**Juniperus communis**
[jew-NIP-er-us KOM-yoo-nis]

**Family:** Cupressaceae

**Names:** dwarf juniper, melmot berry, mountain juniper, gorst, ground juniper, hackmatack, horse savin, juniper bush, prostrate juniper, scent cedar, scrub juniper; genévrier, genievre (French); Wacholder, Machandel, Kranawitt (German); ginepro (Italian); enebro, junipero, nebrina, Cedra, Bayas de enebro (Spanish); dhup, shur (Indian); Junipero (Danish); Jeneverbes (Dutch); Juniperbero (Esperanto); Harilik kadakas (Estonian); Kataja, Kotikataja (Finnish); Aiteil, Ailtinn, Aitiol (Gaelic); Boróka, Borókabogyó (Hungarian); Einiber (Icelandic); Ginepro, Coccola di ginepro (Italian); Einer (Norwegian); Jalowiec pospolity (Polish); Mozhzhevelnik (Russian); Mreteni (Swahili); En, Enbär (Swedish); Ardiç (Turkish); Sabino Macho (Mexican)

**Description:** A small-evergreen shrub or tree 12 to 30 feet in height, low and spreading or upright. The bark of the trunk is reddish brown and tends to shred. The needles are straight, sharp-pointed, ridged, and nearly at right angles to the branchlets. The berries are fleshy and globular, measuring $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{3}$ inches in diameter. They contain three sticky, brown irregular-shaped seeds. The fruits should be used when ripe, that is, after the skin has turned blue. On drying and storing, the smooth shiny skin darkens to a purple black and becomes slightly wrinkled or indented. The unripe fruit is green. The interior flesh of the mature berry is brown-yellow and the brown seeds are crunchy but not hard. Its aroma is fragrant and flowery combining the aromas of gin and turpentine. The flavor is aromatic, bittersweet and piney. Eaten raw, the breath smells like gin.

**Cultivation:** Tolerates most soils in sun or partial shade. Tolerates acid and alkaline conditions, dry and wet soils, and exposed positions. Propagate by seed sown under cover in autumn or spring (takes a considerable period to germinate), or by cuttings of lateral shoots with a heel in autumn. Plant may be damaged by juniper scale, blight, mites and bagworms. The fruits are green throughout the first two years. They then ripen every two years at different times. Harvest from September to October. Fruits are collected by shaking branches over a groundsheets; they are used fresh for oil distillation or dry the berries below 95°F to retain the essential oil for infusions, liquid extracts, tablets and tinctures. If you want berries, be sure to plant both male and female junipers or the females will not fruit. The foliage is harvest as needed and the wood after trees are cut down.

**Constituents:** 0.5-2.0% of a volatile essential oil including terpenes (mainly monoterpenes: pinene, myrcene, sabine with limonene, cymene, terpinene, thuje and camphene); 10% resin; 30% invert sugars, some salts, wax, gum, flavonoids, glycosides, tannins,
podophyllotoxin (an anti-tumor agent), vitamin C and phytonicides. The bitter principle is juniperin. Chemically similar to turpentine and Australian tea tree oil. Very high in chromium. High in tin, protein and cobalt.

Properties: urinary antiseptic, diuretic, carminative, digestive tonic, uterine stimulant, antirheumatic, antispasmodic, antitoxic, aphrodisiac, astringent, cicatrizant, depurative, emmenagogue, nerve, parasiticde, rubefacient, sedative, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, vulnerary

History: Berries were known to Greek, Roman and early Arab physicians as a medicinal fruit and are mentioned in the Bible. Several medicinal recipes survive in Egyptian papyri dating to 1550 BC. During the Renaissance, they were recommended against snake bite and plague and pestilence. Parents burned juniper during childbirth in the belief that its smoke prevented the fairies from substituting a changeling for their newborn baby. Fruit becomes more potent the further south it grows. The oil from the fruit is most famous in the manufacture of gin, certain liquors and bitters. The word 'gin' comes from *geneva*, the Dutch for juniper. Juniper was burned in temples as a part of regular purification rites.

