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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, April 21, 2005
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

Major releases

Other releases

Major releases

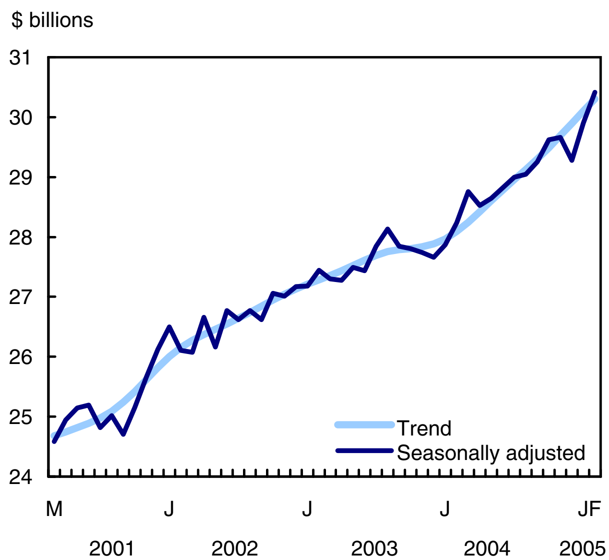
Retail trade

February 2005

Strong consumer spending in most retail stores pushed sales above the $30 billion mark for the first time ever. Retail sales jumped 1.7% in February to $30.4 billion, following an even sharper gain in January (+2.1%).

Retailers enjoyed a strong start in 2005, after facing a sizable 1.3% sales drop in December and essentially no sales growth in November. Previously, they had experienced uninterrupted sales growth from the beginning of 2004, except for a 0.8% decline in April.

Second consecutive month of widespread gains in retail sales



Prices had little impact on the retail sales growth rate in February. Once prices are taken into account, constant dollar retail sales advanced 1.7% in February and 2.3% in January. This strong start in 2005 followed two months of weak results, as constant dollar retail sales fell 1.3% in December and 0.2% in November.

All retail sectors, except general merchandise stores (-0.4%), showed higher sales in February. In fact, similar to January, sales growth surpassed the 2.0% mark in half of all retail sectors led by clothing (+4.1%), building supplies (+2.4%), automotive (+2.4%), and furniture and electronics (+2.2%).

Note to readers

Retail sales estimates are usually revised every year with the February release. This year, both unadjusted and seasonally adjusted retail sales have been revised, for some series, as far back as January 1991. Constant dollar retail sales were uniformly revised back to January 1997.

These revisions were necessary to include late receipt of sales estimates from retailers (thus replacing imputed data), changes to reported information, changes in the classification of some businesses and updates to seasonal and trading day factors.

Revised retail sales are now available on CANSIM and by request. The revised 2004 estimates will also appear in the February 2005 issue of Retail Trade *(63-005-XIE).*

Strong sales advances were also posted by retailers in the food sector (+1.4%), the miscellaneous sector (+1.1%) and in pharmacies (+0.6%). The miscellaneous category includes retailers such as office supply, sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores.

Sudden sales gain in clothing sector

Shoppers spent 4.1% more in clothing and accessories stores in February, after increasing their spending by only 0.3% in January. Before February's gain, sales in the clothing sector had remained essentially flat since the spring of 2004. Within this sector, a sharp sales decline in shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores over the last year offset the slow but steady growth seen in clothing stores.

Sales at building and outdoor home supplies stores advanced strongly for a second consecutive month in February, after reaching a plateau in the last five months of 2004. Consumer spending in these stores jumped 2.4% in February and 1.6% in January. On a year-over-year basis, sales in February stood at 12.5% above those in the same month of 2004, surpassing growth of any other retail sector.

Retail sales in the automotive sector jumped 2.4% in February, thanks to higher sales at new car dealers (+3.0%), used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers (+2.9%) and gasoline stations (+0.9%). A significant increase in the number of new motor vehicles sold in February was mostly behind the higher sales at new car dealers. These dealers have generally seen their sales rise since the beginning of 2004, after a period of declines in the second half of 2003. February's increase brought sales at new car dealers 4.1% above the average sales level seen in the record year of 2002. Sales in gasoline stations, which continued to be inflated by higher gasoline prices in February (+3.4%), have been on the rise since the spring of 2003.

For a third consecutive month, sales were on the rise in furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores. Retailers in this sector enjoyed sales increases of 2.2% in February, 2.3% in January and 1.2% in December. While furniture stores enjoyed sales gains in the first two months of 2005, home electronics and appliance stores were the only type of retailers in this sector to report a third consecutive month of sales increases. Sales in the overall sector have generally been increasing since the summer of 2004, after about a year of essentially no growth.

