holistic stress relief and enhanced well-being^{1,2}.

2. Description of Various Herbs

Table 1. List of botanicals to reduce stress

Herbs	Description
Ashwagandha	An adaptogenic herb used in traditional Ayurvedic medicine to help the body manage stress and anxiety.
Rhodiola rosea	Another adaptogen known for its ability to increase resistance to stress and improve mood and energy levels.
Chamomile	A gentle herb often consumed as a tea, known for its calming properties that can help reduce anxiety and stress.
Lavender	Lavender is commonly used in aromatherapy and herbal teas for its calming effects on the nervous system.
Valerian Root	Valerian root is often used as a natural remedy for insomnia and anxiety, promoting relaxation and calmness.
Lemon Balm	Lemon balm is a member of the mint family and is known for its calming effects, often used to reduce stress.
Passionflower	Passionflower is used in traditional medicine to promote relaxation and reduce symptoms of anxiety and stress.
Holy Basil (Tulsi)	Holy basil is revered in Ayurvedic medicine for its adaptogenic properties, helping the body cope with stress.
Kava	<i>Kava</i> root is known for its sedative and anxiolytic effects, often used to reduce anxiety and promote relaxation.
Ginseng	Ginseng is an adaptogenic herb that may help the body adapt to stress and support overall well-being.

2.1 HOPS (Humulus lupulus L.)

The most significant and well-known Humulus species is Humulus lupulus L., often known as hops (Cannabaceae)³. Although it originated in central Europe, it is now widely grown industrially in the North's temperate zones. This climbing plant is dioecious and perennial, growing up to 10 meters. Hops, commonly known for their role in brewing beer, also possess stress-reducing properties. As a botanical, hops contain compounds such as xanthohumol and flavonoids, which exhibit anxiolytic effects, helping to alleviate stress and anxiety. These compounds interact with neurotransmitters in the brain, promoting relaxation and tranquility. Additionally, hops have been used in traditional medicine for centuries to calm the nervous system and induce sleep. Whether consumed as a tea, supplement or incorporated into aromatherapy, hops offer a natural remedy for combating stress and promoting overall well-being. The female inflorescence is a vital ingredient for beer brewing and is also necessary for the preparation of natural remedies (tinctures and liquid and dry extracts) and teas. Procedures for pharmacopoeial monographs are used to verify the raw material's purity. According to the EMA's hops monograph, these formulations are classified as "traditional herbal medicinal products" and can be used to promote sleep and relieve minor symptoms of mental stress.

The effects of the characteristic hop cone ingredients (XH, IX, 8PN, and HU) as positive allosteric modulators of GABAA and γ -aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors can be linked to this use. The Legette group used LC-MS/MS to conduct a pharmacokinetic investigation on 24 men and 24 women to determine that XH is metabolized to IX conjugates.

While multiple clinical trials have been conducted on mixed preparations of hops, particularly in conjunction with valerian, there is only one study available on single-component preparations for the treatment of disorders directly related to the central nervous system. In a randomized (1:1), placebocontrolled, double-blind crossover design, a group of 36 participants (mean age: 24.7 years; female to male ratio of 31:5) were given either a placebo or capsules for two 4-week intervention periods (separated by a 2-week washout) containing either a meal supplement or twice a day in the evening, two capsules containing 0.2 g of dried hop extract. The items record the pertinent symptoms during the previous week. Both hops and placebo showed a considerable decrease in anxiousness, depression, and stress; the reduction in hops was larger than the placebo's.

The drowsy effects of nonalcoholic beer on healthy female nurses are the subject of an intriguing study. Chronobiological measures and overnight sleep were evaluated following a modest 14-day 333 mL beer sample consumption. The improvement in sleep quality that has been reported should be considered anecdotal, given that nonalcoholic beer is assumed to contain only 0.3% hops. In conclusion, one drawback of a single "single-component" study is the fact that the participants self-reported stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms. Higher quality clinical trials are therefore needed to determine how hops affect the central nervous system⁴.

