

ASIA · WILDLIFE · CULTURE · HISTORY · FOOD · OFF THE BEATEN PATH



Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a country shaped by water: the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna braid into the world's largest delta, where the Sundarbans mangroves shelter Bengal tigers and river launches still ply overnight routes. Add Old Dhaka's Mughal relics, Sreemangal's tea gardens and very few other tourists, and the cool, dry winter is the time to come.

 **The UK Foreign Office (FCDO) advises against all but essential travel to parts of Bangladesh.**
Read the latest FCDO travel advice before planning a trip. Your travel insurance may be invalid if you travel against FCDO advice.
FCDO advice last updated 9 October 2026.

 CAPITAL Dhaka	 CURRENCY Bangladeshi taka (BDT) £1 ≈ BDT 165	 LANGUAGE Bengali, English	 BEST TIME Nov–Feb
 DAILY BUDGET £25–£140 £ Budget-friendly	 PLUGS Type A, C, D, G 220V · UK plugs fit	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 10h 20m direct ~£550–£1,050 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+6 standard time

Bangladesh fits more than 170 million people into an area slightly smaller than England and Wales, most of it low, green delta laced with rivers. A first trip usually starts in Dhaka, with a day or two in the old city around Sadarghat and Lalbagh Fort, then heads south-west to Khulna for a boat trip into the Sundarbans and a visit to the mosque city of Bagerhat. With more time, add the tea estates and forests around Sreemangal in the north-east, or the long beach at Cox's Bazar and the hill country of Bandarban in the south-east.

Travel here is slow, crowded and cheap, and almost entirely free of other tourists, so expect to be stared at, photographed and invited for tea with disarming frequency. Dhaka's traffic tests anyone's patience, but trains and domestic flights make the longer hops manageable. Comfortable hotels are limited outside Dhaka, Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, and alcohol is hard to find. It suits curious travellers who enjoy street life, river journeys and food; those who need polish or nightlife will struggle. Most visitors are surprised by how warm the welcome is, and by how green the countryside looks.

Top 5 highlights

1

WILDLIFE

Sundarbans

The world's largest mangrove forest, shared with India, is explored on multi-day boat trips from Khulna or Mongla. Tigers are rarely seen, but spotted deer, crocodiles, kingfishers and fresh pugmarks along muddy creeks are common.

2

HISTORY

Old Dhaka

Watch wooden boats ferry passengers across the Buriganga at Sadarghat, then walk to Ahsan Manzil, the Nawabs' pink palace, the unfinished seventeenth-century Mughal complex of Lalbagh Fort and the Armenian church. Go early, before the traffic builds.

3

SACRED SITE

Mosque City of Bagerhat

A UNESCO-listed cluster of fifteenth-century brick mosques founded by Khan Jahan Ali, led by the Shait Gumbad (Sixty Dome) Mosque, whose forest of stone pillars supports 77 domes. An easy day trip from Khulna.

4

NATURE

Sreemangal tea country

Bangladesh's tea capital, where neat estates roll over low hills in the north-east. Walk the forest trails of Lawachara National Park in search of western hoolock gibbons, and try the town's famous layered 'seven-colour' tea.

5

BEACH

Cox's Bazar

A sweep of sand running roughly 120 km south towards Teknaf, often billed as the world's longest natural sea beach. Domestic tourists pack it in winter; follow the Marine Drive south for quieter stretches.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Dhaka

≈ 23 million people

A megacity of horns, rickshaws and river traffic. Old Dhaka's Lalbagh Fort, the pink Ahsan Manzil palace and the Sadarghat ferry terminal are the reasons to linger; the newer north is mostly offices and malls.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Chattogram

≈ 5 million people

Bangladesh's main port, long known as Chittagong, is mostly a stepping stone to Cox's Bazar and the hill tracts, though its Commonwealth war cemetery and seafood restaurants merit an afternoon.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Khulna

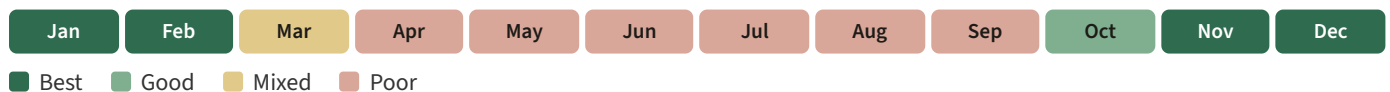
≈ 1 million people

A low-key river city that matters to travellers as the main base for Sundarbans boat trips and for Bagerhat's fifteenth-century mosques, about an hour's drive away.

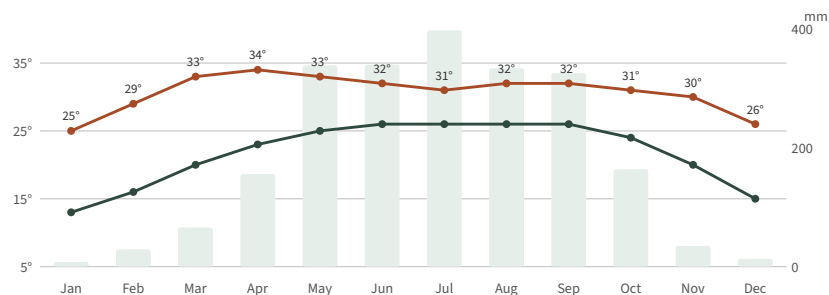
Dhaka and Chattogram are metropolitan estimates and Khulna is its wider urban area. Gazipur and Narayanganj have larger city-corporation populations than Khulna but are part of Greater Dhaka.