Busy month at beer, wine and liquor stores

Sales at food and beverage stores continued to climb in February (+1.4%), following a 3.0% comeback in January. February's 0.3% sales decline in supermarkets was more than offset by a sizeable 9.1% sales jump in beer, wine and liquor stores. An end to the labour dispute at the Société des alcools du Québec on February 11, and stronger sales in most other provinces helped propel sales in beer, wine and liquor stores to a new high. Sales at these stores were 3.7% higher in February compared with October 2004, when sales peaked prior to the declines in the last two months of the year.

Consumer spending in pharmacies and personal care stores was up in the first two months of 2005, after falling in December (-2.1%). Increases in January (+2.4%) and February (+0.6%) brought sales in pharmacies and personal care stores back to the strong upward trend seen since the fall of 2002.

General merchandise stores suffered the only sales decline of all sectors in February (-0.4%), after posting a sizable 2.8% gain in January. Within this sector, both department stores and other general merchandise stores had lower sales in February. Despite February's decline, sales in the general merchandise sector remained above the sales level observed throughout 2004.

Retail sales up in all provinces

All provinces posted higher retail sales in February, with increases ranging from 0.8% in Ontario to 8.3% in Prince Edward Island.

Retailers in Prince Edward Island enjoyed substantial sales gains in February after three years of little growth. Retail sales in that province posted double-digit increases in the automotive, building supplies and clothing sectors in February. Retailers in the automotive and clothing sector were catching up on their previous sales losses, while those in the building supplies sector continued to enjoyed strong sales gains.

Ontario saw considerable retail sales increases in the clothing and building supplies sectors in February, but little change in the remaining sectors. In fact, sales were down in the general merchandise sector. Retailers in Ontario have generally experienced rising sales since the fall of 2001, but at a pace slightly below the national average.

Related indicators for March

Total employment showed essentially no change in March as the gains in part-time employment were offset by declines in the number of full-time jobs. Overall, employment rose only marginally in the first three months of 2005 (+0.2%). Housing starts rose 0.3% in March, adding to the 7.0% increase in February. With these gains, housing starts regained about half the activity level lost in January, when they fell 13.9% from the previous month. Early results from the auto industry indicate a decline of about 7% in the number of new motor vehicles sold in March. This follows a considerable 12.8% jump in the number of new motor vehicles sold in February.

Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0014 to 080-0017 and 076-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2406 and 2408.

The February 2005 issue of *Retail Trade* (63-005-XIE, $18/$166) will soon be available.

Data on retail trade for March will be released on May 20.

For more information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; *retailinfo@statcan.ca*). For analytical information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541), Distributive Trades Division.