2.2 Kava-Kava (Piper methysticum G. Forst.)

Kava-kava, also known simply as *kava*, is a traditional herbal remedy derived from the roots of the Piper methysticum plant, native to the Pacific Islands. Renowned for its potent stress-reducing properties, *kava* contains compounds called kavalactones, which act as natural sedatives and anxiolytics. These compounds interact with the brain's neurotransmitters, including GABA receptors, promoting relaxation and reducing feelings of anxiety⁵.

Used for centuries in Pacific Island cultures for ceremonial and medicinal purposes, kava is often consumed as a tea or tincture. Its calming effects make it popular for alleviating stress, promoting a sense of tranquility, and improving mood. Kava is also valued for its ability to induce a state of relaxation without impairing cognitive function, making it a preferred alternative to pharmaceutical anxiolytics for some individuals. However, it's important to note that kava should be used cautiously and in moderation due to potential side effects, such as liver toxicity with longterm or excessive use. Additionally, individuals with liver conditions or those taking medications that affect the liver should consult with a healthcare professional before using kava. Overall, kava-kava stands as a notable botanical remedy for stress reduction, offering a natural and effective means of promoting relaxation

and emotional well-being when used responsibly. *Kava-kava*, originating from the Pacific Islands, is renowned for its stress-reducing properties. Extracted from the roots of the Piper methysticum plant, it contains kavalactones, compounds that interact with neurotransmitters in the brain to induce relaxation and diminish anxiety. Traditionally consumed in ceremonial and social contexts, *kava* is prepared as a beverage by grinding the plant's roots into a powder and mixing it with water⁶.

Its anxiolytic effects have made it popular globally as a natural remedy for stress and anxiety. Kava promotes a sense of calmness and relaxation without causing sedation or impairing cognitive function, distinguishing it from many pharmaceutical alternatives. However, its usage should be approached with caution due to potential adverse effects on liver health, particularly with prolonged or excessive consumption⁷. While research supports its efficacy in stress reduction, regulatory authorities have issued warnings about potential hepatotoxicity, prompting restrictions or advisories in some regions. Individuals with liver conditions or those taking medications affecting liver function should consult healthcare professionals before using kava8. Overall, kavakava offers a promising botanical solution for stress management, providing a natural and accessible option for those seeking relaxation and emotional balance. Diverse findings emerged from clinical trials about the efficaciousness of kava-kava preparations in treating anxiety disorders. Anxiety symptoms and sleep were improved in a randomized double-blind controlled trial with 135 participants in the kava-kava group and 135 participants in the placebo group. However, there were no differences in the test groups, indicating that kava-kava did not improve these symptoms more than the placebo. Three randomized double-blind controlled trials were pooled for analysis in another investigation, which found no benefit in the kava-kava therapy group⁹.

Because of their hepatotoxic effects, *kava-kava* preparations are prohibited in some countries. Due to an unfavorable risk-benefit analysis and spontaneously reported hepatic adverse events, some of which were so severe that liver transplants were required, the European Medicines Agency opted against establishing an herbal monograph for *kava-kava*. Moreover, the possibility

of animal carcinogenesis gave rise to toxicological concerns. Although *kava-kava* has been shown to be effective in treating anxiety disorders and toxicological problems, methodological limitations in clinical trials mean that *kava-kava* cannot be considered safe or beneficial for this reason¹⁰.

2.3 Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia Mill.)

Lavender, known for its delicate purple flowers and calming fragrance, is a versatile botanical renowned for its stress-reducing properties. Extracted from the lavender plant, Lavandula angustifolia, its essential oil contains compounds such as linalool and linalyl acetate, which have been found to have anxiolytic and sedative effects. One of the most popular methods of using lavender for stress reduction is through aromatherapy. Inhalation of lavender essential oil has been shown to reduce levels of stress hormones like cortisol, leading to feelings of relaxation and calmness¹¹. Diffusing lavender oil in the air, adding a few drops to a bath, or using it in massage oils can all help promote relaxation and reduce stress. Lavender's stress-relieving properties aren't limited to aromatherapy. Some studies suggest that oral supplementation with lavender oil capsules may also help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and stress. Additionally, lavender tea, made by steeping dried lavender flowers in hot water, can be a soothing and comforting beverage to enjoy before bedtime or during periods of stress¹².

Beyond its calming effects, lavender is also valued for its ability to improve sleep quality. Research indicates that inhaling lavender scent before bedtime can lead to better sleep and increased feelings of well-being the next day, further contributing to stress reduction. Furthermore, lavender's gentle nature makes it accessible to most people, with few reported side effects when used appropriately. However, as with any botanical remedy, it's essential to use lavender products according to instructions and consult with a healthcare professional if you have any concerns or underlying health conditions. Lavender is a widely recognized botanical with proven stress-reducing properties. Whether used in aromatherapy, oral supplementation, or as a calming tea, lavender offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall well-being. Its pleasant fragrance and gentle effects make it a popular choice for individuals

seeking holistic approaches to managing stress in their daily lives¹³.

2.4 Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis L.)

Lemon balm, scientifically known as Melissa officinalis, is a fragrant herb belonging to the mint family. It has been used for centuries in traditional medicine for its calming and stress-reducing properties. Lemon balm contains compounds like rosmarinic acid, flavonoids, and terpenes, which contribute to its anxiolytic effects. One of the primary ways lemon balm is utilized for stress reduction is through its soothing properties when consumed as a tea. Steeping dried lemon balm leaves in hot water releases their aromatic oils and bioactive compounds, which can help promote relaxation and alleviate feelings of tension and anxiety. Lemon balm tea is often consumed in the evening to unwind after a stressful day or before bedtime to promote better sleep quality¹⁴. Additionally, lemon balm essential oil, extracted from the plant's leaves, is commonly used in aromatherapy for its calming effects. Diffusing lemon balm oil in the air or adding a few drops to a bath can create a tranquil atmosphere that promotes relaxation and reduces stress levels. Some research suggests that lemon balm may also have moodenhancing effects when taken orally. Studies have shown that lemon balm extract or supplements may help reduce symptoms of anxiety and improve mood by modulating neurotransmitter activity in the brain, particularly serotonin and GABA receptors. Lemon balm's gentle nature makes it well-tolerated by most individuals, with few reported side effects when used in recommended doses. However, as with any herbal remedy, it's essential to use lemon balm responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications. It is a versatile botanical with proven stress-reducing properties. Whether enjoyed as a soothing tea, inhaled through aromatherapy, or taken orally as a supplement, lemon balm offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall well-being. Its pleasant citrusy aroma and gentle effects make it a popular choice for individuals seeking holistic approaches to managing stress and anxiety in their daily lives¹⁵.

2.5 Maypop (Passiflora incarnata L.)

Maypop, scientifically known as *Passiflora incarnata*, is a lesser-known botanical with potent stressreducing properties. Also referred to as passionflower, maypop is a climbing vine native to the southeastern United States. It has a long history of use in traditional medicine for its calming and sedative effects. One of the primary ways maypop is used for stress reduction is through its ability to promote relaxation and alleviate anxiety. Maypop contains compounds like flavonoids, alkaloids, and amino acids, which act on the central nervous system to induce feelings of tranquility and calmness. These compounds interact with neurotransmitters such as GABA, serotonin, and dopamine, helping to regulate mood and reduce stress levels.

Maypop is commonly consumed as a tea, made by steeping dried passionflower leaves and flowers in hot water. Drinking passionflower tea can help soothe frazzled nerves, promote relaxation, and improve sleep quality, making it an excellent option for individuals experiencing stress or anxiety¹⁶.

Passionflower supplements, available in various forms such as capsules, tinctures, and extracts, are often used to support stress management and mental wellbeing. These supplements provide a convenient way to enjoy the stress-reducing benefits of passionflower without the need to prepare tea. Furthermore, passionflower is well-tolerated by most individuals, with few reported side effects when used in recommended doses. However, it's essential to use Passionflower responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

Maypop, or passionflower, is a natural botanical with powerful stress-reducing properties. Whether consumed as a soothing tea or taken as a supplement, maypop offers a gentle and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall wellbeing. Its calming effects and mild sedative properties make it a valuable tool for individuals seeking holistic approaches to managing stress and anxiety in their daily lives¹⁷.

2.6 Peppermint (Mentha piperita L.)

Peppermint, scientifically known as *Mentha piperita*, is a refreshing herb celebrated for its invigorating

aroma and numerous health benefits, including stress reduction. Widely used in culinary and medicinal applications, peppermint contains essential oils such as menthol, menthone, and limonene, which contribute to its stress-relieving properties. One of the primary ways peppermint helps alleviate stress is through its ability to promote relaxation and reduce muscle tension. Inhaling the aroma of peppermint essential oil or drinking peppermint tea can have a calming effect on the mind and body, helping to ease feelings of stress and anxiety. Peppermint tea is especially soothing and can be enjoyed throughout the day to help manage stress levels. Peppermint's cooling sensation can provide immediate relief from tension headaches or migraines, which are often triggered by stress. Applying diluted peppermint essential oil to the temples or inhaling its aroma can help alleviate headache symptoms and promote a sense of relaxation¹⁸. Digestive benefits can indirectly contribute to stress reduction by soothing gastrointestinal discomfort often associated with stress and anxiety. Peppermint tea or supplements can help alleviate symptoms of indigestion, bloating, and abdominal pain, promoting overall well-being and reducing stress levels. Peppermint is also valued for its energizing properties, which can help combat fatigue and boost mood during times of stress. Inhaling the scent of peppermint or using peppermint-infused products like shower gels or lotions can invigorate the senses and provide a refreshing pick-me-up. It is well-tolerated by most individuals, with few reported side effects when consumed in moderation. However, it's essential to use peppermint responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications. It is a versatile botanical with potent stress-reducing properties. Whether enjoyed as a soothing tea, inhaled through aromatherapy, or applied topically, peppermint offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall well-being. Its refreshing aroma and invigorating effects make it a popular choice for individuals seeking holistic approaches to managing stress and anxiety in their daily lives¹⁹.

2.7 Saffron (Crocus sativus L.)

Saffron, derived from the stigma of *Crocus sativus* flowers, is a prized spice with a long history of use in

traditional medicine for its numerous health benefits, including stress reduction. Known for its vibrant color and distinct flavor, saffron contains several bioactive compounds such as crocin, crocetin, and safranal, which contribute to its stress-relieving properties. One of the primary ways saffron helps alleviate stress is through its mood-enhancing effects. Research suggests that saffron may increase the levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine in the brain, which play key roles in regulating mood and emotions. Consuming saffron as a spice in culinary dishes or as a dietary supplement may help promote feelings of happiness and well-being, reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety²⁰.

Saffron is valued for its calming effects on the nervous system, which can help promote relaxation and reduce feelings of tension and anxiety. Drinking saffron-infused tea or adding saffron threads to warm milk before bedtime can create a soothing ritual that promotes restful sleep and reduces stress levels. The antioxidant properties may help protect the brain from oxidative stress and inflammation, which are linked to the development of mood disorders such as anxiety and depression. Consuming saffron regularly as part of a balanced diet may help support cognitive function and emotional well-being, reducing the impact of stress on mental health. Also, saffron's rich flavor and aroma can stimulate the senses and provide a sense of comfort and satisfaction, further contributing to its stress-reducing effects. Adding saffron to dishes like rice, soups, and stews can enhance their flavor profile and promote a sense of culinary indulgence that can help alleviate stress.

While saffron is generally safe for most individuals when consumed in moderate amounts as a spice or dietary supplement, it's essential to use it responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications. Saffron is a valuable botanical with potent stress-reducing properties. Whether enjoyed as a culinary spice, brewed into tea, or taken as a supplement, saffron offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall well-being. Its unique flavor, vibrant color, and mood-enhancing effects make it a cherished ingredient in both traditional and modern wellness practices²¹.

2.8 St. John's Wort (Hypericum perforatum L.)

St. John's Wort, scientifically known as *Hypericum perforatum*, is a flowering plant traditionally used for its medicinal properties, particularly in treating mood disorders such as depression and anxiety. Native to Europe, Asia, and North Africa, St. John's Wort contains several bioactive compounds, including hypericin, hyperforin, and flavonoids, which are believed to contribute to its stress-reducing effects.

One of the primary ways St. John's Wort helps alleviate stress is through its ability to modulate neurotransmitter activity in the brain. Research suggests that St. John's Wort may increase the levels of neurotransmitters like serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine, which play key roles in regulating mood and emotions. By enhancing neurotransmitter function, St. John's Wort may help reduce symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. St. John's Wort is valued for its calming and sedative effects, which can help promote relaxation and reduce feelings of tension and agitation. Consuming St. John's Wort as a tea, tincture, or dietary supplement may help soothe frazzled nerves and improve overall emotional wellbeing²².

St. John's Wort's anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties may help protect the brain from oxidative stress and inflammation, which are linked to the development of mood disorders. By reducing inflammation and oxidative damage, St. John's Wort may help support cognitive function and mental health, reducing the impact of stress on overall wellbeing. St. John's Wort's gentle nature and relatively low risk of side effects make it a popular botanical remedy for stress and mood disorders. However, it's essential to use St. John's Wort responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional before starting any herbal treatment, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

St. John's Wort is a valuable botanical with potent stress-reducing properties. Whether consumed as a tea, tincture, or supplement, St. John's Wort offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall emotional well-being. Its ability to modulate neurotransmitter activity, reduce inflammation, and protect brain health makes it a valuable tool for managing stress and anxiety in today's fast-paced world²³.

2.9 Valerian (Valeriana officinalis L.)

Valerian, scientifically known as *Valeriana officinalis*, is a perennial herb native to Europe and Asia. Used for centuries in traditional medicine for its calming and sedative properties, valerian contains compounds such as valerenic acid, valeranone, and sesquiterpenes, which are believed to contribute to its stress-reducing effects. One of the primary ways valerian helps alleviate stress is through its ability to enhance the activity of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a neurotransmitter that helps regulate anxiety and promote relaxation. Valerian's GABAergic effects can help reduce feelings of stress and anxiety, leading to improved mood and emotional well-being²⁴.

Valerian is valued for its ability to promote better sleep quality, which is often disrupted by stress and anxiety. Research suggests that valerian may help increase both the quantity and quality of sleep by prolonging the duration of deep sleep stages and reducing nighttime awakenings. By improving sleep patterns, valerian can help individuals feel more rested and better equipped to cope with stress during the day. Valerian's mild sedative effects make it a popular choice for promoting relaxation and reducing feelings of tension and nervousness. Consuming valerian as a tea, tincture, or dietary supplement can help soothe frazzled nerves and calm the mind, making it easier to manage stress in daily life. However, it's essential to use valerian responsibly and consult with a healthcare professional before starting any herbal treatment, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications. Valerian is a valuable botanical with potent stress-reducing properties. Whether consumed as a tea, tincture, or supplement, valerian offers a natural and effective way to alleviate stress, promote relaxation, and improve overall emotional well-being. Its ability to enhance GABA activity and promote better sleep quality makes it a valuable tool for managing stress and anxiety in today's hectic world²⁵.

3. Conclusion

It culminates as an empowering guide, encapsulating the essence of natural remedies and their profound impact on stress management. This conclusion encapsulates the transformative journey through herbal allies, summarizing their significance, emphasizing practical

application, and acknowledging the holistic paradigm they represent. Throughout this exploration, the significance of botanical solutions in ameliorating stress's pervasive effects has shone brightly. From ancient herbal wisdom to contemporary scientific validation, this guide has unveiled the rich tapestry of herbs-adaptogens, nervines, and calming botanical each weaving a unique thread in the fabric of stress relief. At its core, this conclusion reaffirms the synergy between traditional knowledge and modern research, acknowledging the resilient endurance of herbal medicine across cultures. It underscores the importance of honoring ancestral wisdom while integrating evidence-based practices, ensuring a comprehensive approach to stress reduction. This conclusion is also a reminder of responsibility and balance. While celebrating the potency of nature's offerings, it advocates for a mindful approach seeking expert advice, acknowledging individual differences, and understanding potential interactions-to ensure safe and effective usage of herbal remedies. In essence, "Soothing Herbs: Stress-Reducing Botanicals" is more than a guidebook; it's a testament to the enduring alliance between humans and nature. It invites readers to embrace a holistic approach to well-being, fostering resilience against stress and embracing the transformative power of these botanical allies for a balanced, harmonious life.

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