

#TRAVEL

Love winter weather? Visit these Bangladesh destinations

It is often said the cold felt across our country is no match for the snowy winters in other parts of the world, but if anyone here wishes to truly taste winter, they should travel to the northern parts of Bangladesh during this time.

Every winter, the northern districts of Bangladesh face the lowest temperatures and are the epicentres of attraction for winter loving tourists. For the brave group of people drawn to the allure of the foggy and mystical weather of northern Bangladesh, below is a list of the three best possible locations to explore.

Bogura and the historic sites frozen in time

Bogura, the city often described as the gateway to northern Bengal, offers some of the finest historic wonders to explore, especially during winter. Most of Bogura's historic attractions are located in the open air.

During summer, the average temperature in Bogura ranges from 30 to 34 degrees Celsius and higher during heatwaves, making it an unsuitable time for many tourists, especially people prone to migraines and heat strokes. This complication is eliminated in winter, when the cool season offers the perfect weather for visiting these locations.

Visiting many of Bogura's heritage sites is like travelling back in time; a trip to this city of history and culture demands a visit to two of its most popular archaeological sites, Mahastangarh and Paharpur. A walk through the remains of Mahastangarh, the capital of the ancient city of Pundranagara, offers a glimpse of the architectural style of the Mauryan



Paharpur.

PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

Empire. It is located in the Shibganj Upazila on the western bank of the Karatoya river.

Near Mahastangarh is a massive landmark called "Behular Bashor Ghor" which is associated with legendary ancient folklore and the Bhasu Vihara, a notable Buddhist monastery from seventh century in the Shibganj Upazila, which are also among key archaeological attractions in the city.

As one among the three UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Bangladesh, remains of the Somapura Mahavira in Paharpur is one of the most well maintained and key tourist attractions found very close to Bogura, in the Naogaon district. Exploring the Buddhist establishment once frequented by the 8th century Palas, insinuates sheer chills as well as gratitude in anyone who's visited, that such history has been preserved to this day for us to witness.

Tetulia Upazila, Panchagarh

Panchagarh is the northernmost district of Bangladesh located within the Rangpur Division and at the border with India. Within Panchagarh is the wondrous Upazila of Tetulia, one of the dreamiest places to visit during winter.

Tetulia and its tea gardens are famous for their beauty, but in winter they transform into a more mystical version of themselves. In the early mornings, the tea gardens located in small valleys are covered in a blanket of fog while in the higher mountainous regions, clouds regularly pass by. Even without staying at specific higher range hotels, it is possible to catch glimpses of distant peaks and mountain ranges in the backdrop of the serene tea gardens



Sunset from the bank of Mohananda River, Panchagarh.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

of Tetulia during winter.

The world's third highest mountain, Kangchenjunga, located at the foothills of Himalayan Ranges has the clearest viewing point from Bangladesh in Tetulia. The dry season in winter is considered a good time of visit. For lucky tourists, if the weather permits, it can offer a beautiful view on sunny winter mornings, often accompanied by hovering clouds of mist above the distant mountain ranges.

While many newly built guesthouses in Tetulia offer spectacular views of Kangchenjunga, the Tetulia Dak Bungalow has always been voted as the best location for this view. Built by the King of Bihar, the bungalow is located on the banks of the Mahananda river,

15 to 20 kilometres above ground level, offering clear views of the mountain, especially during sunrise and sunset, when the peaks appear golden due to the sunlight.

Dinajpur's artificial waterfall: The Mohonpur Rubber Dam

Built on the Atrai and Kakrai rivers of Dinajpur, the Mohonpur Rubber Dam is not only an irrigation project to provide agricultural support to farmers of Dinajpur but it has also become a widespread tourist attraction, mainly due to its aesthetic backdrop for photographs.

In monsoon, the water levels in the dam are high with the two rivers gushing through, making it risky to get anywhere near the dam. People only take pictures from a distance. During winter however, there is reduced water flow through the dam and visitors are often seen getting a closer glimpse of it to take pictures at this beautiful location and observe the dam itself, which imitates the view of a breathtaking artificial waterfall.

Covering a large area of land and reserved water, the Mohonpur Dam is a stunning view under the uninterrupted blue sky above and rivers flowing below. The clouds hovering above it in winter, especially in the early mornings and right before sunset in the evening, turn the place into a magical site.

Whether you are a traveller out on your own across the country or with a group of friends and family, the above-mentioned locations offer equally enjoyable experiences for all, as long as you are passionate about exploring the true beauty of winter and are willing to accept some adventures along the way.

By Raidah Hasan



**A view of Kanchenjunga from Panchagarh.
 Photo: Mostafa Shabuj**