

WHY YOU SHOULD EXPLORE CHATTOGRAM

The City of Stories, Shores and Surprises

With its layers of hills, history, half-forgotten temples, and crooked alleys, Chattogram captures the imagination of those who have the eyes of an explorer. The city unfolds slowly. It does not rush to impress you. No grand reveal, no urgent chaos. Having familial roots there, I never really got to explore it. And this time, I arrived with a new perspective and a pair of walking shoes.

The metropolis is not just worth your time; it's the experience you did not realise you needed — whether you are travelling alone, organising a family vacation, or simply wishing to lose yourself in tales etched on stone and the sea wind.

Let's start from the edge: the coast. Patenga Sea Beach is where most first-timers go, and for good reason. It's near the airport, has a reworked walkway and enough roasted peanuts to last you a week. But if you are the type who likes silence over selfies, Guliakhal Sea Beach (locals still call it Muradpur) is your place. The beach here is not flat sand — it's grass-covered land gently merging into mangroves and water.

Further north, Bashbaria Beach flaunts a long steel jetty that's half industrial, half poetic — best experienced around golden hour. And if you are lucky, you might find your way to Parki Beach, still largely untouched, where the river and sea blur into each other.

However, Chattogram is not just about the sea. Its hills and trails hold some of the finest waterfall treks in the country. Khoiyachora Waterfalls in Mirsarai is a quiet stunner — multiple tiers of clear water tumbling down the green, and yes, you can camp there if you are willing to carry your own gear and do not mind a couple of leeches during monsoon!

For a more accessible option, Sitakunda Eco Park is great for a quick forest trail, and the Jharjhari Trail inside it leads to a series of smaller falls, perfect for a day trip with friends or even children. There's also Kupitakum, Bandurkhum, and a few others you will only hear about from locals — nothing commercial, no signs, just

raw, living nature.

And then comes Barabkunda Agnikunda, a place that honestly feels like folklore. You walk up a dusty trail, joke about the heat, and then suddenly you are in front of a well that's on fire!

Locals worship it. Geologists are intrigued by it. And travellers? Well, most just stand there for a few minutes, quietly watching the fire float on the water.

For the history buffs, Chattogram has more than enough to keep you walking. The War Cemetery is both sobering and strangely peaceful. PK Sen Bhaban, better known as Sat-tala, is one of the city's



Karnafully River

earliest concrete buildings, built in the 1920s and a piece of architecture that still raises eyebrows.

Located in the old Circuit House, the Zia Memorial Museum holds both Liberation War antiquities and colonial antiques under one roof, while the Old Court Building, which is placed atop Fairy's Hill, functions as a watchful guardian over the port city.

Now, if you're travelling for food — and let's be honest, most of us are — you will be glad to know the city's culinary heritage runs deep.

Goni Bakery still bakes its biscuits in

firewood ovens the same way they have been doing for over 150 years. There's something charming about eating a piece of bread that predates your entire family tree. And Dorothy Fried Chicken? Possibly the only place where fried chicken comes with that proper "Chattogram spice slap" — flavour first, regret later.

And then, there are the places that do not make it into most guidebooks. Places that locals do not mention unless you ask twice.

Forest clearings near the hill lines of Mirsarai, makeshift camping grounds above Sitakunda, and streams where the only sound is your footsteps and the occasional kingfisher. These are not just "hidden gems" in the Instagrammable sense. They are quiet. Private. The kind of places that feel like a secret even when you are standing in them.

So, why Chattogram?

Because it does not fit into one neat box. It's not only for the thrill-seeker or the heritage buff. It's for people who want a little bit of everything: wilderness, salt and steam, legend and laughter. It rewards curiosity, not itinerary. Whether you're looking to camp under the stars, sip tea next to a colonial courthouse, or just sit still by a burning spring and wonder how fire can live on water, this port city has something that speaks to you. You just need to show up!

By K Tanzeel Zaman
Photo: K Tanzeel Zaman/Collected
Photo Credit: Amit-chowdhury, Ashikur-rahman, Md.Sumar, Mumtahinata-nni, Nishaan Ahmed, Safwan-Mahmud, Shehjad-Mobin, Tushar Das, Zafor Iqbal - Unsplash



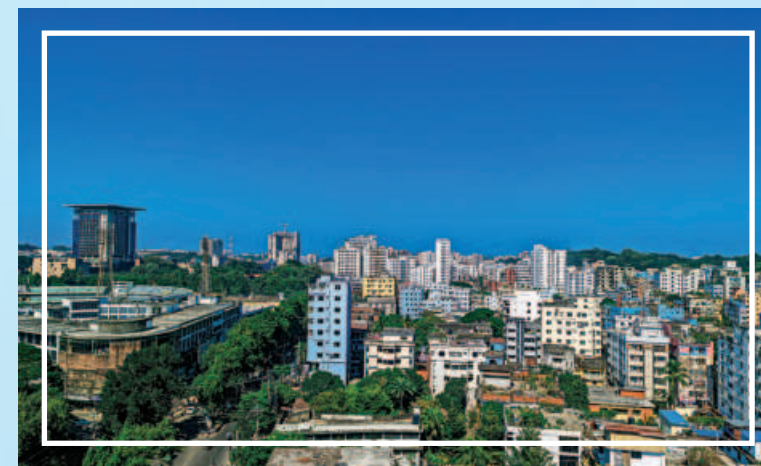
Chittagong Hill Tracts



Chittagong Hill Tracts



Sadarghat



Chittagong City