When to go to Bangladesh

Best time: **Nov–Feb.**

**Average climate in Dhaka**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb	Ekushey Book Fair Dhaka's month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair runs through February in memory of the 1952 Language Movement; on 21 February, International Mother Language Day, crowds lay flowers at the Shaheed Minar.
Apr	Pohela Boishakh Bengali New Year on 14 April brings red-and-white clothes, street fairs and a huge morning procession of giant papier-mâché masks from Dhaka University's Faculty of Fine Arts.
Sep–Oct	Durga Puja Bangladesh's Hindu community builds thousands of elaborate pandals for the goddess Durga; Old Dhaka's Shankhari Bazar and the Dhakeshwari Temple are the most atmospheric places to see the celebrations.

How much does Bangladesh cost?

SHOESTRING £25 per person / day ≈ BDT 4,132 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £60 per person / day ≈ BDT 9,918 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £140 per person / day ≈ BDT 23,142 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Ilish bhapa Hilsa, the national fish, steamed in a pungent paste of mustard seed, green chilli and mustard oil; delicious, but mind the many fine bones.	Kacchi biryani Old Dhaka's celebratory biryani, layering raw marinated mutton with fragrant rice and potato and slow-cooking it in a sealed pot; wedding food served daily in Dhaka's restaurants.	Bhorta Mashed dishes of aubergine, potato, dried fish or lentils, sharpened with raw mustard oil, onion and chilli, served in small bowls alongside plain rice.
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Getting around

Domestic flights on Biman, US-Bangla and Novoair link Dhaka with Chattogram, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Jashore in under an hour. Intercity trains are slower but comfortable in air-conditioned classes; book through the Bangladesh Railway e-ticket site. Private coach firms cover most routes, and overnight launches from Sadarghat sail to Barishal. In Dhaka, use the MRT metro line, Uber or Pathao, and CNG auto-rickshaws for short hops.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  A C D G 220V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 999 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +880	TIME ZONE UTC+6 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Not safe — drink bottled or treated water

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Not expected in cheap eateries; leave around 5–10% in better restaurants, and tip boat crews, drivers and guides at the end of a trip.

ETIQUETTE

Dress conservatively, covering shoulders and knees; women should carry a scarf for mosques. Eat and pass things with the right hand, remove shoes before entering mosques and homes, and expect frank personal questions.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), Dhaka; Shah Amanat International Airport (CGP), Chattogram; Osmani International Airport (ZYL), Sylhet

Visas & entry for Bangladesh

Shown for a British passport.

Visa required — apply before you go

You must have a visa to visit Bangladesh for up to 3 months, unless you have a ‘no visa required’ stamp in your UK passport.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

Typhoid

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Japanese encephalitis

Measles

Rabies

Tuberculosis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

High risk of malaria

- There is a high risk of malaria in the Chittagong Hill Tract districts of Bangladesh: antimalarial tablets recommended.

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Bangladesh

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Wed 16 Dec 2026	Victory Day
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sun 24 Jan 2027	Mid-Sha'ban (date may shift)
Sun 21 Feb 2027	Martyrs' Day and International Mother Language Day
Fri 5 Mar 2027	Jumu'atul-Wida (date may shift)
Sun 7 Mar 2027	Laylat al-Qadr (date may shift)
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Thu 11 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Fri 12 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Independence Day
Wed 14 Apr 2027	Bengali New Year's Day
Sat 1 May 2027	May Day
Mon 17 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Tue 18 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Wed 19 May 2027	Eid al-Adha (date may shift)
Wed 16 Jun 2027	Ashura (date may shift)
Thu 5 Aug 2027	July Mass Uprising Day
Sun 15 Aug 2027	Prophet's Birthday (date may shift)

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Bengali

ENGLISH	BENGALI	SAY IT
Hello	আসসালামু আলাইকুম	<i>ah-sah-LAH-moo ah-LAI-koom</i>
Thank you	ধন্যবাদ	<i>DHON-no-baad</i>
Please	দয়া করে	<i>DOY-ah KOR-eh</i>
Excuse me	মাফ করবেন	<i>maaf KOR-ben</i>
How much is this?	এটার দাম কত?	<i>EH-tar daam KOH-toh</i>

Know before you go

Allow far more time than distances suggest in Dhaka: crossing the city by road can take two hours at peak times, so leave generous margins before flights and trains.

Avoid travelling in the days either side of Eid, when millions leave Dhaka for their home districts and buses, trains and launches are packed and fully booked.

The weekend falls on Friday and Saturday, when offices and banks close. ATMs of larger banks such as BRAC and Dutch-Bangla are the most reliable for foreign cards; carry cash in rural areas.