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Nordkapp

Luleå



WELCOME TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

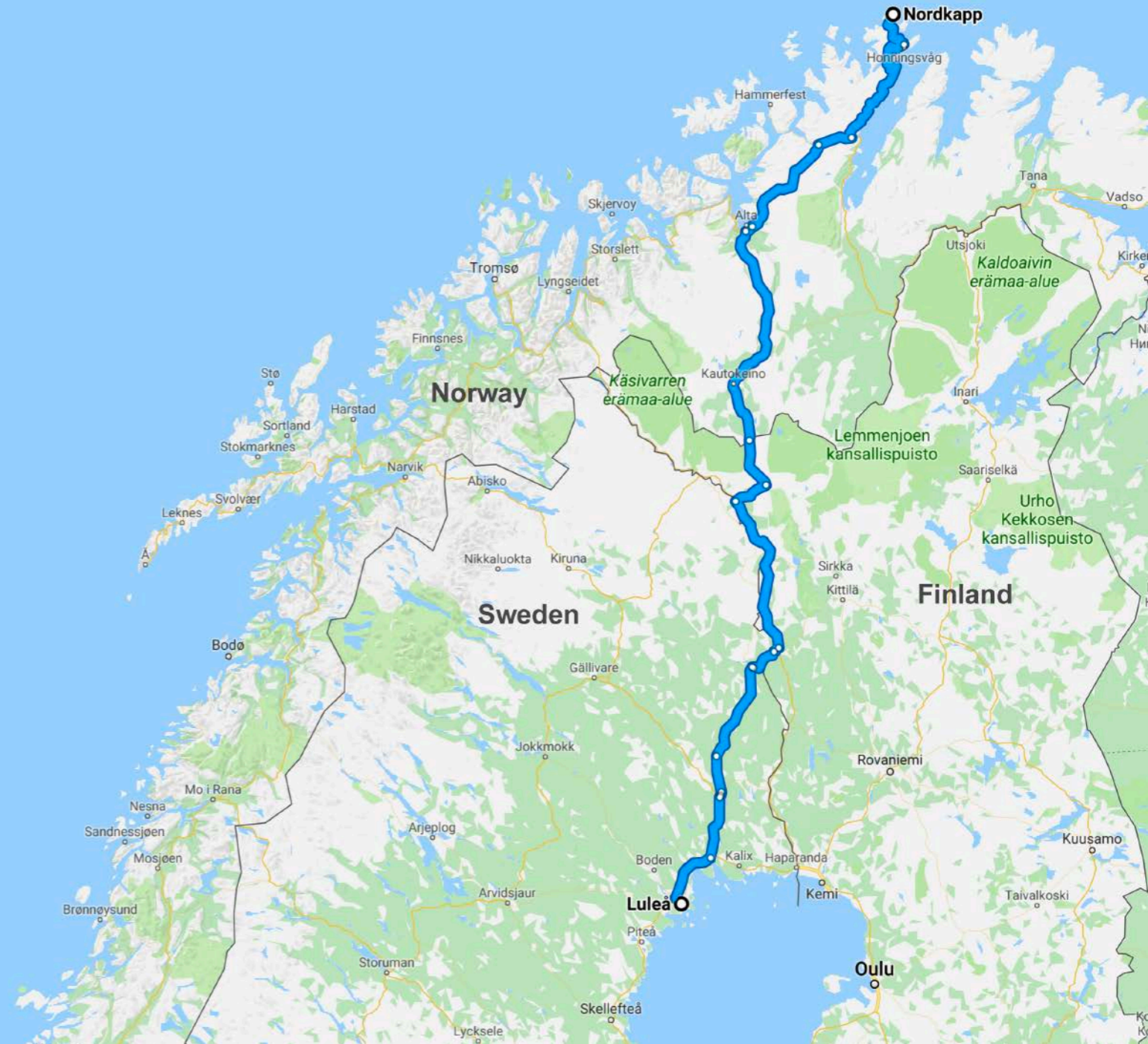
UPDATED 2019 MAZDA MX-5: ARCTIC DRIVE

Welcome to the Arctic Circle. Ahead of you lies more than 500 miles of driving across the stunning terrain of Europe's remote north - a journey that will take in some of Scandinavia's most isolated and dramatic backdrops.

Fitted with a more powerful and higher-revving version of the 2.0-litre Skyactiv-G engine, a limited-slip differential and studded tyres, the updated 2019 Mazda MX-5 is ready to take on the elements.



