

How exploring Bangladesh *in* *your* 20s changes you!



Is there a good age for travelling? Surely one can pack their bags anytime, at any age. But there is something magical, and reasonable, about exploring Bangladesh when you are in your 20s! Why am I saying that? Let this boro bhai explain.

IT'S BUDGET-FRIENDLY

As students or fresh graduates, it is likely that one of your biggest constraints is the money needed for travelling. A couple of home tuitions, freelancing gigs, or an entry-level job will probably suffice, and on top of that, you may have to contribute to your family, or pay your own bills.

But the good news is that travelling in Bangladesh can be really, really cheap! For example, my friend and I once stayed at a hotel in Dinajpur for just Tk 500 per night.

As a student, I did not care much about comfort, luxury, or convenience, as I do now.

You should indeed travel around the world (may be not in 80 days), but at this age, you can easily start with your own country, since it has plenty of budget-friendly options students can easily afford.

BANGLADESH IS ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL!

One dreams of backpacking through Europe, going on a road trip in the Americas, exploring the cool Asian metropolises, or trekking in exotic mountains. Fair enough, but our own country is brimming with beauty as well.

From the common touristy places to the off beaten paths, there are plenty of gems. Hiking through the majestic hill

tracts, rejoicing in the waterfalls, boat rides in haors, idle time on the beaches of Cox's Bazar, exploring nature and wildlife in the Sundarbans — the options are seemingly endless!

Furthermore, you will have an appreciation of our heritage, food, dialects, etc.

Perhaps, the problem is with lack of awareness and proper promotional activities. Otherwise, take any random district in Bangladesh, and you will have a few fun things to do in that district.

IT TEACHES YOU THINGS NO CLASSROOM CAN

The first two reasons should be enough for you to start planning a trip! But here is another: travelling gives you life lessons your structured university syllabus or dull trainings at your job can never teach. And it is best that you take in those lessons early in life.

Let travelling Bangladesh shape you as a person.

I used to engross myself in conversations with rickshaw-pullers or local bus drivers during my travels. It told me how surprisingly common human lives are — in terms of priorities, views, etc.

I had made friends with farmers and shared meals together, and discovered how their lives are not as “simple and peaceful” the way we city folks



sometimes imagine it to be.

I sometimes became pleasantly surprised how kind and hospitable people are. There were also a few instances when I found myself in ugly skirmishes and dealt with aggressive people looking to intimidate or swindle.

Exposure to human behaviour is important, and Bangladesh can give you that in bold, unexpected ways. Travelling across the country promises to be an eye-opener!

IT LEAVES YOU WITH MEMORIES YOU'LL CHERISH FOREVER

For most people, the early to mid-20s is an interesting time — you are an adult, but nobody bats an eye unless you severely goof up! You are an adult but “adulting” is not fully expected out of you yet. You are energetic, and “real” life troubles have (hopefully) not settled in.

These call for some magical times spent. When I look back, I do not necessarily think of the splendour or beauty of a place. I cherish the simplest things.

I cherish how my friends and I got on an Easy Bike and went from one village to the next aimlessly, only to end up in a different division where we had to spend the night because it was too late to return. I remember the extreme darkness one night at a hill station when electricity went off for a while. I still get angry when I recall that I missed a bus back to Dhaka because my friend was too absorbed in eating chui jhal mutton curry. I remember being stranded in the rain as me and my friends took shelter at a tong er dokan in a random, unfamiliar village, with not a care in the world.

My 20s are behind me, but I wonder, would those years be so magical if I had not travelled across Bangladesh?

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