

Managing the finances of a group trip

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Squad trips are undoubtedly one of the most anticipated events. It's when you get to know your friends on a more personal level, understand their fears and motivations, share stories and memories that will define the bond for years to come, and realise how utterly and horribly incapable you all are when dealing with money. If you can relate and/or have a squad trip in the near future, be sure to read on to better manage the finances of your travels.

The common process of financial management during squad trips is individual payment - everyone pays separately for their personal expenses. By principle it's as easy as it gets. But other than that, this method is annoyingly troublesome. For instance, divvying up collective expenses like hotel rent or boat ride fee becomes difficult and time consuming. What happens if the expense is not evenly divisible by the population of your squad? Who's gonna pay for the remainder? Or what if everyone needs change because they're only carrying notes of BDT 1000? The usual solution to these issues is that a fraction of the squad pays the whole fee, leading to a tangle of personal debts. Later on when debts need to be paid, miscalculations occur because both parties were too busy admiring mundane astrological events like sunsets to remember more important things like money. This inevitably leads to broken feelings and finely articulated plots of financial revenge.

So let me inform you of a better method that only the most intellectual travellers maintain: the "central trip fund". The basics are simple: everyone stores an

equal amount of money as a fund which will cover all the financial expenses of the whole trip and the remainder is split equally among everyone when the trip ends. Now let's go into the details.

WHEN SHOULD YOU COLLECT IT?

One answer can be when the expenses begin. The expenses of the trip usually starts with either buying the transport tickets or renting a hotel or resort in advance. But it's not always possible for the squad to meet up before this. In such cases, the early payment has to be dealt

There's no hard and fast rule because funds mostly depend on the size of the trip, the number of people and the frequency or category of expenses. A rule of thumb can be depositing enough for a day's expenses, which can be one third of the approximate individual budget. For example, if you're on a trip to Saint Martin's Island, you can guess an individual total expense of BDT 6000. In this case, everyone can deposit BDT 2000 to the fund. And if the fund is close to empty at the end of the day, refill it for the next day.



personally by one kind soul of the squad. The fund will be collected afterwards when everyone meets, usually in the bus/plane/launch/train station waiting for the trip to officially start. Here the kind soul will deposit less than the rest to settle the debt.

How much money should the fund store?

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF THE FUND?

There should be at least one "fund master" overlooking the finances, from collection and expenditure to maintenance and redistribution. But they aren't solely responsible for keeping all the money. The fund can be distributed to multiple squad members' pockets and/or bags. This prevents single point failure in the

off chance that the "fund master" is secretly an international con artist or worse, gets pickpocketed.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING UNEVEN EXPENSES?

Easy, subtract everyone's expenses from the maximum one and give them the difference from the fund. Or invert the process if the majority paid the minimum value. This is extremely necessary during meals where a part of the squad likes to try out everything from the menu and the other part is satisfied with just rice and korolla bhaji for whatever sadistic reason.

DOESN'T THIS RUIN THE "FUND MASTER'S" TRIP?

Yes, if they decide to memorise each and every transaction. As a "fund master", record everything on your favourite note keeping app instead.

WHAT TO DO WITH AN UNEVEN FUND REMAINDER?

When trip expenses finish and it's time to break the fund and distribute it evenly among the squad, it's hardly ever going to be equally divisible. In times like this, let your wildest imaginations dictate what to do with this money. Donate it to charity, or give it to that random kid who sang you the local songs or worked as your unprofessional yet highly efficient tour guide, or if you're naïve enough to think that friendships won't falter, save the fund for the next squad trip.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyon, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy.



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