



BASE CAMP

A Quick Escape from the Concrete Jungle

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With every new eatery cropping up in Dhaka city, our sources of entertainment leans a little more towards eating out. Spending quality time with family and friends equals to eating out. We are all caught up in the monotony of the rat race, and spending some hard earned free time far outside of the city in the land of unicorns and rainbows is not a viable option. Enter: Base Camp.

Located just on the outskirts of the city, Base Camp is an outdoor camp and a huge chunk of greenery in the bland grey expanse that is Gazipur. Upon entering the gates, you will be immediately transferred to a place where you can hear the



birds chirp and can take a fresh deep breath without doubling over.

Last year, I visited the place on a school camping trip and boy oh boy was it one of the best trips of my life. To utilise all the activities available, we needed 4 days.

DAY 1

As we were a big group of about thirty people, we were divided into two teams and every activity done henceforth was a competition between the teams. To ease into the activities, we jumped right into a mild warm-up and then played a challenging but hilarious activity where we had to run and circle a pole 10 times. The funny part was of course bumping bums



with the participant in the next row as we encircled wildly.

We then learned an essential skill required to survive in the wilderness: tent pitching. It was a fulfilling experience as we would be living in the very tent we set up over the next few days. We ended the day playing an activity called "Devil's Shoe" where 3 people had to walk with the same pair of planks and race to the finish line. The concept was like tri-cycling, but only, you know, walking.

The cold of the winter crept in when night fell, and with fog obscuring the surroundings, we had to scurry to our tents to pull out and put on warmer clothes. After dinner, we gathered around to hear ghost stories.

DAY 2

It was very difficult to wake up the next morning. We were up late and forgot the fact that the alarm would go off at the early hour of 6 a.m. Breaking out of the cocoon of blankets were bad enough, warming up in a bulky bundle of sweaters was worse. Fortunately, warmth settled in

as the sun rose.

The whole day was dedicated to completing a military style obstacle course complete with a rope maze, tire tracks, walking on a branch, etc. This is definitely not for the faint of heart as it requires quite an effort and stamina. We managed to complete it before lunch and then the boys went off for a dip in the pool and we, girls, went for archery. This was one activity which I wanted to do for a long time. Old, but gold.

DAY 3

The following day, warm-up was replaced by forest trekking. It was a refreshing experience to explore the forest and connect with nature. An amplifier type device was provided for us to listen to the serene chirping of the birds, something we hardly get to hear in the urban setting.

After breakfast, we prepared ourselves for one of the most challenging activities: conquering a series of dangerous tree obstacles. We were obviously put into a harness and a helmet. Disclaimer: I have

acrophobia so I was exempted from doing it. Just by seeing everyone hanging from trees by one hand and topple down like dominos was enough to send me running.

At night, we sat around a campfire and participated in barbecue and corny camping rituals. You gotta do that at least once in your life.

DAY 4

The final day was saddening; we had all grown a bond over the few days and it was hard to let go. But we went through all the zoomering (hauling oneself up a very tall tree with a pulley), zip lining (being hung to a wire and sliding down it Superman-style) and boat rowing with the same high spirits. Again, I was



exempted from the height activities. We played a very team-oriented energetic game later on, which was the classic Capture the Flag before bidding adieu.

I hear more activities and obstacle courses have been added since I camped there more than a year ago. Base Camp is best visited during the winter, when you can experience the true feeling of cold weather and outdoor activities are less of a sweaty mess.

Mashiyat Nayeem has a genuine phobia of onions and has mastered the art of scavenging for beresta in her biriyani. Learn more at mashiyat.nayeem@gmail.com