

# BENGALI DAWAT 101

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These are not the regular dinners you see in movies. Dawats are the quintessence of our race: intense cricket discussions, fed up moms running after their young and trying to feed them, and that smell of *kacchi biryani* that is teasing your salivary glands from the kitchen but is taking eons to be served. We make a big deal about it and use it as an excuse to drop any other plans whatsoever. A few conditions should also be fulfilled to meet the standards of a true Bangali dawat.

## Arriving fashionably late and with sweets

Even if the invitation to the dinner was at 8 in the evening, it is mandatory to arrive at least an hour late. This rule-of-thumb is known and expected by both the guests and the host, given our traffic-centric omen and makeup-centric women. You have to get that perfect winged eyeliner and post that dawat selfie before venturing out, only to sit hours in the grid lock with a fuming father.

Also, it is mandatory that you arrive with a few kilograms of *laddoos* from *Madaripur Sweet Shop*.

## The social-butterfly effect

Socialisation - a prerequisite of every dawat. The arena for this is usually the esteemed living room where the chandelier is lit for a change. The discussions vary from politics, condemning Facebook to "*Ilish er daam kome gese*" and "*agey ki shundor din kataitam*". And of course, the *crème de la crème* of these

conversations where everyone likes to indulge in is cricket. The intellectual conversations soon rise in temperature and one can sense the impending threat looming where one of the guests almost ends up losing it but then does not, successfully maintaining the decorum. All smiles. Cold smiles.

Unfortunately, if you are someone who cannot sustain your position in your parents' good books, this part is bad news for you. Be prepared to get verbally bashed and compared to the host's friend's uncle's son's daughter Tasnim who just landed a Harvard scholarship, successfully climbed Mount Everest, and still returns home before sundown. This part can make or break your life.

## The feasting

This is the moment everyone's been waiting for. You hear the bottlecap twist open followed by the escaping fizzy sound of Cola and your mouth starts watering as you try to compose yourself in the last and most difficult minutes. The profound smell of *Goru Bhuna* and *Khashi Reazala* almost overwhelms you and you are forced to run to the dining room. You start losing count of the plethora of dishes on the table only to be interrupted by the aunty who sarcastically utters, "*beshi kichu korte pari nai.*"

Halfway into devouring your meal, you realize your insatiable appetite has met its match in the form of a relentless host who just keeps it coming. After finally forcing yourself to stop, the sweet delicacies consisting of *payesh* and pudding light up your world once again.



## Burps and goodbyes

After the banquet, when there is nothing more to look forward to, you still have to linger back as nobody wants to seem too "*noakhalish*" and leave right after eating. This is the part where the families usually make the little ones recite poems, take pictures and post it in the same social media they denounced earlier, and go on to mention how you are of age and that you are next in line to get married which is enough to give you indigestion. You also get to witness a lot of burps and tooth picking which further helps with the indigestion.

Finally, one of the guests makes a move after a toddler or two falls asleep

paving the way for others. Absurd words of goodbyes are exchanged where both the parties insist they caused trouble to one another, repeating, "*bhabi, onek koshto korlen*" whereas none of them faced any sort of inconvenience whatsoever. Even though, you will be rolling your eyes at all the drama soaked formalities, you know you will still jump with joy at the next invitation that comes along.

*Iqra suffers from wanderlust, dreams of discovering the Loch Ness Monster and occasionally hates on Economics. Tell her to get a life at iqralaqa@gmail.com or at <https://www.facebook.com/iqra.l.qamari>*

# CONFESSIONS OF A NON-HUGGER

RAFIDAH RAHMAN

I am not a hugger, my dudes.

As a plea to all huggers-please learn to recognise our breed. If someone you've hugged turns into ice the second you noose them in your arms, they're probably a non-hugger. Just because I refuse to hug, doesn't mean I don't like you. I have my reasons, and here's why, my dudes:

**Hugging just doesn't feel natural:** It is never in my intuition to hug someone. The worst is when I run into some random acquaintance and the first thing they do is

try to hug me. I mean "Hello, do we even care for each other?" Quite simply, if I am not married to you, related to you, or very, very, good friends with you, I do not want to hug you. I don't even want to touch you. Unless you're adorable, my dudes.

**We see and talk to each other all the time:** You might be a very close friend, but if I see you every day in the lounge, the stairs and Skype, I've probably made it clear that you matter. If we have lent each other something, a simple thank you would suffice. Intensity of hugs don't measure the depth of friendship, my dudes.

**The setting is...awkward:** So, last year I got into a silly

fight with a friend cause he hugged me in a park. He failed to understand what the big deal was but let me tell you- it was all kinds of weird. People in Bangladesh suffer from a "staring without a reason syndrome," especially when they see a girl and a guy together. I'm sorry but random uncles and aunties' chitchatting about me makes me feel super self-conscious. Distance, please, my dudes.

**I'm not sure if I still like you:** It's nice that we were civilised enough to reach a common ground. But, just because I decided to forgive you, doesn't mean I'm ready to forget. I'm still against to fake it that I'm okay with all that went down. None of us are in the mood to like each other, and that's fine. No need to decorate our mutual loathe with a hug-shaped bow. Let's wait, my dudes.

**It's hot.** Disturbingly hot: I resent Dhaka's humidity for turning me into the Lion King every time I step out of the house. So, do I want to wear you as a human blanket for even quarter a second? I do not. I'm already burning ubiquitously, so keep your volcanic self away from me, my dudes.

To be honest though, I'm quite envious of these natural huggers. They certainly come off as much warmer and friendlier than me even though it might not entirely be true. I'm not uppity, I promise. I just value my personal space a bit too much, my dudes.

*Rafidah Rahman is a teeny-tiny Hulk, she's always angry and she's always hungry. A cynical dreamer and a food enthusiast, she's your everyday entertainment. Correspond with her at [rafidahrahman93@gmail.com](mailto:rafidahrahman93@gmail.com) or <https://www.facebook.com/rafidah.rahman.39>.*

