

From Catan to connections: Inside Bangladesh's thriving board game community

It began with a few people coming along and bonding over a shared love for boardgames. While looking for an escape from the grind of everyday life, a handful of acquaintances started meeting up and spending time playing board games. It was not just about passing time. Rather, it was about finding a meaningful way to connect with like-minded people. From homes to cafés, the games brought them together, and before long, what started as a casual meetup grew into a thriving group, the Bangladesh Board Game Community.

Reflecting on the early days, Arifin Rahman, one of the founding members of this community shared, "At first we created a Facebook group with some board game enthusiasts. We started hanging out together, playing board games, and used



to post about it on the group so that others could join us."

Thus, the community started growing slowly, and Panaderia, Gulshan café became their weekly meeting ground. Giving this casual meetup a new dimension and taking

it a step further, they started arranging tournaments. During the pandemic, they arranged a few online competitions but the first offline tournament was based on Catan, a multi-player board game designed by Klaus Teuber.

Although the community boasts an impressive collection of imported games, ranging in different tastes and preferences, one board game seems to unite most of them — Catan. The event, Catan Cup 2024 drew many, even some travelling from outside Dhaka, among which around 50 people participated.

Over two weekends the participants battled out one another in a series of knockouts. By the end of the first round, only 16 participants advanced to the semi-finals, which were held on the last day of the competition. The semi-finals were no less intense. Four games were played simultaneously, four tables, four players each, under the supervision of a moderator for each game.

From these four fiercely contested games, one winner from each table claimed



a seat at the final round, a stage where everything hinged on their wits and a touch of luck. The final four faced off on the same day and after an intensive play, Pearuddin, a player from Chittagong, became the champion. As a token of appreciation, all finalists were given a copy of Rosh Kosh, a game designed by one of the members of the community.

In recent years, this group has become more than just a company of gamers. Some members have turned their passion into entrepreneurial ventures, importing and selling games or even publishing and creating their own.

Another organiser of the event, Mafiul

Robin, shared, "People here are now publishing their own board games". Playground Inc., an initiative born from this group, has already released several titles, including Polashi, which is inspired by the historic Battle of Plassey. The game has since gained significant popularity.

"We don't have many board games rooted in our cultural narratives. So, we are blending interesting elements from existing games with our history and traditions, creating something we can truly connect with," explained Robin.

For many, the Bangladesh Board Game Community has been a lifeline; a place to find like-minded individuals in a city that does not always make space for connections. If you have a knack for board gaming, looking for a new hobby, or simply want to be a part of this wholesome group, you can slide into the café Panaderia in Gulshan on a random Saturday evening and be part of the community.

By Rehnuma Shahreen
Photo: Courtesy

#FOOD & RECIPES

The secret to making chocolate chip cookies: A step-by-step guide

They have gained popularity across the globe for their rich chocolatey flavour, chewy centre, and buttery aftertaste. The contrast between the warm, melted chocolate and the slightly crispy edges of the chocolate chip cookie creates a satisfying experience. American chef, Ruth Graves Wakefield came up with the recipe in 1938, around the time when she owned the Toll House Inn, in Whitman, Massachusetts. In that era, the Toll House Inn was a popular restaurant that featured home cooking.

Due to its rich history, 4 August is celebrated as 'National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day'. The following recipe can meet your cravings for Chocolate Chip Cookies,

from the comforts of your home. Here's how it's done —

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ingredients

½ cup unsalted butter (softened)
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup white sugar
1 large egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
1½ cups all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking soda
200g milk chocolate bar, chopped into bits
100g white chocolate bar, chopped into bits



A pinch of salt

Method

Preheat the oven to 160°C (320°F).

In a mixing bowl, combine the softened butter, brown sugar, white sugar, 1 large egg (room temperature) and vanilla extract. Mix thoroughly with your hand or stand mixer until smooth and creamy.

Gradually add the flour, baking soda, and a pinch of salt to the wet ingredients. Mix

until combined. Fold in the chopped milk and white chocolate bits.

Scoop spoonful of the dough and place them on a baking tray lined with parchment paper, leaving enough space between each to allow for spreading.

Bake for 10-15 minutes, or until the edges are golden and crispy.

Remove from the oven and let the cookies cool on the tray for a few minutes. Transfer them to a cooling rack and let them cool completely for at least 10 minutes before serving.

Recipes & Photo: Farzana Hossain