□

Retail sales

	February 2004[r]	November 2004[r]	December 2004[r]	January 2005[r]	February 2005[p]	January to February 2005	February 2004 to February 2005
	Seasonally adjusted						
	$ millions					% change	
Automotive	**9,436**	**10,044**	**9,865**	**10,037**	**10,278**	**2.4**	**8.9**
New car dealers	5,640	5,830	5,640	5,825	6,002	3.0	6.4
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	1,179	1,255	1,281	1,255	1,291	2.9	9.5
Gasoline stations	2,617	2,960	2,943	2,957	2,985	0.9	14.1
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	**1,952**	**2,037**	**2,061**	**2,109**	**2,156**	**2.2**	**10.4**
Furniture stores	704	728	710	743	763	2.6	8.4
Home furnishings stores	358	378	394	392	393	0.2	9.9
Computer and software stores	131	135	142	143	144	0.6	10.1
Home electronics and appliance stores	760	796	814	831	857	3.1	12.7
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	**1,648**	**1,793**	**1,783**	**1,811**	**1,855**	**2.4**	**12.5**
Home centres and hardware stores	1,302	1,422	1,433	1,428	1,467	2.7	12.7
Specialized building materials and garden stores	346	370	350	382	387	1.3	11.8
Food and beverage stores	**6,679**	**7,119**	**6,913**	**7,118**	**7,218**	**1.4**	**8.1**
Supermarkets	4,841	5,214	5,146	5,218	5,202	-0.3	7.5
Convenience and specialty food stores	711	741	759	754	766	1.6	7.7
Beer, wine and liquor stores	1,127	1,163	1,008	1,145	1,250	9.1	10.9
Pharmacies and personal care stores	**1,849**	**1,956**	**1,914**	**1,959**	**1,970**	**0.6**	**6.5**
Clothing and accessories stores	**1,673**	**1,681**	**1,692**	**1,696**	**1,765**	**4.1**	**5.5**
Clothing stores	1,253	1,284	1,284	1,318	1,372	4.0	9.4
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	420	396	408	378	393	4.2	-6.4
General merchandise stores	**3,467**	**3,526**	**3,523**	**3,624**	**3,608**	**-0.4**	**4.1**
Department stores	1,822	1,811	1,817	1,872	1,869	-0.1	2.6
Other general merchandise stores	1,645	1,715	1,706	1,752	1,739	-0.7	5.7
Miscellaneous retailers	**1,529**	**1,508**	**1,531**	**1,548**	**1,564**	**1.1**	**2.3**
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	725	739	759	759	768	1.2	5.9
Miscellaneous store retailers	804	769	772	789	797	0.9	-0.9
Total retail sales	**28,234**	**29,663**	**29,281**	**29,901**	**30,415**	**1.7**	**7.7**
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	**21,415**	**22,578**	**22,360**	**22,821**	**23,121**	**1.3**	**8.0**
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	491	492	492	487	493	1.1	0.3
Prince Edward Island	115	116	114	117	127	8.3	10.4
Nova Scotia	807	870	842	841	897	6.6	11.2
New Brunswick	653	699	668	687	702	2.2	7.5
Quebec	6,312	6,788	6,575	6,861	6,931	1.0	9.8
Ontario	10,626	10,977	10,952	11,142	11,234	0.8	5.7
Manitoba	955	996	974	1,016	1,039	2.3	8.8
Saskatchewan	844	871	867	875	901	3.0	6.8
Alberta	3,545	3,743	3,702	3,783	3,879	2.5	9.4
British Columbia	3,790	4,008	3,994	3,989	4,104	2.9	8.3
Yukon	35	36	36	35	36	1.1	1.5
Northwest Territories	42	45	46	47	51	9.1	23.3
Nunavut	19	20	20	20	21	1.3	6.1

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*

Retail sales

	February 2004[r]	January 2005[r]	February 2005[p]	February 2004 to February 2005
	Unadjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Automotive	**7,858**	**7,862**	**8,449**	**7.5**
New car dealers	4,634	4,322	4,896	5.7
Used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	873	849	942	7.8
Gasoline stations	2,350	2,691	2,611	11.1
Furniture, home furnishings and electronics stores	**1,571**	**1,815**	**1,696**	**8.0**
Furniture stores	566	636	594	4.9
Home furnishings stores	288	318	312	8.3
Computer and software stores	123	143	134	8.5
Home electronics and appliance stores	594	718	657	10.6
Building and outdoor home supplies stores	**1,091**	**1,210**	**1,207**	**10.6**
Home centres and hardware stores	863	970	956	10.9
Specialized building materials and garden stores	229	240	251	9.7
Food and beverage stores	**5,880**	**6,564**	**6,202**	**5.5**
Supermarkets	4,396	5,059	4,614	5.0
Convenience and specialty food stores	617	653	646	4.7
Beer, wine and liquor stores	867	852	943	8.7
Pharmacies and personal care stores	**1,739**	**1,880**	**1,802**	**3.7**
Clothing and accessories stores	**1,158**	**1,262**	**1,189**	**2.6**
Clothing stores	850	990	907	6.7
Shoe, clothing accessories and jewellery stores	308	272	281	-8.8
General merchandise stores	**2,554**	**2,805**	**2,585**	**1.2**
Department stores	1,343	1,375	1,336	-0.5
Other general merchandise stores	1,211	1,430	1,249	3.1
Miscellaneous retailers	**1,220**	**1,326**	**1,217**	**-0.2**
Sporting goods, hobby, music and book stores	544	672	559	2.9
Miscellaneous store retailers	676	654	658	-2.7
Total retail sales	**23,071**	**24,725**	**24,349**	**5.5**
Total excluding new car dealers, used and recreational motor vehicle and parts dealers	**17,564**	**19,554**	**18,511**	**5.4**
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland and Labrador	375	368	370	-1.3
Prince Edward Island	84	89	91	8.5
Nova Scotia	646	685	700	8.4
New Brunswick	515	550	541	5.2
Quebec	5,034	5,554	5,396	7.2
Ontario	8,648	9,253	8,983	3.9
Manitoba	783	840	837	6.9
Saskatchewan	685	725	721	5.2
Alberta	2,962	3,155	3,184	7.5
British Columbia	3,260	3,420	3,438	5.5
Yukon	27	28	27	0.3
Northwest Territories	37	40	45	22.3
Nunavut	16	17	17	2.1

[r] *Revised figures.*
[p] *Preliminary figures.*

■

Principal field crops

March 2005 intentions

Prairie farmers, frustrated by low prices and higher input costs, anticipate planting a million fewer acres of canola this spring than they did last year, and about half a million fewer acres of spring wheat, the two main cash crops.

