

Journeys with **US**

**YOUR PRE-DEPARTURE
INFORMATION HAS ARRIVED!**



Photo: Wissam Andraos/Save the Children

**THIS SPECIAL PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION HAS
BEEN PREPARED JUST FOR YOU BEFORE YOU EMBARK
ON THIS JOURNEY WITH US TO BANGLADESH**



REQUIRED DOCUMENTS & COURSES

The following is what is normally required BEFORE any travel to visit our programs in Bangladesh, and by now you would have completed the following:

- ✓ Medical/Insurance & Personal details relayed to host
- ✓ Completed meeting/conversation with the Safety and Security Focal Point
- ✓ Valid Passport and General Travel Visa
- ✓ Background Check
- ✓ Personal Safety & Security Course & Briefing
- ✓ Child Safeguarding Course
- ✓ Antimalarial tablets (recommended but not required)
- ✓ Vaccines against Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, MMR and tetanus diphtheria. To ensure you have up to date information regarding immunizations before travelling, check this link before departure and select Bangladesh: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/>
- ✓ Updated COVID-19 vaccination card or negative COVID test report within 72 hours prior to travel
- ✓ CDC's Zika travel guidance now recommends that pregnant women NOT travel to any area where there is a risk of Zika virus infection. To identify updated areas of Zika risk, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/zika/>



RECOMMENDED PACKING (completed)

- ✓ Clothing for warm weather (see climate/attire below). Bangladesh in October is very hot and rain is frequent! Daytime temperatures in Dhaka range between 78°F and 91°F.
- ✓ Lightweight travel towel
- ✓ Closed toe sturdy shoes
- ✓ A day pack
- ✓ A personal first aid kit
- ✓ Insect repellent and bed netting
- ✓ A good strong water bottle
- ✓ Lightweight jacket
- ✓ A small umbrella
- ✓ Sunscreen lotion
- ✓ Rain/sun hat





ARRIVAL

Your arrival in country will begin at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC or VGHS), which was formerly known as the Dacca International Airport and later as Zia International Airport before being named in honor of Shah Jalal, who is known as one of the most respected Sufi saints of Bangladesh.



The Shahjalal International Airport is located 11 miles north from the Dhaka city center. Dhaka, or formerly known Dacca, is the sixth largest and sixth-most densely populated city in the world, being one of the major cities of South Asia and the capital city of Bangladesh.

Airline counters, security, baggage claim and restrooms all have designated space within the terminal and the airport provides the following services for your convenience; restaurants, cafés, shops/duty free, currency exchange, ATMs, bank booths, police office and prayer rooms. TAKA is the currency of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (BDT) but all major credit and debit cards are also accepted especially in and around major cities.

Once you have gone through immigration and have your bags, you will be met outside the baggage-claim area at terminal-2, as transportation has been arranged for you. Please look for the staffer with branded Save the Children signage and clothing. Before your experience begins, he/she will provide you with your emergency contact list and briefing and then you are off on your adventure!



TRANSPORTATION

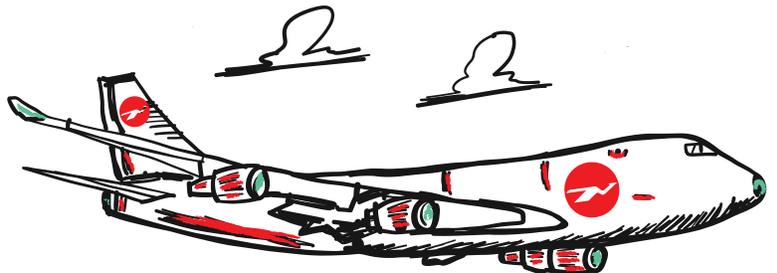
Van service (SC office marked vehicle) will be provided to you to and from the airport, to your hotel and to each itinerary destination. Due to security reasons, it is strongly recommended to avoid taxi services from the airport on your own.

Should you wish to venture out after Save the Children excursions, it is not recommended to travel alone or at night for safety reasons. During the day, Uber or taxi service is encouraged through hotel recommendation or you can use some of the public transportation services including rickshaws, ferries, and buses but expect major traffic in and around Dhaka and poor road conditions.



ACCOMMODATIONS

Hotel accommodations are provided only at security assessed hotels. At the end of excursions each day, you will retire for evenings at the Hotel Radisson Blu and in mornings rise to complimentary breakfasts before journeying out on program visits and cultural excursions.





ITINERARY

- ✓ Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport
- ✓ Dhaka Tourist Attractions:
 - Sadarghat Port
 - Dhakeshwari Temple
 - Shyam Bazaar
 - National Parliament
 - Ahsan Manzil
- ✓ Dhaka Field Office
- ✓ Manikganj District Home Visits
- ✓ MaMoni Health Center
- ✓ Sylhet District Home Visits
- ✓ Jaflong hill station
- ✓ Malnicherra Tea Estate (oldest tea garden in the subcontinent)
- ✓ River Surma
- ✓ Farewell