WELCOME TO THE ARCTIC CIRCLE





UPDATED 2019 MAZDA MX-5

With its lightweight design, sleek cabin, beautifully engineered mechanicals, superior power-to-weight ratio, rear-wheel drive, perfect 50:50 weight distribution, balanced handling and more comfort and technology than ever before, the fourth generation Mazda MX-5 is pure roadster.

Reaffirming Mazda's dominance of the affordable sports car sector and maintaining the driver-focused ethos that has made it the world's bestselling two-seater sports car of all time, the latest MX-5 was conceived and developed under the concept of 'innovate in order to preserve'.

This engineering philosophy has allowed Mazda to maintain the agility, fun and engagement that has always defined the MX-5, while at the same time meeting ever-increasing safety and efficiency requirements, alongside improved refinement.

The fourth generation Mazda MX-5 has the smallest overhangs and lowest centre of gravity yet. These dynamic proportions combined with Mazda's KODO: Soul of Motion design philosophy ensure that the all-new Mazda MX-5's styling reflects its focus on driving pleasure in an unmistakably contemporary and dynamic way.

Mazda's weight saving 'gram strategy' played a huge part in chassis development, and this is the lightest MX-5 since the iconic original. Retaining a front double wishbone and rear multi-link suspension set-up, this Mazda MX-5's Skyactiv-Chassis is 12kg lighter than that of the previous model, and stiffer and more driver-focused than ever.

This is also the first MX-5 to feature a dual-pinion electric power assist steering system. Placed closer to the front wheels to deliver even more direct feedback and feel, the system's steering ratio has changed from 15.1 to 15.5, with the overall result being lighter, faster and more precise steering.

For 2019, Mazda has carefully revised and upgraded its globally renowned sports car to ensure it's more exciting and engaging to drive than ever before. Both convertible and RF versions of the MX-5 benefit from enhanced dynamic performance, increased safety equipment and carefully considered cabin refinements.

At the forefront of this technical upgrade is a more powerful and higher-revving version of the 2.0-litre Skyactiv-G engine. Substantially redesigned with lighter pistons and con-rod, the 2.0-litre engine also features revisions to the camshafts and exhaust valves, fuel injectors, throttle valve and air intake.

The end result is an increase in maximum power output from 160ps to 184ps and a heightened redline, which rises from 6,800 to 7,500rpm. In addition, with higher fuel pressure and more efficient combustion, there's an increase in torque across the rev range, while peak torque rises by 5Nm. As a result, the convertible's 0-62mph performance improves by 0.8 of a second to 6.5 seconds, and manual and automatic RF models see a 0.6 and 0.5 second increase, respectively. In addition, tuning of the main silencer delivers a cleaner, more powerful engine note.

This enhanced performance hasn't come at the cost of efficiency. Fully homologated to the WLTP/RDE test cycle, both the 2019 MX-5's engines achieve Euro 6d Temp emission regulation compliance, while the introduction of Mazda's i-ELOOP and i-stop kinetic recovery and stop-start technology on 2.0-litre models means all 184ps cars have a lower CO2 output than that of the outgoing 160ps car.

In both the RF and convertible variants, the upgraded 184ps 2.0-litre engine is available in SE-L Nav+, Sport Nav+ and the new range-topping GT Sport Nav+ trim.

Better yet, and fitted as standard to Sport Nav+ and GT Sport Nav+ variants, the more enthusiastic 2.0 litre unit delivers power to the rear wheels via a limited-slip differential; crucial on snow, and the perfect complement to studded tyres.





The 1.5-litre Skyactiv-G engine benefits from improved combustion and reduced internal friction to see a slight power increase to 132ps and a moderate torque improvement to 152Nm, while at the same time retaining its superb efficiency and fuel economy.

Across all models in the range, the 2019 MX-5 now features telescopic steering adjustment and improved seat sliding operation to further enhance driver comfort and improve the famous Jinba Ittai 'car-and-driver as one' ethos that sits at the heart of the MX-5 experience.

As you would expect of a car that was named World Car Design of the Year on its debut, the styling of the MX-5 has been left alone, although a new design of 16 and 17-inch alloy wheel will mark out the 2019 model.

The MX-5 convertible is offered in SE+, SE-L Nav+, Sport Nav+ and new GT Sport Nav+ trim, while the RF is available in SE-L Nav+, Sport Nav+, and GT Sport Nav+, with the higher two trims available with an automatic gearbox.

