



## **WASIQUE HASAN**

Let's get this out of the way first – travelling isn't fun. It's even less fun when you're doing it alone over 48 hours to a foreign country where you don't know anyone and are going to spend four years. When you're fatigued, stressed, and thousands of miles away from home, a bathroom can be all that stands between you and an honest-to-God meltdown.

I went through this life-altering moment multiple times because I knew in my heart I would one day rate them all on a numerical scale.

## HOME SWEET HOME

I don't need to tell you about Bangladeshi bathrooms. You know what to expect by now. The quality of bathrooms you've come across while travelling will vary greatly. At their worst they're a biohazard. At their best, however, they are the bathrooms in the Dhaka airport. I have to give credit where it's deserved, those bathrooms are almost always clean.

In addition, recently there are people with packets of pocket tissue to make sure running out of paper is never a worry. If you average out the two ends of the spectrum, I can give the bathrooms I've come across a solid 6/10. This is the benchmark that bathrooms across the world have to meet. Let's find out how they fare.

## LIVE LIKE THE SHEIKHS

There is no way to sugarcoat just how good bathrooms are in airports in the Middle East. These bathrooms have everything you could want and more. Need a comfortable place to perform *wudu*  before you pray? You got it. A place to change your baby's diaper? It's there before you can even ask. They even have the feature all Bangladeshis look for: bidets. Just having bidets would be an automatic 9/10, but they go the extra mile and have temperature-controlled bidets.

I cannot overstate how comfortable a long transit is when you have such nice bathrooms to look forward to. It might sound silly to look forward to a nice bathroom but think back to the worst public bathroom experience you've had. Let that sit in your mind for a moment. Put into that context, is it really that ridiculous to look forward to a nice bathroom?

## THE AMERICAN DREAM

Before we can even talk about the bathrooms, we have to address how weird US airports are. They are almost identical. Unfortunately I'm not exaggerating, you can't tell the difference between landing at Boston and landing at NYC until you exit the airport because they are exactly the same. As such, I will have to take a point off for the confusing layout. Once we get past that, however, the bathrooms are really quite nice. They are clean, have adequate space, and look very *shiny*. I wish there was a better way to describe them, but there isn't.

Also, perhaps it's just because of my bad luck, but I always end up going to the bathroom right before the janitorial crew show up. I don't know what I'm doing wrong but having to explain to the staff that the bathroom isn't unoccupied gets quite tiring. Since that could just be an unfortunate series of coincidences, I won't penalize them for it. What I will penalize them for is the lack of bidets. That is unforgivable, what kind of animals use toilet paper? 8/10, could be better.

I hope you enjoyed learning about bathrooms across the world as much as I enjoyed discovering them. You'll notice that none of the bathrooms got a 10/10. That's because there is no bathroom better than your own, with your *bodna* by your side.

Wasique is an undergraduate student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Write to him at hasan.wasique75@gmail.com