SAFETY MEASURES

- ✓ Ensure that your personal belongings, passports and other travel documents are secure
- ✓ Unaccompanied movements outside during odd hours may expose to snatching/hijacking. Please avoid outside movements and jogging during odd hours (early morning, late evening).
- ✓ Crowded places, restaurants and bars where foreigners usually frequent, may be possible targets of terrorist attacks. Please avoid gathering at those places. However, embassy run clubs are safer.
- ✓ Travelling locally on foot and by rickshaw should be done with extra caution. Remain vigilant for snatchers.
- ✓ Be aware of fraudulent activities in the name of international guest service at airport or outside.
- ✓ Snatching, mugging and petty crimes are very common in city and rural streets and women may be more vulnerable to such acts, especially in lone streets and early morning or after dark.
- ✓ Do not carry large sums of money or credit cards.
- ✓ Keep your phone fully charged, handy, and not on silent mode.
- ✓ Country is at the risk of possible Dengue outbreak, during the winter and spring seasons and Dengue and Chikungunya during summer. Using mosquito net or mosquito repellent cream are the best protection measures. Malaria risks prevail at Cox's Bazaar operational area.
- ✓ Beware of waterborne diseases, usually transmitted through unhygienic food and water. Viral flu is common during the season changes.
- ✓ Tap water is not safe to drink, so be sure the water you are drinking is bottled.
- ✓ We strongly recommend not to walk alone after dark, especially after 9 pm in city areas and after sunset in rural areas, and very early morning in both places.
- ✓ For up-to-date COVID-19 notices and guidelines:
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/bangladesh>



YOUR HOSTS



Onno Van Manen, Country Director

Onno has been working as a humanitarian and development professional for over 20 years managing programmes and operations in some of the world's most challenging contexts. Most recently as Country Director for Save the Children in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. During his career he managed and oversaw both development programs as well as responses to some of the largest humanitarian crisis in the past decade. He has been part of the Humanitarian Country Team in various countries.

Onno attended the Royal Dutch Naval college after which he completed his Bachelor degree in Business Engineering at the Technical University in Eindhoven, and obtained his Master of Geopolitics and Grand Strategy (and Development) at Sussex University in the UK.

He has been passionate about human wellbeing and development throughout his career, starting with Right to Play to support children in refugee camps. After that he worked for over 8 years with ACF/AAH, following which he joined Save the Children in Pakistan in 2013 as a Deputy CD of Humanitarian Programs. Today oversees both longer term development projects as well as a large scale humanitarian response for the Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh. He has also been a persistent advocate for Education and overseen several Girls Education Challenge projects.



Nusrat Amin, Head of Media & Communications

Nusrat started her professional career as a television journalist, communications and campaign expert, and is a known face in the country's development and humanitarian work arena for her expertise in strategic communications and out-of-the-box campaign composition methods. Prioritizing sustainable positive changes in the community's behavioral approaches, Nusrat has been walking through the sector for the last 12 years and contributed to multiple international entities and organisations like Action Aid, Oxfam, Concern Worldwide, Plan International and Save the Children International where she is currently heading the Media and Communications Unit. A second master's degree in Development Studies enabled this English Literature graduate to strengthen the structures of multiple development programs. Nusrat's areas of expertise and interests include strategic communications, organizational branding & positioning, advocacy, campaigns, fundraising, stakeholder engagement, media & public relation, and humanitarian response. Along with brain-producing effective communication bibles for several organisations, Nusrat has conducted several trainings at national and international levels.



Sheemtana Shameem, Director – Advocacy, Campaigns, Communications & Media

Sheemtana comes from Communications background having almost 10 years' of experience working in the Media and Development sectors. Prior to her joining SCI, she had been working as a freelance creative director and producer in local and international media, having previously worked with development organizations such as CARE Bangladesh and BBC Media Action.

Her expertise lies on creating campaigns, developing communication strategies and executing media plans which she has done both in the private sector as well in the case of INGOs. In her previous role as a freelance creative director, she has produced multiple full-scale campaigns for brands in Bangladesh and abroad. Earlier this year she was working as a producer on 'Body of Our Own', a feature film documenting the lives of four Hijra women in Bangladesh, the film is to be released next year. She has also produced a short documentary film released on Trans Visibility Day 2022, titled 'The Hijra Community' commissioned by Stonewall UK.

Her experiences are enhanced by her masters' degree in International Relations from University of Nottingham. She has acquired extensive research based and practical knowledge, and excellent cross cultural communication skills through diversified job experiences.





PROGRAM INFORMATION

Save the Children has been working in Bangladesh since 1970 and in October 2011, four Save the Children members (UK, US, Australia and Sweden-Denmark) united to form one Save the Children International in Bangladesh. The program works across six thematic sectors: Child Protection, Health & Nutrition and HIV/AIDS, Child Poverty, Policy & Rights Governance, and Education. The Humanitarian unit works as a cross cutting role player within all sectors and is currently leading the massive humanitarian effort for Rohingya refugees providing physical and mental health care, education, protection.

As one of the largest child charities in Bangladesh, we offer a wide range of programs, including those promoting children's basic rights to good health, education and a life free from violence.

Save the Children in Bangladesh is operating programs through 8 field and project offices currently.

OUR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



Health

Save the Children Bangladesh focuses on improving access, use and quality of health services, particularly for those most impacted by inequality and discrimination. This is accomplished by enhancing knowledge and health-seeking practices among households and communities. We partner with the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and other relevant ministries, donors and civil society organizations to improve the provision of quality care at healthcare facilities. We have supported the establishment of Special Care Newborn Units (SCANU) and Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC). In addition, Save the Children works with partners to model future disease prevalence and to support the government and its ministries.

Since 2018, we've led and implemented the USAID MaMoni Maternal and Newborn Care Strengthening Project (MaMoni MNCSP) with its consortium partners to substantially improve health outcomes for mothers and newborns. The project supports the Health, Population and Nutrition Sector Program of the Bangladesh government to achieve its goal in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality rate by 2022. The project demonstrates proven Maternal and Newborn Health (MNH) interventions in pilot phase and has now been implemented in 17 districts and an island named Sandwip reaching approximately 34.8 million population. Subsequently, it supports Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) for scale up of the successful interventions across the country. It also strives to improve equitable access to quality MNH services, especially for the poor and marginalized who are more susceptible to maternal and neonatal deaths. Additionally,

it facilitates health system's improvements and policy changes for sustained impact at scale. Through MNCP's Emergency Response to COVID-19 Pandemic, we also work to strengthen the health system response to community transmission, minimize health risks to individuals, and avoid adverse health outcomes.



Child Protection

Our social protection schemes and partner organizations work to empower children, their families, and caregivers. We support the government in implementing proper care through family and community-based programs, as well as building an integrated approach that puts an end to child marriage. In early childhood, corporal punishment is known to reduce cognitive abilities. We advocate implementing the new law that bans Physical and Humiliating Punishment (PHP) in all settings, especially in schools. Our child protection program creates access to income-generating opportunities for families to prevent children from joining hazardous work. It also provides mental health and case management support to children to help keep them safe following threats to their physical or emotional well-being. Our Child Rights Governance program works with children to implement child-sensitive planning, budgeting, and investment for the most disadvantaged by creating equitable access to essential and social services. Our work with the government aims to improve accountability and implement policies that promote equity in quality health and education services. Our National Children's Task Force (NCTF) is the platform where children can directly advocate and influence duty bearers and policymakers to take action that supports fulfilling their rights.



Education

Our education programs in country build on tested, evidence-based models and the associated intervention package which we call 'Common Approach' EdTech solution, strategic engagement and influence with government for strengthening education system focused on access and quality, rich technical expertise in both thematic and cross-thematic domains, robust MEAL and results-based management system, and rooted operational presence countrywide directly or through partners particularly targeting in-school and out-of-school marginalized children in urban and hard to reach areas including refugee camps. Learning and wellbeing of Rohingya children will continue to be a key focus for our education programs. We support through Community Based Learning Facilities and Learning Centers.



Humanitarian

We work with the Ministry of Disaster Management and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to review and update policies and rules to mitigate the effects of disasters and climatic events on children. We focus on rural areas and work with government agencies and city corporations to support community resilience and capacity-building initiatives. Based on our analysis of the areas most prone to experiencing disasters, we preposition vendors and prepare contingency

stocks to provide urgent relief and supplies when needed. During emergencies, our highest priority is working to ensure the most vulnerable children and their families receive immediate aid and services. Our Child Centered Climate Change Adaptation and initiatives like Green Club and Oxygen Bank focus on improving knowledge and basic understanding of climate change among children, youth and communities.

Our emergency work continues to help ensure Rohingya children and their families are supported with food, shelter, kitchen supplies, clean water, and sanitation and hygiene facilities and supplies. Our Child Safe Spaces and Child-Friendly Spaces support vulnerable children at risk or survivors of child abuse, child labor, child marriage, and trafficking. We provide case management services to protect at-risk and unaccompanied children who may experience abuse, exploitation, and neglect. We have safe and inclusive learning centers with trained teachers and provide families with quality healthcare, nutrition support, and psychosocial support for those suffering from trauma. Our programs work to strengthen and expand household and community mechanisms to support the well-being and resilience of vulnerable populations such as those affected by the Rohingya crisis and COVID-19.



ALL ABOUT BANGLADESH



HOW DID BANGLADESH GET ITS NAME?

Bangladesh got its name from a compound of two Bengali words, Bengal and Desh, meaning the country or land where Bangla language is spoken and the country of Bengal.

WHERE IS BANGLADESH LOCATED?

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a small and picturesque country with a population of nearly 168 million divided into 8 regions (states/divisions). It is located in the north-eastern part of South Asia on the Bay of Bengal and is home to the world's largest river delta, formed by Brahmaputra and the Ganges River. The Ganges/Padma River flows into the country from the northwest and the Brahmaputra/Jamuna enters from the north. The capital city, Dhaka, is near the point where these river systems all come together.

Surrounded on three sides by India (north and west) and sharing a small border with Myanmar in the southeast, the countryside is replete with lush greenery, mangrove forests, mountains, fertile plains and many waterways. In the southwest, lie the Sundarbans Reserve Forest, which is the largest mangrove ecosystem in the world where you may even spot a Bengal tiger! And in the southeast lies Cox's Bazaar Beach, located at Cox's Bazaar, this beach is the longest natural sea beach in the world.

The topography of Bangladesh is mainly low-lying floodplains which are prone to flooding in the monsoon season from the months of May all the way through to September. In the north and the southeast the land is hillier and dry which provides favorable climate and environment for its tea production.