The 2019 Mazda MX-5 also benefits from upgraded i-Activsense safety technologies. Standard safety equipment has increased with Sport Nav+ trim and above, now featuring Front Smart City Brake Support, Lane Departure Warning System, Rear Smart City Brake Support, Traffic Sign Recognition and Driver Attention Alert.

A Blind Spot Monitoring System with Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Adaptive LED headlights and a reversing camera are standard on GT Sport Nav+ and optional as a safety pack on Sport Nav+.

Masashi Nakayama, program manager and chief designer for the MX-5, said “the key phrase for our development of the fourth-generation MX-5 was ‘Innovate in order to preserve’, and I strongly believe that this model’s ongoing appeal is the result of our unceasing commitment to refining the vehicle over its 29-year history. We intend to keep refining the car, seeking out new ways to make it even more thrilling and satisfying to drive, so it can continue to offer customers unique excitement and cement its position as a cultural icon. And that’s exactly what we’ve done with the 2019 MX-5.”

Commenting on the 2019 Mazda MX-5, Mazda UK Managing Director Jeremy Thomson said, “when it comes to driver engagement, the current generation MX-5 has already established itself as a benchmark sports car, so with extra power, improved performance, more revs to enjoy and a sweeter exhaust note, the 2019 2.0-litre Skyactiv-G MX-5 will be more exciting and satisfying to drive than ever before. And with telescopic steering adjustment now standard across all models, we’ve listening to feedback from our customers to make sure driver comfort is also enhanced.”

Adding, “Our engineers have created a sports car that incorporates our ground-breaking SKYACTIV technology, modern safety and superb efficiency with the driver focused enjoyment for which the MX-5 is loved. The MX-5 is Mazda’s brand icon and it embodies all that is great about our products. Its fun to drive character has strengthened the bond between Mazda and its customers for 29 years and the new 2019 model continues this unswerving dedication to delivering an affordable, engaging, world-class sports car.”

The updated, 2019 Mazda MX-5 continues an award-winning tradition that has seen the model garner over 30 global awards to date, including, most recently, 2106 World Car of the Year, World Car Design of the Year and UK Car of the Year.



LULEA TO NORDKAPP

Squatting on the chilly coastline of the northernmost reaches of the Gulf of Bothnia - which usefully prevents Sweden and Finland from biffing into each other - Lulea is the largest city in Swedish Lapland.

Just offshore, sprayed haphazardly over the seascape like wedding confetti on a churchyard path, some 1,312 islands and skerries (a skerry being a diminutive rocky islet good for nothing but the drying of cormorant wings and the inadvertent beaching of pleasure boats) make up the world's only archipelago immersed in brackish water; the Atlantic Ocean off the Norwegian port of Narvik, for instance, contains ten times more salt than this part of the Gulf of Bothnia.

Most of the islands are uninhabited save for a profusion of berries best served with reindeer stew, and an attendant blizzard of diverse, plump and highly contented bird life. No matter their size, however, all of the islands do have one thing in common - they're getting larger.

Due to something geology boffins call 'post-glacial rebound', the land is rising at from 0.8 to 1 centimetre annually, so the shoreline can retreat by as much as 100 metres in one person's lifetime. Hence, the islands are growing in size, but the waters and harbours are becoming shallower. Because of this process, in 1649 the entire city of Lulea was forced to move to its present location since the channel to its previous site had become too shallow.

A bonus for the regularly-beaten-warm-by-birch-switch Scandinavian outward-boundah, fresh water freezes far more readily than its saline cousin, and the brackish waters surrounding this sea side town freeze up to a meter thick each winter. Whereupon the council carves a 17km part ice-skating rink, part walking trail onto the once-wet patch surrounding the town, whilst - to the delight of SR.N6 aficionados - hovercraft take over summer ferry services to the populated islands of the archipelago.





A drive of just 62 miles north from Lulea takes you into the Arctic Circle, and Lapland. Stretching across northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland and into the Kola Peninsula of Russia, Lapland is the conventional name for the region, derived from Lapp, the name Scandinavians ascribed to the Sami people, who have sparsely inhabited the region for several thousand years. Have a care, though; today the Sami call the region Sapmi, and consider Lapp to be a derogatory term.

Southern and central Lapland occupies the zone of the taiga; swampy coniferous forest and saturated land pockmarked with a teenage acne of bogs and swamps. Further north and at higher elevations, forests of pine and spruce give way to the dwarf birch, heath, and lichens of the tundra, whilst Norwegian Lapland is largely open, windswept and littered with reindeer.