Seeding intentions of major grains and oilseeds

Crop	2004	2005	2004 to 2005
	thousands of acres		% change
Total wheat	25,553	25,170	-1.5
Spring wheat	18,601	18,204	-2.1
Canola	13,145	12,075	-8.1
Barley	11,559	11,614	0.5
Summerfallow	8,920	9,660	8.3
Durum wheat	5,510	5,815	5.5
Oats	4,930	5,664	14.9
Dry field peas	3,430	3,365	-1.9
Soybeans	3,037	3,027	-0.3
Corn for grain	2,928	2,818	-3.8
Flaxseed	1,800	2,145	19.2

At the same time, they expected dramatic increases in plantings of flaxseed, durum wheat and oats in 2005. In Eastern Canada, Ontario and Quebec farmers indicated a probable decline in grain corn, but no significant change in the area devoted to soybeans.

Data from the annual March Seeding Intentions Survey that covered 12,000 respondents showed that in the case of canola, the anticipated acreage will fall from 13.1 million acres in 2004 to only 12.1 million acres in 2005. If they follow through with their plans, this would represent a decline of 8.1% or 1.0 million acres.

Many farm operators expressed their frustration with the poor market prices forecast for 2005 and this is playing a big part in their decisions to plant this year.

Significantly higher fuel and fertilizer costs predicted for 2005 on top of the reduced income from the inadequate harvest of 2004 due to poor quality and unharvestable crops left some to wonder if they can afford to plant.

An indication of this insecurity was an 8.1% increase in expected summerfallow acreage in the Prairies in 2005. However, this indecision may change in the next few weeks as farmers head into mid-spring when concrete decisions have to be made.

Oilseed picture mixed

The survey portrayed a mixed picture for oilseeds on the Prairies this year. The anticipated big decline in canola acreage would accompany a robust increase in flaxseed plantings.

The projected decline in canola acreage would be equally shared across the three Prairie provinces. It may be the result of lower anticipated returns compared with alternative crops. The 10-year average for canola is 11.6 million acres.

In terms of flaxseed, the picture is vastly different. Flaxseed area is expected to climb to 2.1 million acres, 19.2% higher than the 1.8 million acres seeded in 2004.

Producers in all three producing Prairie provinces reported robust increases in anticipated flaxseed plantings.

Strong prices for the meager harvest of 2004 appear to have fueled this interest. Saskatchewan accounts for nearly three-quarters of the flaxseed grown.

Spring wheat down slightly, durum wheat on the rise

Farmers in the Prairies reported a decline in intended spring wheat plantings. Total area is estimated at 17.8 million acres, a drop of 2.4% from the seeded acreage of 18.3 million acres in 2004. The five-year seeded average is 19.0 million acres.

Farmers in Saskatchewan, which contributes 51.7% of the spring wheat area in the Prairies, anticipated a 6.9% decline, while Manitoba farmers reported a 6.7% gain, and Alberta farmers a slight 1.0% increase.

Farmers expected to plant more durum wheat this year. Prairie provinces reported increases resulting in a forecast seeded area of 5.8 million acres, a gain of 5.5% from the 5.5 million acres seeded in 2004. The 10-year average is 5.7 million acres.

Barley to remain unchanged while oats soars

The total area seeded to barley is expected to remain unchanged at 11.6 million acres.

Farmers in Saskatchewan, where almost half of barley in the West is grown, reported a gain of 5.2%. On the other hand, farmers in Manitoba anticipated a decline of 6.5%, while their counterparts in Alberta expected a 3.1% drop.

As a result of better expected returns and lower input costs relative to other crops, Prairie farmers expect to plant 5.2 million acres of oats in 2005, an increase of 17.0% from the 4.4 million acres seeded in 2004.

All Prairie provinces reported gains, with Saskatchewan leading the way at 2.7 million acres, an increase of 550,000 acres.

Ontario, Quebec farmers may plant less grain corn, fewer soybeans

Anticipated grain corn acreage in Eastern Canada could fall for the fourth consecutive year. Record large supplies in the United States coupled with prospects for another large crop in 2005 have dragged the Canadian price down and reduced hopes of a reasonable return on the cost of growing corn relative to other crops.