KEY STATE FACTS

- **Government:** Parliamentary democracy that includes a president, Mohammad Abdul Hamid, a prime minister, Sheikh HASINA, and a unicameral parliament
- **Population:** Approx. 168 million – most densely populated country on the planet!
- **Capital:** Dhaka – most densely populated city in the world in 2022 (ref. World Economic Forum)
- **Language:** Bangla/Bengali, English is secondary
- **Area:** 148,460 sq. km
- **Major Religions:** Muslim is main religion, Hindu, Christianity and Buddhism are also practiced
- **Life Expectancy:** 73 years
- **Currency:** Bangladeshi Taka (BDT)
- **National Animal:** Bengal Tiger
- **Animals:** Home to more than 388 bird species, 110 mammals, 109 reptiles, 22 amphibians, 17 marine reptiles, and three marine mammals. A few to mention; western hoolock gibbon, mugger crocodile, gaur, clouded leopard, and Asian elephant
- **Flower:** Water lily (*Nymphaea nouchali*), known to symbolize the innocence and purity of its people
- **National Anthem:** Amar Shonar Bangla: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVjbVPFeo2o>
- **National Drink:** There is no specific national drink. Cha-freshly-grown tea from the Sylhet tea gardens offers the most ancient drink in the world.
- **Major Mountain Ranges:** Mount Lebanon, Qurnat as-Sawda
- **Major Rivers:** Ganges, Jamuna, Padma and Meghna River
- **Major Forest:** World's largest mangrove forest with a total area of 10,000 km², the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Sundarbans mangrove forest lies on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers on the Bay of Bengal
- **Climate:** Humid, warm climate which is influenced by monsoon season (June – October) bringing heavy precipitation, flooding and even tropical cyclones. Its historical climate has experienced average temperatures around 80°F but typically range between 60°-90°F throughout the year
- **Country Flag:**
The Bangladesh flag is composed of a dark green rectangle with a red circle just left of center. Green symbolizes the trees and fields of the countryside; red represents the rising sun and the blood spilled in the 1971 war for liberation.





HISTORY

Prior to 1700, Bangladesh, previously known as East Bengal, and formerly East Pakistan, was ruled by many different leaders, including Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist dynasties which today is still reflective in its impressive architectural landscape. In the early 1700's the country was part of the Mughal Empire until British colonialists (British Raj.) arrived and ruled in this region for almost 200 years.

The borders of modern Bangladesh were created along religious lines with the separation of Bengal and India taking place in August of 1947, when the region became East Pakistan as a part of the newly formed State of Pakistan following the end of British rule in the region. This separation created much friction for Bangladesh who was then separated from West Pakistan by India. From 1948 until 1971 Bangladeshi culture and language was oppressed which led to the culmination of the nine-month-long conflict, the War of Liberation. This war brought independence for Bangladesh on March 26, 1971.

Today, Bangladesh continues to experience political volatility, among other challenges, including but not limited to, climate change, inequality, and religious extremism. They have endured famine, natural disasters, widespread poverty and military coups. Over the past two decades, according to the World Bank (ref. 10.22 report), Bangladesh has made progress and is on a positive economic growth and development track. Despite progress, millions still live in poverty and climate change-related disasters pose a grave threat, and child mortality, malnutrition and marriage rates are among the world's highest. Bangladesh also hosts the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazaar, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya children and families have fled to escape violence in Myanmar.





CULTURE & CUSTOMS, INDUSTRY

Despite challenges and hardships this country has endured and continues to endure, the people of Bangladesh are known to be genuinely friendly, happy and welcoming with open hearts and unending hospitality. Visitors are often greeted with smiles, requests for selfies and questions about why someone has traveled to their home on the Bay of Bengal. Bangladeshis are also known to have a true enthusiasm for life and are immensely proud of their vast history, independence, culture and heritage.

The official language spoken in country is Bangla (sometimes called Bengali), however, English is also widely spoken and understood. Bangla is written in its own script, derived from that of Sanskrit. While meeting others, the exchange of greetings usually done between Muslim people (regardless of sex) is by saying "Assalam-walikum," to which the appropriate reply is, "Walikum-assalam." If you manage to learn this your acceptability will be quite high!

Majority of people in Bangladesh are Muslims, although Hindus, Christians and a small number of Buddhists live throughout the country and there is a sizable indigenous population. Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, with more than 1,100 people per square kilometer on an average. 98% of the population identifies with a single ethnicity: Bengali. The Bengali people speak the Bengali (or Bangla) language which can have several distinct dialects across the nation. The Chittagong Hill Tracts, Sylhet, Mymensingh and North Bengal regions are home to diverse indigenous peoples. Here you can find many dialects of Bengali spoken with those in Chittagong and Sylhet particularly distinctive. Most tribal people are of Sino-Tibetan descent and differ in their social customs, food, birth and death rites, from the people of the rest of the country. They do not identify themselves with the national culture as were provided with a degree of autonomy and self-governance in 1998.

Bangladesh is a hierarchical society with the most senior men (either by age or position) making decisions that are best for family and/or business. The most common household unit is comprised of extended family living in a household called a Barhi which can include a husband and wife, unmarried children, adult sons with wives and children and even grandparents, cousins, nieces and nephews. The oldest woman may have some authority within this household. In rural areas a Barhi, can be composed of many houses that face each other with a courtyard in center for daily tasks. Islam is practiced daily in all parts of the country.