As a semi-nomadic people, the reindeer-herding Sami traditionally maintained permanent dwellings and spent part of their time living in tents. The permanent homes were either frame buildings or sod huts. The Sami tent, called a lavvo, has a circular framework of poles leaning inward like the teepee or wigwam of Native Americans, and a floor of birch twigs covered with layers of reindeer fur.

Though northern Norway is still home to several hundred thousand reindeer, only some 2,600 Sami people make their living from herding them today. This traditional reindeer country has been intruded upon by permanent farming, forestry, mining, and hydroelectric and even industrial enterprises. And many of the Sami have adopted a sedentary life and intermarried with Scandinavians and Finns. Those who still practice reindeer herding have liberty of movement across the open boundaries of Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

Sami is rich in words that describe reindeer, with words for different colours, sizes, antler spreads, and fur textures. Other words indicate how tame a reindeer is or how good it is at pulling sleds. There is actually a separate word describing a male reindeer in each year of his life. There are also hundreds of words that differentiate snow according to its age, depth, density, and hardness. For example, terms exist for powdery snow, snow that fell yesterday, and snow that is soft underneath with a hard crust on top.

The Sami have by far the oldest culture in large areas of Northern Norway and, happily, it's currently experiencing a strong renaissance. For it seems we still have much to learn from a people who've spent millennia surviving in semi-darkness and sub-zero temperatures for months on end. Indeed, when the temperature falls below -40 C, Sami boots lined with blister sedge will keep your feet warmer than any of the latest fads in Arctic survival equipment.

Nearer to the North Pole than to Oslo, Nordkapp has made a good living out of billing itself as the northernmost point in continental Europe. In fact, it isn't. Technically, it's on an island, Mageroya, so the honours actually go to Knivskjelodden, a stout snowshoe hike away, which boasts the triple tourist trip-hazard of being far less dramatic, inaccessible by vehicle, and utterly unpronounceable.

Stand atop the vertiginous cliff that separates the Nordkapp plateau from a turbulent Barents Sea beating itself into a fury of spray and spume over 1000ft below, and the only dry land between you and the North Pole is the distant Svalbard archipelago.

The weather at the North Cape is a veritable smorgasbord of climactic contradictions. The summer sun doesn't set between the middle of May and the end of July, yet this northern coast is close enough to the North Pole that it's subject to polar winds, which can be furious, especially in winter and spring when, by and large, the sun steadfastly refuses to rise. Despite Nordkapp's sub-polar oceanic climate, a branch of the Gulf Stream makes landfall here, so, even at these latitudes, the open sea never freezes, which doesn't happen anywhere else in the world...





And this, for at least three reasons, is a Good Thing. Firstly, year-round access to a particularly bountiful sea means the guano-gummed cliffs of northern Norway are home to the indescribable hubbub of hundreds of thousands of nesting razorbills, auks, storm petrels, gannets and -described by the lighthouse keepers of Cape Wrath in Scotland as 'fush wuth wings'- puffins.

Secondly, the coastal waters teem with life; harbour porpoises, dolphins and humpback whales are often seen close inshore, and one of the more monstrous fruits of a 12 month-long fishing bonanza is a relatively new arrival to Norway, the king crab.

Originally from the northern reaches of the Pacific Ocean, and previously known in Norway as the Kamchatka crab after the peninsula on the east coast of Siberia, the species was released into the Murmansk Fjord by Soviet biologists in the 1960s, and thrived, clattering ever westward on those spindly limbs. The first king crab was caught in Norwegian waters in 1977 and, today, particularly dense from Nordkapp eastwards, crab colonies in these waters are now ubiquitous. Pass the mayonnaise...

Finally, the fact that the sea never freezes means that the only area of Norway populated by the pant-wettingly dangerous polar bear remains the Svalbard archipelago. Interestingly, the news that the same is true of that sabre-toothed lard-arse the walrus leaves tourists unmoved. Perhaps because the majority feel they have a fighting chance of outrunning one.

AURORA BOREALIS - THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Named after the Roman goddess of Dawn, Aurora, and the Greek name for the north wind, Boreas, by the Italian astronomer Galileo in 1619, the Aurora Borealis is a spectacular light show that occurs when electrically charged particles released by the Sun enter the earth's atmosphere and collide with the molecules of gases such as oxygen and nitrogen.