The old testament records that the prophet Elijah took refuge under a juniper tree to avoid persecution by King Ahab. The juniper tree is revered in Catholic countries because of the legend that a juniper bush hid the infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary from Herod’s army while they were fleeing into Egypt (also rosemary).

A tribal belief in South America relates the story of the Moon god, a young man, who visits his sister, the Sun goddess. Because he only arrives during the night, she takes him as her lover. Wanting to find out who he really is, she rubs the juice of the juniper upon his face. Unable to wash it off, his identity is discovered and he flees into the sky. This tale is used to explain the face of the Moon.

The oil extracted from juniper has an ancient reputation as an abortifacient (which may have echoes in the Victorian belief in the effectiveness of gin for the same purpose). In Lothian, in the medieval period, giving birth 'under the savin tree' was a euphemism for a miscarriage or juniper-provoked abortion. Until at least the mid-1980s juniper pills were being advertised as “The Lady’s Friend” in the small ads in ladies’ journals.

The wood yields cedar oil. Native Americans used a poultice made of needles and twigs to treat wounds.

Ritual Uses: Gender--Hot; Planet--Sun; Element--Fire; Basic powers-Protection and love. String the matured berries for an attractive charm designed to attract lovers. Grow juniper at your doorstep for protection. Language of Flowers: asylum, protection

Hang a bunch of juniper over your doorway, and your house will be protected against witches (because they will be seized with an irresistible desire to count all its leaves). The resin of the juniper can be gathered, dried and powdered, making an excellent incense. The berries may be dried and placed into amulets or ground and added to incense mixtures or even infused as a tea. The needles may be used fresh or dried, placed upon burning charcoal as incense. Juniper is believed to keep disease at bay and to help keep one safe from injury. This is accomplished by both banishing dark energies and by attracting good and positive healthy energy. In Wales it is considered unlucky to cut down a juniper because whoever does so will die within the year or lose a member of the family.

It is unlucky to dream of a juniper tree, especially if you are ill, but to dream of gathering the berries in winter means prosperity. Dreaming of just the berries alone means that you will shortly attain great honor and become an important person. To the married it foretells the birth of a male child. There is a legend that during the flight into Egypt the juniper bush opened its branches to hide the Christ Child. So juniper came to be
dedicated to the Virgin Mary and in Italy its branches are hung up in stables and cattle sheds at Christmas like holly.

TWELVE-HERB YULE SACHET
7 parts juniper leaves/berries
4 parts cinnamon
4 parts allspice
4 parts ginger
4 parts caraway
2 parts nutmeg
2 parts rosemary
2 parts lemon peel
2 parts orange peel
1 part clove
1 part bay
2 pinches orris root

Tie up in green or red cloth and give as gifts on Yule or Samhain.

CAR PROTECTION SACHET
2 parts rosemary
2 parts juniper
1 part mugwort
1 part comfrey
1 part caraway
1 small quartz crystal point

Tie up in red cloth. Secrete somewhere in the car where it won’t be found. After a few months, take the sachet apart, save and cleanse the crystal and use again in a new sachet.

SOLAR CLEANSING BREW
2 parts fern
2 parts juniper
2 parts rosemary
1 part cumin
1 part yarrow
1 part pepper
1 part rue

Place the ground, mixed and empowered herbs in a red bottle half-filled with water. Set this in the sun, let steep, strain. For a gentle cleansing, sprinkle the brew around the house at sunrise for three or four days every month.

Culinary Uses: When bitten, a juniper berry tastes of gin first and then its flavor includes a touch of turpentine. If chewed, gin is the primary flavor, with a slight bitterness that is not unpleasant. The aroma has the same characteristics: a smell of gin and turpentine. The strong flavor of juniper goes well with strong meats, such as game. It will favor stuffing for small birds. It adds to venison, rabbit and wild boar. Other meats that benefit from it are pork chops, roast leg of lamb and veal. Add to wine marinades for meat and with coriander to smoke meat. In Sweden it's used in a preserve. Generally juniper can be used in any dish requiring alcohol. Fruit dishes also harmonize with the flavor. Combines well with bay, garlic, marjoram, thyme and fennel. Always crush lightly before using to release the flavor. Freshly dried berries have the most intense flavor, but this fades quickly so buy in small quantities and do not store for more than six months. For dishes which are briefly cooked, pound them in a pestle and mortar or crush under the flattened blade of a stout knife and then chop finely as this helps to release the volatile oils more quickly. For longer-cooked dishes, they can be used whole. Apple jelly with juniper goes well with lamb and game.

Recipes:

Juniper Pork Chops
1 oz butter
Sauce:
1 oz butter
2 Tbsp oil
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 onion, medium, chopped
2 tsp juniper berries, chopped
6 pork spare ribs or boneless chops
1 oz flour
2 bay leaves
½ pt stock (reserved cooking liquid)
6 peppercorns
4 Tbsp sour cream
½ pt cider
salt and pepper to taste

Heat butter and oil in a large frying pan and cook onions until golden. Remove onions and reserve. Add chops and brown on both sides. Transfer meat to a casserole and add onions, bay leaves, peppercorns and cider.
Cover and cook in the oven at 350F for 45 minutes or until tender. Remove chops and set aside in a serving dish to keep warm while making sauce. Melt butter in a saucepan and gently cook garlic and juniper for 5 minutes. Add flour, stir for a few minutes, then gradually add the stock, stirring until smooth. Now add sour cream, season to taste and reheat very gently. Pour sauce over chops and serve. (Cooking with Spices)

**Pheasant in Gin**

- 4 oz butter, diced
- 1 Tbsp flour
- 2 pheasants
- 2 Tbsp gin
- salt
- 2 Tbsp orange juice
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp red currant jelly
- 12 juniper berries, crushed
- 4 rashers streaky bacon, rinded
- 1 pint game stock or cider

Put half the butter into the body cavities of the pheasants and rub the remainder over the bird. Place the pheasants in a large casserole and season with salt and pepper and the crushed juniper berries. Arrange the bacon rashers over the breasts of the bird. Pour on half the stock. Cover and cook in a preheated hot oven for 45-60 minutes, until the pheasants are tender and cooked through. Remove the pheasants to a warmed serving dish and keep warm. Skim off the fat from the casserole and stir the remaining stock into the juices. Whisk in the flour and the gin, orange juice and red currant jelly. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2-3 minutes, stirring. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Carve the pheasants and serve carrot puree and the gravy handed separately in a warmed sauceboat. (The Encyclopedia of Herbs, Spices & Flavorings)

**Wild Mushroom and Juniper Berry Sandwiches**

- ½ tsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp olive oil
- ½ lb chanterelle or oyster mushrooms
- 3 juniper berries, bruised
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 4 coarse country bread slices, each ½ inch thick
- 1 cup watercress leaves

In a skillet over medium heat, melt the butter. When it begins to foam, add the olive oil. Then add the mushrooms and stir to coat with the butter and oil. Stir in the juniper

**Venison Steaks with Juniper Sauce**

- 1 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2 cups beef stock
- 1/2 cup dry Madeira, such as Sercial
- 2 tsp ground juniper berries
- salt
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 Tbsp oil
- 4 venison tenderloin steaks about 4 oz each

Melt 3 Tbsp of the butter in a saucepan. Stir in the flour and cook over very low heat for 2-3 minutes, stirring constantly. Off the heat, gradually stir in the beef stock until smooth. Stir in the Madeira and return to the heat. Add the juniper and continue to cook, stirring, until the mixture is slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Season to taste, keep warm. In a skillet, combine the remaining 1 Tbsp butter and the oil over high heat, add the venison and cook, about 6 minutes for medium-rare. Season to taste, transfer to warmed dinner plates, pour over the sauce and serve with buttered vegetables. (The Encyclopedia of Herbs Spices & Flavorings)

**T-Bone Steaks with Juniper Berries**

- 4 T-Bone steaks
- large pot of whole seed French mustard
- 1/4 cup crushed juniper berries