The major industries in country are primarily jute, tea processing, cotton, textiles, garments, paper newsprint, cement, chemical fertilizers, natural gas, sugar and light engineering. Jute, a natural fiber from the bark of the jute plant has been used to make rope, sacks and carpet backing for decades is now also being used as an engineering product to strengthen soil to help protect eroding riverbanks and strengthen poorly built roads. Jute, garments, textiles and fish account for much of Bangladesh's exports.

Major agriculture crops include jute, tea, rice, tobacco, sugarcane, vegetables, and pulse (grain legumes-harvested for dry seed i.e. dried beans, lentils, etc.). The warm and humid climate provides favorable means for tea production in four hilly regions; Sylhet, Moulvibazaar, Habiganj, and Chittagong. Srimangal in Sylhet is known as the tea capital of Bangladesh and for miles around all you can see are the green carpets of tea gardens on hills. The area has over 150 tea gardens including three of the largest tea gardens in the world both in area and production (ref. <https://www.bangladesh.com/blog/tea-gardens-in-bangladesh/>).

In rural areas, you can still find traditional craftsmen and women producing everyday items; weavers, potters, iron and gold smiths, and carpenters.



CLIMATE & ATTIRE

Bangladesh has a humid, warm climate which is influenced by monsoon season (June – October) bringing heavy precipitation, flooding and even some tropical cyclones. Its historical climate has experienced average temperatures around 80°F but typically range between 60°-90°F throughout the year. The country can be divided into two different climate zones with the central and southern areas feeling more hot and tropical and northern mountainous areas having temperate and humid conditions with a dry period in winter. December through mid-February are the coolest with average temperatures between 52-68°F with evening temperatures dropping slightly. Winter can also bring low visibility due to dense fog according to meteorological records. Although Bangladesh is without snow, from some of the northern districts, you can see the Highest Mountain Range Himalayas covered year round!

Bangladeshi people have uniquely South Asian and modest dress preferences. Men tend to wear Panjabi on religious and cultural occasions; Lungi is casual wear and shirt-pant on formal occasions. Women are encouraged to dress modestly. The national dress for women is a Shari and shalwar kameez. Wearing a long dress or loose long pants and shirt, along with a scarf when traveling in rural areas, is regarded as appropriate for women. Wearing shorts is not encouraged outside the home for either men or women. It is best to just keep in mind that modest clothing is most appropriate and cover with either long skirts or pants and long-sleeved shirts. Because of the heat and humidity try and wear natural fabrics such as cotton, linen or silk and go for loose-fitting clothes!





ARTS, MUSIC AND SPORTS

The music of Bangladesh can be divided into three main categories – classical, folk and modern. One well-known folk type is called Baul which has a unique blend of music that combines folk traditions from both the Hindu and Muslim religions. Modern Bengali music has blended western and middle-eastern traits with traditional forms and contemporary music has influence from the west. Bangladeshi classical music is based on modes called ragas and they are different variation of Hindustani Classical Music. Many instruments used in Bangladeshi classical music are the same as the ones which are used in India. A few musical instruments that originated in Bangladesh include the Banshi (bamboo flute), Dhole (wooden drums), Ektara (a single stringed instrument), Dotara (a four stringed instrument), and Mandira (a pair of metal bowls used as rhythm instrument).

Dancing to music is quite common and can be done as individual or group. The main dance style of Bangladeshi is folk which is known as the Bangladeshi Regional dance. Other popular classic dances include the Kathak, Bharatanatyam, Odissi and Manipuri.

Bangladesh has a rich tradition of art with expressions of social and political changes which influenced the country through centuries. Drawings and paintings are visible on the backs of rickshaws and even on wooden sides of trucks. Modern painting was discovered by artists such as Zainul Ahedin, Qamrul Hasan, Anwarul Haque, and others. Zainul Ahedin earned worldwide fame by his sketches of the Bengal Famine in 1943 showing humanity and its struggle for survival. One of the most prevalent art forms is pottery – Kalshish (water jugs/pitchers), Patils (pots for cooking) and décor is sold at many markets and can be found on the streets of Dhaka. Another art form to highlight is poetry. Many people, regardless of status or literacy can recite more than one poem from one of the two best known poets of the region; Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam. Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Although he is from West Bengal, he is well respected as a Bengali who championed the protection of the Bangla language and culture and his poem “Golden Bengal” is the national anthem. Islam is remembered for his literary work including poems and songs – Nazrul Geeti songs can be heard in many a Bengali household and he is also Bangladesh's national poet.

Sports and games are an integral part of Bangladesh life. In many rural areas you will find children kicking a football or see them playing the most popular sport in country, cricket. In fact, Bangladesh's greatest ever athlete Shakib Al Hasan made history after he became the first and the only cricketer ever to be ranked #1 all-rounder in all formats by the International Cricket Council. When not playing cricket, you will find young adults playing Kabaddi, the national sport of Bangladesh which requires no special equipment, clothing or accessories - everyone can play! The game consists of two teams that have 12 players each with only seven allowed to play at a time. The field area is separated into two halves and teams score one point for each opponent that they put out of the game. Teams alternate between defending and attacking. When attacking, the offensive team sends across a “raider” into the opposition's side who must touch one of more players and when defending, the objective is to capture the raider by wrestling them to the ground or simply by preventing them returning to their own half. Of course, badminton and chess are also widely played and perhaps a bit less combative!

