

The waffle-on-a-stick revolution

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Waffles on a stick are popping up at every corner of Dhaka city, slowly becoming the newest street food sensation. If you haven't tried one yet, you should seriously consider it because the crunchy little baked squares on popsicle sticks coupled with mouthwatering colourful toppings are irresistible.

I had been planning to go on a dessert run to satisfy my sweet tooth, so I decided to make a day out of tasting waffles. I visited the highest-rated waffle places that have been taking Dhaka's foodgram by storm.

My journey began at Waffle Time, Dhanmondi. Needless to say, I was feeling a little adventurous so I went with the red velvet waffle topped with whipped cream and red velvet crumbs. The first plus point was that it looked exactly as delectable as it looks on the menu but I didn't expect it to be as sweet although the crunchy texture and the gooey cream melted right into my mouth.

Next on my list was Waffle Street which took me all the way to Mirpur-1, to try their Nutella Ice Loaded, which was the most expensive one on their menu. It was a Nutella-coated waffle that came with



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vanilla ice cream, drizzled caramel, and chocolate sauce as well as banana cubes and chocolate chips as toppings. Given the price and the journey, it was quite the mouthful. The waffle got a little messy to eat out of a stick as the ice cream was melting fast. And so, I was compelled to

use a fork and a spoon.

The final station of my sugar rush was at Waffle Up's flagship outlet in Banani. I wanted to save it till the end because that's where I had my first-ever waffle on a stick last summer, so it made perfect sense for it to come full circle. Their classic

Nutella Waffle that comes with a teal interior tasted rich, fluffy, and as sweet as you would expect it to be. It balanced out my palate, being simpler than my experimental rendezvous throughout the day.

The taste of the individual waffles is comparable because there is little variation in flavours, with the toppings usually having a Nutella or whipped cream base of a classic waffle batter. As for the menu prices, they are between BDT 150-200, well below regular waffles.

You might want to think twice before getting extra syrup or Nutella add-ons because they can at times overpower the taste. It's also best to steer clear of runny toppings when you're having waffles on the go. Not only do they run the risk of spills, but the waffle could also get soggy and come off the stick.

The outlet's kiosk-like structure with signature funky wallpapers accented by vibrant LED strip lights provides a perfectly cosy and inviting atmosphere for a budget date or a snack out with your friends. So, if you're craving a sweet, delicious, and affordable snack on the go, treat yourself to your nearest waffle joint.

Spill the tea with Joyeeta at [Instagram.com/nahianjamaljoyeeta](https://www.instagram.com/nahianjamaljoyeeta)

Critical thinking in our curriculum: Too much or too little?

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Critical thinking has always been emphasised heavily in education and with good reason. It is known to improve creativity, foster curiosity and enhance decision-making. Another benefit of mastering this ability is that it's universally relevant across all professions and fields.

Being a critical thinker has ramifications outside of academic and professional surroundings as well. It's easier than ever for fake news to spread and more than a little difficult to determine what is correct, given the overwhelming number of information sources. The amount of misinformation circulating around the pandemic should serve as an eye-opener in this regard.

There has been constant debate about whether the quality of our national education is up to par with global standards, as well as attempts to reinvent it. Thankfully, the NCTB has been going through a much-needed overhaul, starting from 2022.

Here's a little recap: in the revised framework, there will be no public exams before class 10 and no exams of

any kind for students up to class 3. SSC exams will consist of five subjects, while HSC will be held in two phases. The division of science, humanities, and business studies will occur from class 11 instead of 9. All these revisions are reportedly devised to facilitate holistic learning and improve creativity and competence.

The current creative question system was introduced in 2008 to promote critical thinking and discourage rote memorisation. Whether it has achieved that goal is debatable. The answer may be leaning towards a firm no, considering the amount of criticism the curriculum has received over the years.

Infrequent revisions have exacerbated its existing flaws like outdated syllabuses and textbooks riddled with errors. The creative questions are usually creative in name only, since educators encourage memorisation over all else, and that is what students are judged on, not their analytical capacity. The extent of memorisation unfortunately stretches to subjects like English and Bangla as well.

The system also fails to give teachers the necessary guidance and training required to make exams that test students'

critical and analytical thinking ability. To make matters worse, there are no universal guidelines to mark these questions provided to examiners either.

Replacing memorisation culture with a more updated system is a necessary goal, but whether it's practical in our geographical context is a glaring issue. While students in Dhaka are equipped with the best schools, teachers, and coaching centres, students outside of the capital barely receive a fraction of the academic support. The more you move towards the rural side of our country, the further the discrepancy widens. There are already doubts about whether the recent changes can be implemented in these areas due to lack of space, funding, and technology. Further modernisation might put strain on schools which are already struggling.

Some of the recent changes to the national curriculum have been wel-

come ones. Whether they affect everyone equally remains to be seen.

References:

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2. Dhaka Tribune (January 7, 2023). *Can the new curriculum end old-school memorisation?*

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