When grill is ready throw a few handfuls of juniper needles on the fire to release the aromatic smell that will flavor the meat. Spread the steaks generously on one side with mustard and crushed juniper berries, then barbecue them on the open grill, mustard side up first, for 3-4 minutes, then turn and repeat. (Wild Food)
berries, bay leaf, salt and pepper. Cook until the juices from the mushrooms are released, about 3 minutes. Add the white wine and stir to disperse the ingredients, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the mushrooms are very soft and the juice has thickened slightly, about 20 minutes. Remove from the heat and discard the bay leaf. Cut bread slices in half and place two halves on each individual plate. Top each with equal portions of the watercress leaves and then with equal portions of the mushroom mixture. Serve immediately. (Herbes de Provence)

Chestnut and red cabbage salad with juniper
1 small red cabbage, finely shredded
4 oz cooked chestnuts, finely sliced
¼ cup sour cream
6 juniper berries, crushed
¼ tsp paprika
salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
chopped parsley to garnish

Combine the cabbage and chestnuts in a salad bowl. Beat together the remaining ingredients except the parsley and leave for 15-30 minutes for the flavors to develop. Toss the salad in the dressing and sprinkle with the chopped parsley. (The Macmillan Treasury of Spices & Natural Flavorings)

Herb Blend for Wild Game
1 Tbsp dried parsley
1 Tbsp dried marjoram
1 Tbsp dried lemon balm
1 Tbsp dried rosemary
1 Tbsp dried summer savory
2 tsp dried juniper berries, crushed
1 tsp dried minced garlic
1 tsp dried thyme
1 tsp dried sage
1 tsp dried mint

Combine all the herbs in an airtight jar and store away from heat and light. Use in gravies, sauces, stuffings or marinade. Sprinkle on venison, moose, rabbit, squirrel, beef, pork, goose or duck. (Herb Mixtures & Spicy Blends)

Chicken Liver Bruschetta
BRUSCHETTA
1 loaf crusty Italian bread
1 garlic clove halved
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
CHICKEN LIVERS
3 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
1 lb chicken livers, washed, trimmed, halved, and dried
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
6 fresh sage leaves, minced, or ¾ tsp dried sage, crumbled, plus additional sage leaves for garnish
8 juniper berries, smashed
¾ tsp freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp fine sea salt
½ tsp cinnamon
pomegranate seeds, for garnish

To make the brushcetta, cut 12 ¾ inch thick slices of bread. Reserve the rest for another use. Grill or broil slices for about 1 minute on each side, or until golden brown and crisp on the outside but still soft on the inside. Rub one side of the toasts with garlic, and drizzle olive oil on the same side. Set aside. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat until hot but not smoking. Add the onion and sauté, stirring, until golden. With a slotted spoon, remove the onion to a paper towel to drain. Add the garlic to the skillet and cook over medium heat until golden. Add the chicken livers and sauté until browned, about 2 minutes on each side. Stir in the vinegar, sage, juniper berries, pepper, salt and cinnamon and cook for 1 more minute. Remove the chicken liver mixture to a flat surface and chop coarsely. Mound 2 teaspoons of the mixture on the oiled side of each brushcetta. Garnish with the onion and sage leaves, dot with pomegranate seeds and serve. (Adriana’s Spice Caravan)

Paupiettes of Chicken Breasts with Juniper Berries and Bacon
6 chicken breasts
salt and pepper
12 juniper berries, crushed
a squeeze lemon juice
9 oz bacon pieces
6 Tbsp chopped walnuts
6 Tbsp fomage frais
6 large green cabbage leaves
2 oz butter
10 oz chicken stock
1 tsp cornstarch
4 oz light cream
finely chopped chives

Place the chicken breasts between sheets of waxed paper or plastic and beat out gently with a bottle or rolling pin to flatten them slightly. Season with salt, pepper, crushed juniper berries and lemon juice. Leave to marinate while you prepare the filling.

Stew the bacon pieces gently in a heavy pan until the fat runs and they’re barely cooked. Do not let them brown. Tip away most of the fat and add the walnuts. Remove from the heat and stir in the fromage frais to bind it all together. Taste for seasoning—no salt should be necessary, but maybe a little pepper.

Blanch the cabbage leaves in boiling water for 2 minutes. Cut away the hard central rib and lay them on a teatowel to dry. Place the chicken breasts on top, one to each leaf. Divide the filling among them. Roll up the breasts and lay them seam side down on a board.