For your Listening Pleasure

স্বপ্ন যাবে বাড়ি:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciBnbRssHno>

Purbo Digonte Shurjo Utheche:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwMvK86X9Bo>

Hey Samalo:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDQG0wZEPkc>

**Majhe Majhe Tobo Dekha Pai | মাঝে মাঝে
তব দে খা পাই, Rabindra Sangeet X Arnob:**

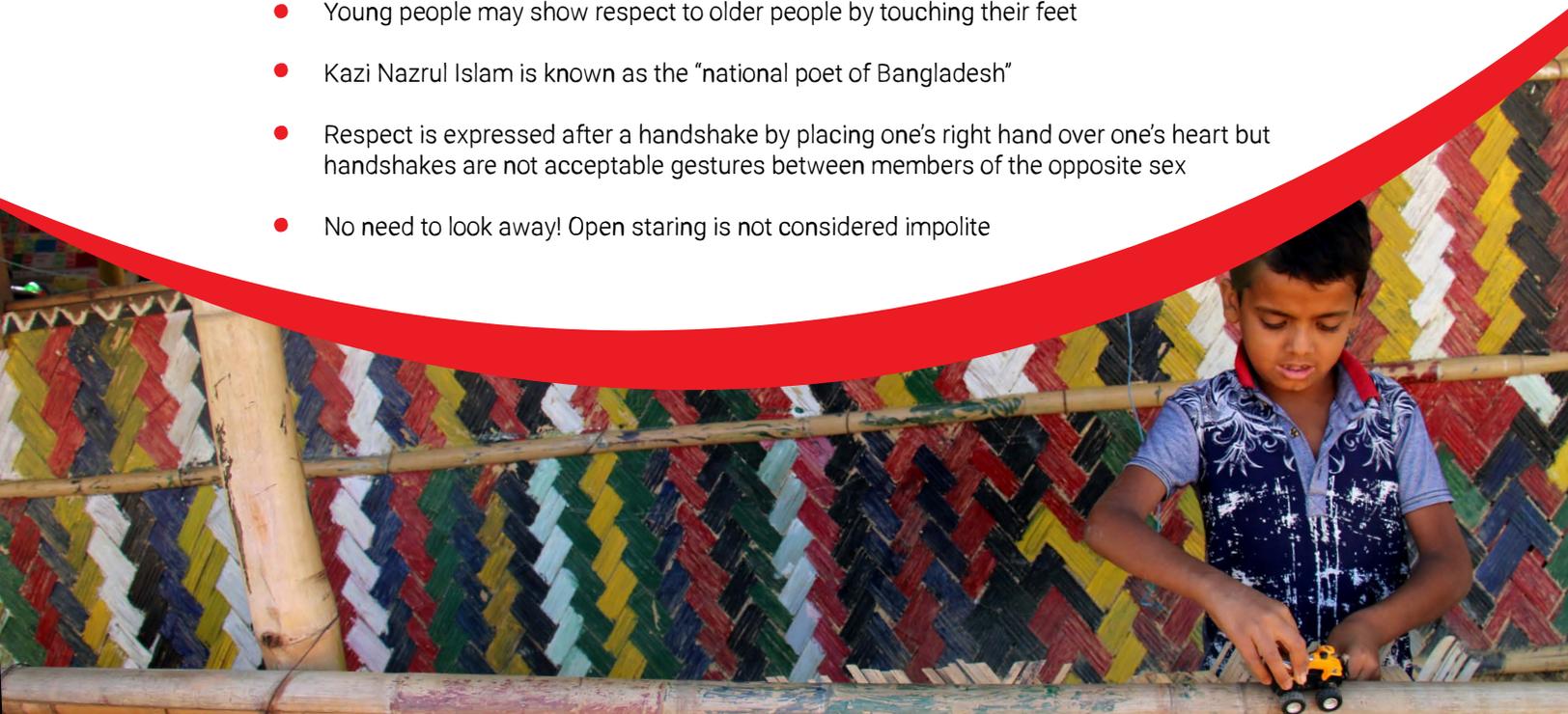
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uqkm0MnHAy4>





SOME INTERESTING FACTS AND LEGENDS

- Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladeshi social entrepreneur, banker, economist and civil society leader who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank and pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance
- The Great Bhola Cyclone is recorded as the deadliest tropical cyclone and one of the world's deadliest natural disasters killing up to half-million people (ref. World Meteorological Organization)
- It is considered impolite to cross one's legs or to smoke in the presence of elders
- Muslin is a renowned lightweight cotton fabric that was first handwoven in the Bengal region around current day Dhaka
- No where to run – or swim to! Beware of the Russel viper snake –one of the fastest biters globally and lives both on land AND in water! Additionally, if in Sundarbans, watch out for the King Cobra too!
- Artist Zainul Abedin was founder of Bangladeshi modern art and created the 'Bengali style' – a folk form using geometric shapes, primary colors and abstract representation
- Bangladesh was once East Pakistan
- Friday & Saturday are the weekly holidays
- Bangladesh has the longest female-led government!
- Etiquette: you should always pass items with your right hand or both hands as the left hand is reserved for cleaning
- The river delta makes Bangladesh one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world (ref.Wanderwisdom.com)
- If swimming at Cox's Bazaar, do so in full clothing!
- Bangladesh Central Bank was the target of a massive bank heist in 2016 - attempting to steal US\$1 billion through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York
- Young people may show respect to older people by touching their feet
- Kazi Nazrul Islam is known as the "national poet of Bangladesh"
- Respect is expressed after a handshake by placing one's right hand over one's heart but handshakes are not acceptable gestures between members of the opposite sex
- No need to look away! Open staring is not considered impolite