Their quantity related to the strength of sunspot and solar flare activity on the Sun's surface, free electrons and protons carried on the solar wind are largely deflected by the Earth's magnetic field. However, this field is weaker at the poles, allowing some particles to enter the atmosphere.

Variations in aurora colour relate to the type of gas particles involved. The most common colour is green, produced by oxygen molecules located some 60 miles above the Earth. Rarer red auroras are produced by high altitude oxygen, at heights of up to 200 miles, whilst blue or purple auroras are produced by nitrogen.

The Northern Lights are strongest when an active area of the Sun's surface faces the Earth. The most spectacular displays thus occur at roughly 27-day intervals -the time it takes for the Sun to rotate once. October, February and March are the best months for witnessing this extraordinary phenomenon, between the hours of 10pm and 2am.

ARCTIC FOX *Vulpes Lagopus*

So well insulated is the Arctic fox that it doesn't even start to shiver until the temperature drops to -70°C . It boasts the animal kingdom's best insulating fur, footpads covered in fur, and increased blood circulation to the paws to stop them freezing to the ice. Making Michael Jackson's efforts look somewhat amateurish, the Arctic fox morphs from brown to snow white every winter. It hears its favourite snack, lemmings, burrowing under 4-5" of snow, pouncing and punching through the surface to catch its victim.



GREY WOLF *Canis Lupus*

The wolf is a social animal, living in packs 10-15 strong. All the wolves in a pack will be related - for instance, two parents and their offspring. During summer, wolves hunt by themselves or in pairs, whilst, in autumn and winter, they hunt in packs to be able to target larger animals such as reindeer or moose. Recovering from extinction in Sweden in the 1970s, the Scandinavian wolf population grew by 25% in the 1990s, and today numbers in excess of 400 animals.



BROWN BEAR *Ursus Arctos*

Scandinavia's largest predator, the adult male brown bear can weigh up to 350kg. Bears are omnivores, eating a wide range of food from shoots and berries to ants, bees and voles. They may also hunt larger animals, such as moose. The brown bear hibernates during winter, so, if you do come across one, it may well have been disturbed and, hence, prove somewhat grumpy. Stand tall, speak loudly, and retrace your steps. Do not run.



WOLVERINE *Gulo Gulo*

Not to be confused with Hugh Jackman, the wolverine also goes by the name of Glutton, after the Latin gulo, and Skunk Bear in honour of its appalling pong. A better scavenger than predator, it will follow the trails of wolves, lynx and other predators in the hope of finding abandoned prey, but its sheer ferocity also allows it to hunt animals larger than itself. The wolverine has developed teeth purpose made for ripping into flesh that has been frozen solid.



MOOSE

Meece? Muce? Mace? Mooses? Wasted conjecture. There is, it transpires, no plural. Furthermore, strictly speaking, we're talking elk here; moose, though identical, all live in Canada and star in nature films.

In the interests of trade, the Swedes themselves are wont to get this wrong too, since tourists know what a moose looks like, enjoy what saying it does to the lips and will buy the souvenir mug, but wouldn't recognise an elk if they drove full pelt into one. Which, about 15 times a day in Sweden, is exactly what happens.

There are some 600,000 moose on the loose in this overgrown Christmas tree plantation and, in some districts, they account for up to a quarter of all road traffic accidents.

Weighing in at well over 1000lbs, a full grown bull moose resembles a somewhat hastily constructed horse with the nose bag permanently sewn into position. It sports joke antlers, and has excessively long legs with the structural integrity of a Twiglet.

When you assault one with a rapidly moving car, the legs offer no resistance to the front bumper whatsoever. The body, meanwhile, passes quickly through the involuntary bonnet mascot stage and immediately thereafter attempts, via the windscreen, to acquire passenger status.

Eric Carlsson, rally supremo of the early sixties and ever Sweden's favourite son, himself once had a spot of bother with a moose: 'Late one evening in 1957, I was driving some friends home; doing about 70mph,' he explained. 'And I saw something in mid-air, coming from the bank beside the road. It turned out to be a big bull moose of about 1700lbs, and that's more or less the last I could see because it tipped over into the windscreen.'

'Both front tyres exploded, the valves shot out and the windscreen smashed. The moose split open and the cock and balls and all the shit went straight through the car and ended up in the rear window. None of us was hurt' Eric recalled, 'but we had a whole car full of shit.'

And therein lies the problem. You can repair the physical damage resulting from a moose encounter, but you can't clean the upholstery and you never, ever get rid of the smell. So have a care...





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SPECIFICATIONS

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