Corn growers in Quebec and Ontario reported that they are intending to seed 2.6 million acres, down 112,000 acres from the 2.7 million acres in 2004.

Ontario farmers reported an intended area of 1.6 million acres, down 100,000 acres from 2004, while Quebec farmers reported a small decline to 1.0 million acres, down 12,000 acres from 2004.

Soybean seeded area in the East should remain almost unchanged from the 2.8 million acres seeded in 2004. The 10 year average soybean area is 2.5 million acres.

Available on CANSIM: tables 001-0004, 001-0010 and 001-0017 to 001-0020.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3401.

The publication *Field Crop Reporting Series: March Intentions of Principal Field Crop Areas, Canada*, 2005, Vol. 84, no. 2 (22-002-XIB, $12/$71; 22-002-XPB, $17/$95) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For further information, contact David Burroughs (613-951-5138; *dave.burroughs@statcan.ca*), Dave Roeske (613-951-0572; *dave.roeske@statcan.ca*), or Heather Smith (613-951-0730; *heather.smith@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Other releases

Crushing statistics
March 2005

According to the monthly survey of crushing plants, oilseed processors crushed 274,913 metric tonnes of canola in March. Oil production last month totalled 113,559 tonnes while meal production amounted to 175,573 tonnes.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0005.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3404.

The March 2005 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in May.

For general information, contact Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Karen Gray (204-983-2856; *karen.gray@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Deliveries of major grains
March 2005

Data on March grain deliveries are now available.

Available on CANSIM: table 001-0001.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 3403, 3404 and 3443.

The March 2005 issue of *Cereals and Oilseeds Review* (22-007-XIB, $12/$120) will be available in May 2005.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Susan Anderson (613-951-3859; *sue.anderson@statcan.ca*) or Client Services (1-800-465-1991; *agriculture@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Large urban transit
February 2005 (preliminary)

Combined ridership on 10 large urban transit systems in Canada edged up 0.1% in February compared with the same month in 2004.

Approximately 108 million passenger trips were taken on these transit systems in February. These systems account for about 80% of total urban transit in Canada.

The trips generated $163.7 million in revenue in February 2005 (excluding subsidies), up 2.7% compared with February 2004.

Available on CANSIM: table 408-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2745.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Dissemination Unit (1-866-500-8400; fax: 1-613-951-0009; *transportationstatistics@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

New products

Canadian Economic Observer, April 2005, Vol. 18, no. 4
Catalogue number 11-010-XPB ($25/$243).

Input-output Model Simulations (National Model), 2001
Catalogue number 15F0004XDB
(various prices).

Input-output Model Simulations (Interprovincial Model), 2001
Catalogue number 15F0009XDB
(various prices).

National Input-output Tables, 2001
Catalogue number 15F0041XDB
(various prices).

Interprovincial Input-output Tables, 2001
Catalogue number 15F0042XDB
(various prices).

National and Provincial Multipliers, 2001
Catalogue number 15F0046XDB
(various prices).

Field Crop Reporting Series, 2005, Vol. 84, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-002-XIB ($12/$71).

Field Crop Reporting Series, 2005, Vol. 84, no. 2
Catalogue number 22-002-XPB ($17/$95).

Imports by Commodity, February 2005, Vol. 62, no. 2
Catalogue number 65-007-XMB ($40/$387).

Imports by Commodity, February 2005, Vol. 62, no. 2
Catalogue number 65-007-XPB ($84/$828).

Income Research Paper Series: Low Income Cut-offs for 2004 and Low Income Measures for 2002, 1992 to 2004, no. 3
Catalogue number 75F0002MIE2005003
(free).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or –XDE are electronic versions on diskette and -XCB or –XCE are electronic versions on compact disc.

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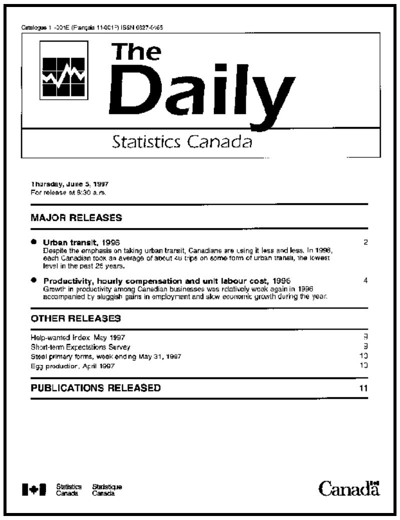
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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, May 1997	9
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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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