About 15 minutes before serving time, melt the butter in a large shallow pan which will take all the breasts in one layer. Put them in seam side down and fry gently for 2 minutes. Turn and fry gently for a further 2 minutes, then add the stock and simmer gently for a final 5 minutes. Remove the breasts to a side dish and keep warm in a low oven. Heat also the serving plates. Reduce the cooking juices by half to about 7 oz. Mix the cornstarch into the cream and whisk it into the stock off the heat. Bring back to the simmer and add the chives. Taste for seasoning. To serve, slice the chicken rolls into 3/8 inch slices and fan them out on the heated plates. Garnish with the chosen accompaniment and pour the sauce around. (Fruits of the Forest)

Chicken with sloe gin and juniper
2 Tbsp butter
2 Tbsp sunflower oil
8 chicken breast fillets
12 oz carrots, cooked
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
1 Tbsp finely chopped parsley
¼ cup chicken stock
¼ cup red wine
¼ cup sloe gin
1 tsp crushed juniper berries
salt and pepper
1 bunch basil, to garnish

Melt the butter with the oil in a pan, and sauté the chicken until browned on all sides. In a food processor,, combine all the remaining ingredients except the basil and blend to a smooth purée. If the mixture seems too thick add a little more red wine or water until a thinner consistency is reached. Put the chicken breasts in a pan, pour the sauce over the top and cook until the chicken is cooked through—about 15 minutes. Adjust the seasoning and serve garnished the seasoning and serve garnished with chopped fresh basil. (The Encyclopedia of Herbs and Spices)

Juniper Wine
1 oz juniper berries, crushed
½ tsp crushed coriander seeds
1 quart red or white wine
9 Tbsp white sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract

Steep the juniper berries and the coriander seeds in the cold wine for 24 hours. Add the sugar and the vanilla, stirring well until they are dissolved, and filter. (Mastering Herbalism)

Medicinal Use: Native Americans believed that a tea of juniper twigs cured stomachaches and colds. They applied hot packs of twigs and boiled berries to sores and aches, and used the berries as a diuretic, as a blood tonic, and for hemorrhaging. Mostly used are the green unripe berries because properties are more pronounced. It is diuretic, stimulant, stomachic and carminative. The berries are mainly used for urinary infections and prescribed to clear
acid wastes from the system in arthritis and gout. They reduce colic and flatulence, stimulate the digestion and encourage uterine contractions in labor. It is a valuable remedy for cystitis, and helps to relieve fluid retention but should be avoided in cases of kidney disease. In the digestive system, juniper is warming and settling, easing colic and supporting the function of the stomach. Taken internally or applied externally, juniper is helpful for chronic arthritis, gout, and rheumatic conditions. Juniper contains a potent antiviral compound (deoxypodophyllotoxin). The extracts appear to inhibit a number of different viruses including those that cause flu and herpes. Large doses of juniper cause the urine to smell of violets. Being disinfectant and insectifugal, the berries are used in veterinary medicine to treat open wounds. Its disinfectant action is similar to that of pine cleaners. As a diuretic the oil is thought to increase the production of urine by irritating the kidney's filtration glomerulae. The oil is also irritating to microbes, so much so that it kills many of them. Traditional formulas are in combination with ginger and dong quai or with goldenseal or with uva ursi.

Applications: Sip a weak infusion of berries for stomach upsets and chills or menstrual pain; take 2 ml of the tincture, three times a day, for urinary infections, such as cystitis or to stimulate digestion.

Kidney Tonic: 1 lb fresh dandelion tops and roots, 1 lb fresh green peach leaves, 1 lb parsley roots and tops, 1 lb strawberry vines. Bruise and add 3 gallons of water. Boil and then add 4 oz pulverized juniper berries and 1 lb sugar. Allow the mixture to ferment and then strain and bottle for use. Dose: half a wineglass 4 times daily.

Stone-Crushing Decoction
1 Tbsp juniper berries
2 tsp marsh mallow root
2 tsp parsley root
2 Tbsp horsetail leaves
1 tsp angelica seeds
4 cups water
Boil all the plants in the water for 7 minutes. Infuse 30 minutes and stain. Drink all the liquid in 3 servings, before meals and extend the cure from 7 to 21 days to pas kidney stones and to relieve all types of water retention and rheumatism.

Emotional Uses: Juniper is associated with the base chakra, where the Kundalini, or sepet power, lies dormant. Juniper allows a person to be more detached emotionally and to move on from obsessions or resentments, from anger and violence. Being fiery, juniper can also help to ‘dry out’ water types, who become lost in a sea of emotion and are unable to act or initiate. Burn five juniper berries on charcoal at the new and full moons for three months. Make a note of changes that happen in your spiritual life.

Aromatherapy:
EXTRACTION METHOD: essential oil by stem distillation from the berries and the needles and wood. A resinoid, concrete and absolute are also produced on a small scale.
CHARACTERISTICS: a water-white or pale yellow mobile liquid with a sweet, fresh, woody-balsamic odor.
BLENDS WELL WITH: vetiver, sandalwood, cedarwood, mastic, oakmoss, galbanum, elemi, cypress, clary sage, pine, lavender, lavandin, labdanum, fir needle, rosemary, benzoin, balsam tolu, geranium and citrus oils
USES:
Skin care: acne, dermatitis, eczema, hair loss, hemorrhoids, oily complexions, as a skin toner
Circulation, Muscles and Joints: accumulation of toxins, arteriosclerosis, cellulites, gout, obesity, rheumatism
Immune System: colds, flu, infections
Genito-urinary system: amenorrhea, cystitis, dysmenorrhea, leucorrhea
Nervous System: anxiety, nervous tension and stress-related conditions
Other uses: berries and extracts are used in diuretic and laxative preparations, veterinary preventatives of ticks and fleas. Employed as a fragrance component in soaps, detergents,
cosmetics and perfumes. Extensively used in many food products but especially alcoholic and soft drinks.

BLENDS:
Digestive: 7 drops juniper, 3 parsley, 2 fennel
Urinary: 6 drops juniper, 4 celery, 2 sandalwood
Respiratory: 6 drops juniper, 3 eucalyptus, 3 sandalwood
Emotion: 6 drops juniper, 4 bergamot, 2 frankincense
Oily skin: 8 drops ylang-ylang, 8 juniper berries, 8 orange, 6 lavender in 2 Tbsp grapeseed oil

Toxicity: Juniper may irritate the kidneys in long-term use, so do not take internally for more than six weeks without a break, or at all if there is already kidney damage. Other adverse effects are generally of an allergic nature. Contraindicated during pregnancy.

Cosmetic Uses:
Deodorizing Herbal Foot Bath
2 Tbsp rosemary
2 Tbsp pennyroyal
2 Tbsp sage
2 Tbsp angelica
2 Tbsp juniper berries
2 pints boiling water
Put all the ingredients in the boiling water, cover and leave to stand for one hour. Strain, bottle and refrigerate. Pour half a pint of liquid into a foot-basin partially filled with warm water. Immerse your feet in the soak for 15-20 minutes. Pat dry.

Balsamic toning bath
1/3 oz silver fir leaves
1/3 oz bay leaves
1/3 oz eucalyptus leaves
1/3 oz juniper leaves
1/3 oz marjoram leaves
1/3 oz peppermint leaves
1/3 oz Swiss mountain pine buds (crushed)
1/3 oz rosemary leaves
1/3 oz thyme leaves
2 oz rice flour
2 tsp sweet almond oil
6 pints mineral water
Beat the rice flour into the water in a large stainless steel pan away from the heat, then bring it gently to a boil, stirring constantly. Add the herbs, remove from the heat and cover. Wait for 15 minutes, during which time you can run the bath and add the almond oil, stirring it round to disperse the droplets of oil. Strain the herb liquid into the bath. Take a 15-20 minute bath, rubbing yourself vigorously with a sponge. Do not use soap or other detergents as the rice flour will cleanse the body. (Natural Beauty)

Other Uses:
Dye: Mordant: alum and dream of tartar. Use 4 oz of fresh or dried crushed berries. Alum gives a pale cream or fawn, chrome a pale khaki

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