BANGLADESH CUISINE

The Bangladesh cuisine is known for its heat, spice and flavor. Many dishes include a five spice blend called Panch Phoron (panch (five) and phoron (flavor or spice) which can be made combining 1 tablespoon nigella seeds, 1 tablespoon cumin seeds, 1 tablespoon black mustard seeds, 1 tablespoon fenugreek seeds, and 1 tablespoon fennel seeds. Rice is the main staple and is usually accompanied by fish curry and lentil (majority of population eats fish regularly - the Hilsa fish is the national fish of Bangladesh). Popular snacks enjoyed throughout the country are Jhal Muri and Fuchka and are usually eaten in the evening. Jhal Muri is made up of puffed rice with oils and spices and fuchka is a crunchy shell filled with yellow peas and spices. A common saying heard ... "Fish and rice make a Bengali". This country is also known for its sweets – from rice cakes to puddings and other deserts usually made from rice and cow's milk.

For the true authentic dining experience place a jute rug for each person on your floor (these rugs are called asans in-country). Then, be sure to wash your hands over a large bowl and remember to only use your right hand for eating, drinking and passing the food! Cherish every bite to honor the Bangladeshi passion and love for food.

Let's Enjoy a Meal!

FIRST COURSE FULKOPIR CHOP (CAULIFLOWER FRITTERS)

<https://www.internationalcuisine.com/?s=bangladesh>



Prep Time:
30 Minutes

Total Time:
30 Minutes

Servings:
4

Author:
International Cuisine

Ingredients

- 1 head of cauliflower cut into florets
- 4 tablespoons rice flour
- 1 tablespoon corn flour
- ½ teaspoon cumin powder
- ½ teaspoon red chili powder
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt plus one tablespoon for water
- 3 tablespoons water for batter
- Oil for deep frying

Instructions:

1. In a bowl, mix together dry ingredients
2. Beat egg in a separate bowl and add soy and water.
3. Add liquid to dry ingredients mix until smooth.
4. Set aside for 15 minutes
5. Boil a pot of water with 1 tablespoon salt, when water boils add in the cauliflower florets. Boil for 5-6 minutes until just slightly soft.
6. Drain the water and set aside
7. Heat the oil in a pan to medium high.
8. Dip florets into batter and fry until golden brown.
9. Serve immediately.

MAIN COURSE:
BHAPA CHINGRI
(STEAMED SHRIMP WITH MUSTARD & GREEN CHILI)

<https://www.internationalcuisine.com/bhapa-chingri/>



Prep Time: 30 Minutes

Cook Time: 15 Minutes

Total Time: 45 Minutes

Servings: 4

Author: International
Cuisine

Ingredients

- 1 lb. large shrimp peeled and de-veined
- 2 teaspoon mustard seeds coarsely ground
- 1 tablespoon water
- ¼ cup onion finely diced
- 2 green thai chili's finely chopped (serrano can be substituted)
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- ½ teaspoon red chili powder
- 3 tablespoons mustard oil or olive oil
- ¼ cup plus ¼ teaspoon salt

Instructions:

- 1.** Rub the cleaned and peeled shrimp with ¼ cup of salt (set aside for 10 minutes)
- 2.** Rinse the shrimp to remove the salt.
- 3.** In a stainless steel bowl that will fit the ingredients and also fit into a bigger pot for steaming, add in the mustard seeds, water, onion, green chili, turmeric, salt, chili powder and oil, mix well.
- 4.** Add in the shrimp and set aside for another 10 minutes.
- 5.** In a large pot, that is big enough to hold the stainless steel bowl, add water so that it goes up to at least 1/3 the side of the stainless bowl.
- 6.** Bring to a boil, steam covered for about 10 minutes until the shrimp turns translucent.
- 7.** Stir occasionally
- 8.** Serve with piping hot rice.



DESSERT:
BHAPA PITHA
(A SWEET RICE
CAKE DESSERT)

<https://www.internationalcuisine.com/bhapa-pitha/>

Servings: 4

Author: International Cuisine

Ingredients

- 2 cups rice flour
- 1 ½ cups fresh coconut grated
- ½ cup water plus additional for steaming
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup date molasses coarsely broken into small pieces (brown sugar can be substituted)
- You will also need 2 pieces of cheese cloth a deep small round bowl to shape the pitha, a bhapa pitha pot or a saucepan and aluminum foil.

