

5 REASONS DHAKA IS THE BEST CITY IN THE WORLD



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We've all heard about that list in that magazine where Dhaka is the second worst city in the world. Born and raised in this city, I refuse to believe that. I don't know about you but I'm not one to trust a list on a magazine, so here's a list of reasons to call Dhaka the **BEST** city in the world.

THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Take a rickshaw ride with the hood down on an open road on a rainy day before you die; if you don't, you will have died without living. There are millions of rickshaws in Dhaka and the art on the back represents how most people in this city live their lives – colourful and cheap. Speaking of cheap, public transportation in Dhaka is the most efficient mode of travel you could think of. The roads are filled with buses and minibuses and these truck-van fusion thingies called tempo. There are mild drawbacks to these vehicles, things like pick-pocketing and getting poisoned and mugged, but at the end of the day they do what they're supposed to, which is get you from one place to another. You can travel from literally anywhere to everywhere in Dhaka on public transport, other than Uttara, because no one's quite certain if that's inside Dhaka. Also, you are forced to remain immobile if a government high-up or a foreign emissary decides to take the roads. It's theirs whenever they want it.

THE STRAY ANIMALS

Only in Dhaka will you see dogs and cats

roam the streets like they own it, littering where they want. These animals are stray not because the people are too heartless to take them in, but because animals need to be free and the confines of assured care and food will destroy them, which the people of this city understand. Then there are crows. These little angels clean up our city by devouring the garbage we produce. They aren't particularly successful, but at least they try, unlike the people who are supposed to be in charge of waste management. The crows often decide to sit and relax on our electric wires and electrocute themselves, shutting down the electric supply for a whole block, but we don't mind because we're grateful.

THE TRAFFIC JAM

Haters will say traffic jams are a bad thing because they waste our time, but they're actually not. Traffic jams teach us things like patience and how to plan ahead of time. They also teach us that no matter how far ahead of time we plan, sometimes it just doesn't work. Take a

good look around the next time you're stuck in traffic. You'll see people, people who have lives of their own and together, they all put the brakes on because someone somewhere stuck a car into an oncoming lane. In today's fast and unforgiving world, it is a blessing to get the chance to simply stop and do nothing. In cities around the world, such an opportunity is

scarce, but you can do it every day in Dhaka.

THE STREET FOOD

Dhaka isn't the street food capital of the world, but it's close, somewhat. You can find food in Dhaka no matter what the state of your purse/wallet is.

The mama haleem, the chotpoti fuchka, and the jhalmuri are few of the things that define Dhaka's street food scene (food carts can rot in hell). In old town, there's biryani being sold out of shops that have been there for centuries. Everywhere else, there are poser biryani places wrongfully claiming to be their branches. Every Ramadan, the roads are literally jammed with street food vendors in the hours before iftar.

Hygiene is a tiny issue but it can be easily figured out by this formula: "The product of an item's taste and number of trips to the toilet it causes is inversely proportional to how much it costs." What happens in Ramadan doesn't stay after Eid and what really matters is the taste. So we eat anyway and try not to think about diarrhoea too much.

THE PEOPLE

When this many people manage to survive in such conditions for so long, it makes you wonder if Dhaka is actually a paradise in disguise and we just haven't figured it out yet. Sure there are muggers, robbers, thieves, pickpockets, frauds, drug dealers and organised crime, but there are also people who are naïve enough to be the victims and we can safely say that at least they aren't the bad guys. There are so many people in this city that you'll get lost in a crowd more often than finding yourself lost in a vacant alley. And if you really are lost, you will probably find help. In a way, Dhaka is like Hogwarts – help will always be provided in Dhaka to those who are lucky enough to get it. The others get mugged, obviously.

If you ever feel bad about living in Dhaka, take a look at this list. Or you could go drive around Hatirjheel at night, but sadly, it's not exactly safe after dark in the best city in the world.

When he's not obsessing over football, Azmin spends his time devising ways of not getting mugged, only to fail miserably. Give him advice at fb.com/azminazran

