

A guide to buying your first guitar

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Buying your first guitar can be a challenging task. You may find yourself overwhelmed at the ocean of options available when you enter a guitar store. The confusion only increases when the shopkeeper tries to hand you an expensive guitar to convince you that this product will help you play like Jimi Hendrix, and the whole process turns out to be way more arduous than it is.

There are many factors that make a guitar worth buying. Though the idea of worth maybe subjective, it's wise to have a clear picture of what you want beforehand to steer clear of future regrets. Here's what's important when you're buying your first guitar.

FIX A BUDGET

Having a fixed budget before you start browsing is always a good idea. You can ask the salesperson of your local guitar store to show products from a specific price range early on to avoid liking a vintage piece that costs more than a few of your organs combined.

Usually, you will find good acoustic guitars within BDT 5,000-15,000. Electric guitars are more expensive and can range from BDT 20,000-40,000 with the additional cost of an amplifier or an audio interface. If possible, spare an additional BDT 1,500-3,000 for accessories like gig bags, guitar



PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

capos, and spare strings.

FIND WHAT'S COMFORTABLE

Though one might argue that the quality of sound is more important, I personally think comfort overshadows everything else. You will have to like how the guitar feels in your hands to be able to play it in the long run. The weight should be comfortable and

you have to be able to access the entirety of the fretboard smoothly so that playing for longer hours doesn't feel uncomfortable.

The easiest way to test this is to place the guitar on your lap and run your hands across the fretboard to see how it feels. If it doesn't feel comfortable to you, it's a good idea to look for an alternative.

CHECK THE EQUIPMENT

Do you like the sound of the guitar? Does the guitar have fret buzz? Are the electronics in good condition?

These are all questions you should ask and get answers to when buying your first guitar. Check if the neck of the guitar is straight. If the strings are too far apart from the wood, that means the action of the guitar isn't right, which may produce an unpleasant sound even when the salesperson is playing the right chords. A great way to have these things checked is to have someone with you who knows how to play the guitar.

IS THE AESTHETIC EVEN IMPORTANT?

The way your guitar looks is more important than you may think. You need to like how it looks so that you actually want to pick it up and practice. Try out different shapes and colours to see what satisfies your aesthetic sense.

At the end of the day, buying your first guitar is an exciting process. But it's only the beginning of an even more exciting journey. Make sure to create healthy practising habits so that you can reach your goal with your new instrument and have fun while doing so.

Fahad likes frogs and wants you to take him with you when you're buying your first guitar. Find him at amfahad1747@gmail.com

The joy of designing your own dresses

NOUSHIN NURI

White is the most annoying of colours.

Arriving at such a conclusion about the colour that rules my closet was unexpected. But after spending hours walking through the alleyways of a market with similar shops, it's hard to keep patience. I had been making circles in Chandni Chawk to buy some fabric for a *salwar* to match a white *kameez*. But every time I placed the fabrics beside my *kameez*, each of them was either too white, too yellow, too thin, or too expensive.

While some of you can relate to my frustration of matching white with white, others can ask, why go through this ordeal in the first place? Why take the convoluted route through the Chandni Chawk backstreets when I can just swipe a card in a store or better yet, make a few clicks on the internet?

It does cost more to customise a dress than to grab one that has been mass-produced. So, while the rationalist in me doesn't approve of such endeavours, there's another part that gets slightly dazed at the sight of fabric rolls neatly lined from the top to the bottom of a wall.

When the salesman unfurls the nature print organza before my eyes, my heart is divided between the yellow daisies on black and the lavender blossoms on white. It hurts to leave any of them behind but my budget makes me do cruel things.

While I'm running errands to collect materials, it's not only the feminine floral prints that allure. One of my favourite places to shop is the men's fabric store. I



ILLUSTRATION: **FATIMA JAHAN ENA**

consider them the haven of solid pastel colours. Though fabrics in men's shops tend to be on the pricier side, their texture and durability happen to be much better than the ones made for women.

The most telling of all fabrics is definitely the ones repurposed from old sarees. One of my friends wore an *anarkali* made from her mom's red jamdani for Baishakh when we were in the third grade. The memory still remains even now, when I'm at the dusk of my undergrad. That's how immortal a *kameez* reborn from a saree can be.

The inspiration for a design can be a revelation, sometimes, literally from the sky. One day, you look at the sky and the fluff of gliding autumn clouds makes you want to wear the sky. You go to a boutique house and ask if they can embroider clouds on a sky-blue fabric. The possibilities of customisation are beautiful – tea cups, cats, books – it's a way of telling someone what you care about without saying a word.

From the dreamy desire to wear the sky to the energetic expedition of making it a reality – it's a fun little project. Finding the

right shade of white lace to line my white *kameez* is like fitting the last pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. The difference is that I can fit this puzzle around my body and walk into the world with contentment. Designing the dress, I want is a preparation for dressing the way I want. I hope more and more of us can do that.

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