Instructions:

1. Sift the flour and salt together into a bowl. Add in ½ cup of grated coconut
2. Sprinkle a small amount of water at a time to dampen the flour. (You want the mixture to be just wet, not like dough or a batter.) If you make a ball you want it to stay together until it touches the work surface and would lightly fall apart.
3. In a small bowl, put two pieces of cheesecloth in water (about the size of a large napkin), let soak for a few minutes.
4. Boil some water in your pitha making pan or if you are using a saucepan, fill it about ½ way with water, bring to a boil and cover tightly with aluminum foil. Poke holes in the top of the foil the size of the bowl you will be using to make the pitha. (this will allow the steam to cook the pitha).
5. In the small, deep bowl you are using to shape the pitha, press the flour mixture to the bottom of the bowl only ½ way. Add in some coconut and molasses to the center. Cover the coconut and molasses with a layer of the flour mixture, pressing firmly. (Don't overfill with the coconut and molasses, you want the filling to remain just in the middle.)
6. Take one of the cheesecloth pieces and squeeze out any excess water. Spread the cloth over the top of the bowl.
7. Gather the corners of the cloth with the bowl inside and flip the bowl over using the cloth and place the bowl which is now upside down on top of the holes you made in your pitha pan.
8. Carefully remove the bowl, the pitha will hold the shape of the bowl and steam cook the pitha for 6-8 minutes. Please note that cooking time will vary depending on the size of the bowl you are using.
9. Carefully unwrap the pitha from the cheesecloth and place it on a plate with the help of a spatula. Put the warm cheesecloth back into the bowl of water to soak for later use.
10. Using the second piece of cheesecloth, repeat the process until all the flour mixture is gone.

Of course this traditional Bangladesh meal can be enjoyed with sweet tea and milk!

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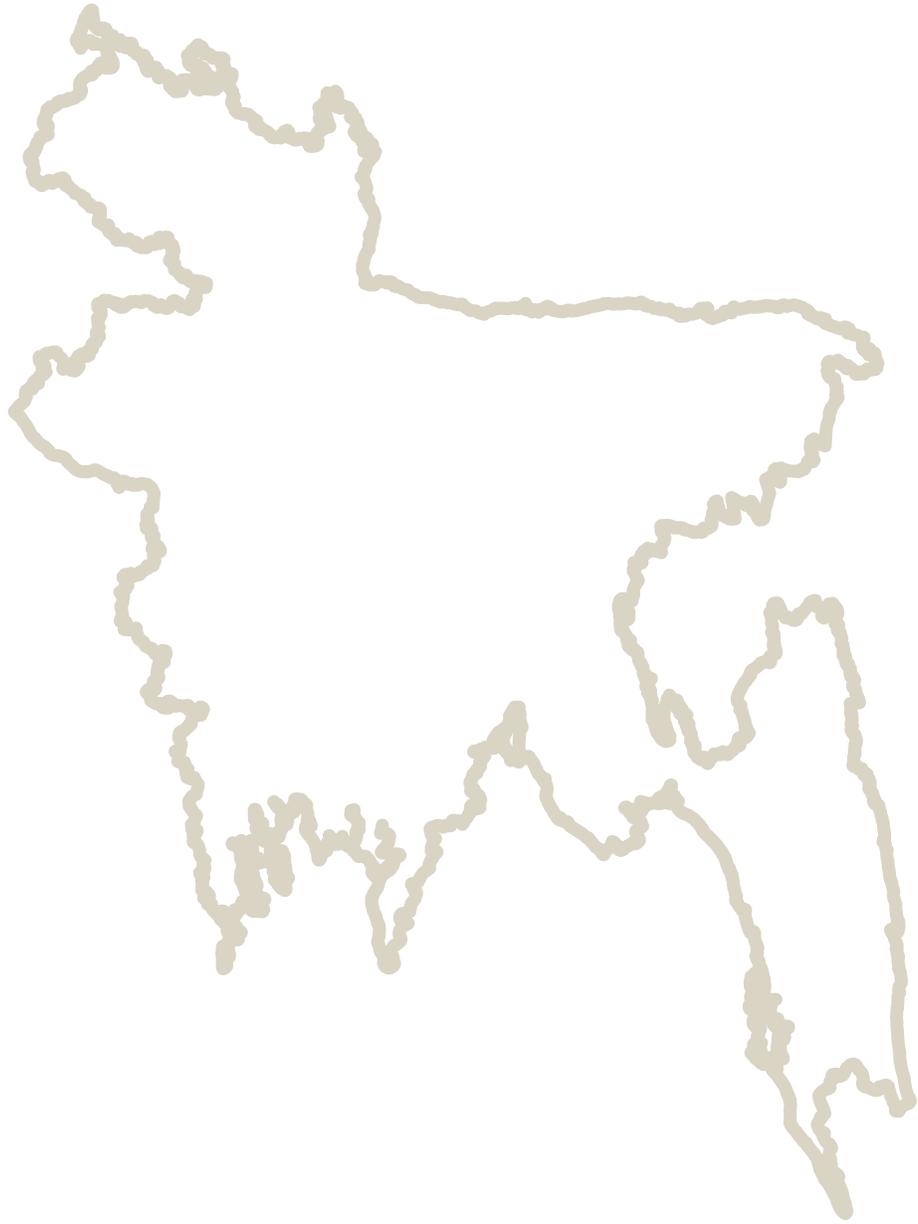
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