

PICK THE RIGHT BUS

Your Route to Saving Both Money and Time



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Dhaka is a convoluted mess when it comes to transportation. The excruciatingly high time for commutes, the blistering heat, and the lack of proper public transport in one of the most densely populated cities on Earth – it can get pretty hectic. Not all of us have private cars, so the other options are CNGs, rickshaws and buses. CNGs are versatile and comfortable, but gobble up your money. Rickshaws are good for close destinations and bad for long ones because of their speed and restrictions. Buses also have downsides but they really do their job well, transporting numerous people to long destinations. To conquer Dhaka traffic, one has to use all the mediums of transportation.

Sadly, buses are confusing. There are numerous buses going to a variety of destinations, using different routes. The bus companies don't have a proper method to spread necessary information, just the helper of the bus answers you when you ask where the bus goes. Some of them have routes written on their bodies (which may be incorrect) and that's it. So, let's take a look at some of the buses that roam around Dhaka and with all that information, you too can become a bus aficionado.

TICKET BUSES: Currently, there are a handful of ticket buses that are running. Tickets can be bought from the counter. They are located close to the route a specific bus takes, especially at the starting point. A counter may provide tickets for one or multiple different buses, so make sure you know which bus you're getting into. Some buses check your ticket during the transit, so keep it until you reach your destination. Ticket buses usually take in passengers without a ticket if they pay the price of the ticket. So, which of them are ticket buses?
BRTC: The head-honcho, the granddaddy of all buses. BRTC buses are coloured red and green. Some of them are double-deckers and are generally pretty spacious; the seats are comfy as well. BRTC buses usually don't stop to take in passengers that much because the employees are on salaries anyway. But they still get jammed with people during office hours. They have the most buses out of any other company and they cover numerous routes. This is where the problem is, the buses look the same regardless of which route they take, and

they don't even have routes written on their bodies. So, before you get on a BRTC, just ask the helper. Now, let's cover some of the routes it takes:

- ◆ Abdullahpur to Motijheel via Farmgate
- ◆ Abdullahpur to Azimpur via Asad Gate
- ◆ Gulistan to Gazipur via Farmgate
- ◆ Mirpur-12 to Motijheel via Farmgate
- ◆ Gabtoli to Gulistan via Farmgate
- ◆ Gabtoli to Khilgaon via Gulshan-1
- ◆ Mohammadpur to Kuril flyover via Mohakhali

FALGUN: Big purple buses that go from Azimpur to Uttara via Rampura/Badda. They take about 10-20 minutes to arrive at the stop depending on the traffic condition. They're pretty roomy, and if you get on from the starting point, it'll be a peaceful ride. Falgun buses sometimes have their doors closed and don't allow passengers without a ticket. But if they're stuck in a traffic jam, you can request to get in and they'll probably give in.

TARONGA: These go from Mohammadpur to Kuril flyover via Mohakhali and Gulshan-1. The route used to end at Notun Bazar but not anymore, which makes it more convenient for people who want to go to Bashundhara or Jamuna Future Park. You need to wait for 5-10 minutes to get on after buying a ticket. The buses are not the best when it comes to comfort. The seats are worn out, and the buses are smaller than Falgun and BRTC buses. Most of the time, the buses are almost full which makes it even more cumbersome, but hey, it gets the job done.

TARONGA PLUS: Despite bearing the same name as the previous entry with an added "Plus", these buses go to a different destination and use a different route. They start from Mohammadpur and go to South Banasree via Shahbagh and Kakrail. The buses are coloured in dark shades and the condition of the buses is similar to Taronga.

HANIF METRO: If you're planning on going to Fantasy Kingdom or Nandan Park, then this is the bus to be on. Hanif buses go from Motijheel to Nandan Park via Gabtoli. Why waste hundreds on travelling to an amusement park when you can use that money to get on rides later. Use Hanif, save money.

LOCAL BUSES: Local buses are like the rebels of the bus world. They don't care about the amount of people in the bus or the safety standards that need to be maintained. They take in passengers anywhere, anytime; doesn't matter if the bus is full or it's running at almost full



- ◆ Shakalpa: Mirpur-1 Zoo gate to Kamalapur via Farmgate (used to be a ticket bus)
- ◆ Number-6 Local: Motijheel to Banani via Mohakhali

BUS ADVICE: Whenever you get off a bus, especially a moving one, put your left foot down first to maintain balance, and also because the door's on the left. Don't hang your hand outside the window of the bus, for obvious reasons. A lot of buses have designated seats for women and individuals with disabilities, use them if you are from the specified group; otherwise, don't. If you're standing inside the bus, hold on tight, you don't want to fall on someone's face. If you have a minimum of 60 taka, you can probably go to your desired location and come back using a bus. Starting point of a bus is reversed if you're at the other end. A fair warning to those who are planning on using buses, you will get drenched in sweat due to the cramped environment and the people radiating their body heat. It may also smell sometimes.

That's all, folks. Have fun riding those *murir tin!*

References: brtc.gov.bd, online-dhaka.com, Urban Launchpad.

speed. This may be awesome if you're an adrenaline junkie but most people who use these buses are in their middle ages, going to their 9 to 5 jobs. So, if you care about your safety, please don't hang from the gate of a full bus or get on a running bus. On the bright side, local buses are dirt cheap, so no need to fear the expenses. There are a lot of local buses running in Dhaka – some popular, some pretty obscure. It's almost impossible to list them all but here are the well-known ones:

- ◆ Shuprobhaat: Sadarghat to Gazipur via Badda
- ◆ Balaka: Syedabad to Gazipur via Mohakhali
- ◆ Number-3 Local: Gulistan to Airport via Farmgate
- ◆ Bondhu: Gulistan to Badda via Malibagh
- ◆ Probhati Banasree: Gulistan to Uttara via Mohakhali
- ◆ Number-8 Local: Jatrahari to Gabtoli via Farmgate
- ◆ Number-7 Local: Sadarghat to Gabtoli via Asad Gate



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA