

PAGE  
**2**

# PLAN YOUR TRIP

YOUR PLANNING TOOL KIT

Photos, itineraries, lists and suggestions to help you put together your perfect trip

Welcome to Bangladesh ..... 2

Map ..... 4

10 Top Experiences ..... 6

Need to Know ..... 12

If You Like..... 14

Month by Month ..... 16

Itineraries..... 19

Border Crossings ..... 22

Boat Trips..... 26

Regions at a Glance ..... 30



## 10 TOP EXPERIENCES

**Traveling Tippers in the Sundarbans**

**Tea & Welcoming**

... and welcome, Bangladesh is a country of contrasts. It's a land of ancient traditions and modern influences, of bustling cities and remote villages, of lush green landscapes and arid plains. The country is a melting pot of cultures, religions, and languages, offering a unique and unforgettable experience for every traveler.

## Border Crossings

**Most Popular Crossings**

There are numerous points in Bangladesh where you can cross the border with India, but not all are created equal. In fact, the most popular and easiest to navigate are the ones that have been established for decades. These include the Cox's Bazar, Benha, and Maungmye-Thabeik crossings. Each of these has its own unique challenges and rewards, so it's important to do your research before heading to any of them.



PAGE  
**147**

# UNDERSTAND BANGLADESH

GET MORE FROM YOUR TRIP  
Learn about the big picture, so you can make sense of what you see

Bangladesh Today..... 148

History..... 150

Environment ..... 156

Arts & Literature ..... 160

Bangladesh Cuisine ..... 163

## Environment

**The Land**

Thanks to being the wettest, Bangladesh is largely comprised of over 80 percent of permanently grown farmland surrounded by a vast network of rivers. It's a semi-mountainous and hilly land, but, thanks to every channel that Bangladesh will be the most fertile and the most lush.

## Bangladesh Today

**population per sq km**

The world's 15th most populous nation, Bangladesh has a population of over 160 million people. It's a country of contrasts, with a mix of modern and traditional influences. The country is a melting pot of cultures, religions, and languages, offering a unique and unforgettable experience for every traveler.



Directory A–Z .....	166
Transport .....	175
Health .....	181
Language .....	188
Index .....	203
Map Legend .....	207



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

**Daniel McCrohan**

➤ **Every listing is recommended by our authors, and their favourite places are listed first**

➤ **Look out for these icons:**



Our author's top recommendation



A green or sustainable option



No payment required

# On the Road

<b>DHAKA.....34</b>	<b>CHITTAGONG</b>
<b>DHAKA DIVISION .... 57</b>	<b>DIVISION .....106</b>
Sonargaon.....59	Chittagong.....108
Dhamrai .....60	Bandarban.....113
Mymensingh.....61	Rangamati.....117
Around Mymensingh.....63	Cox's Bazar.....125
Birisiri.....64	Around Cox's Bazar.....127
Around Birisiri.....65	St Martin's Island.....128
	Comilla.....130
<b>KHULNA &amp; BARISAL .66</b>	<b>SYLHET DIVISION .. 133</b>
KHULNA DIVISION.....68	Sylhet.....135
Khulna.....68	Sunamganj.....138
Sundarbans National Park.....71	Srimangal & Around.....139
Mongla.....74	
Bagerhat.....76	
Jessore.....79	
Kushtia.....81	
BARISAL DIVISION.....83	
Barisal.....83	
Kuakata.....85	
<b>RAJSHAHI &amp;</b>	
<b>RANGPUR ..... 87</b>	
Bogra.....89	
Mahasthangarh.....91	
Paharpur.....92	
Rangpur.....93	
Dinajpur.....96	
Rajshahi.....99	
Sona Masjid (Gaud).....102	
Puthia.....103	
Natore.....104	
Pabna.....105	





**Sundarbans National Park**  
Explore the world's largest mangrove forest (p71)

**Barisal**  
Ride the paddle-wheel 'Rocket' (p83)

**Chittagong Hill Tracts**  
Discover Bangladesh's Adivasi culture (p120)

20°N

88°E

89°E

90°E

91°E

92°E

INDIA (MIZORAM)

INDIA (TRIPURA)

INDIA (WEST BENGAL)

MYANMAR (BURMA)

BAY OF BENGAL

KOLKATA (CALCUTTA)

KHULNA DIVISION

BARISAL DIVISION

CHITTAGONG DIVISION

Chittagong

Ruma

Keokradong (12350m)

Chittagong Hill Tracts

Thanchi Bazar

Maheskhal Island

Cox's Bazar

Ramu

Shah Porir Dwip

Teknaf Game Reserve

Teknaf

St. Martin's Island

Khagrachhari

Rangamati

Sitakunda

Sandwip Island

Hatia

Nijum Dwip

Chandpur

Lakshmipur

Noakhali

Feni

Kaptai

Bannarban

Sangu River

Karnaphuli River

Kaptai Lake

Meghna River

Kazal River

Patuakhali

Bagerhat

Mongla

Khulna

Khatakhali

Satkhira

Jessore

Faridpur

Narayanganj

Munshiganj

Daudkandi

Sonargaon

Mograpara

Comilla

Cornilla

Madaripur

Shariatpur

Banshal

Patuakhali

Kuakata

Sundarbans National Park



## OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

## OUR WRITER



### Daniel McCrohan

Daniel first fell in love with Bangladesh way back in 1998 and has since made multiple trips here, chalking up many months' worth of Bangla-travel. He has worked extensively throughout Asia (his adopted home since leaving England more than eight years ago), but particularly enjoys this region, one of the few parts of South Asia, he says, that still has yet to be properly discovered by travellers. Daniel has worked on more than a dozen other Lonely Planet guides including *India*, *Tibet* and *China*. He also cohosted the Lonely Planet television series *Best in China*. You can follow his Asia travels on Twitter (@danielmccrohan), or through his website (danielmccrohan.com).

Read more about Daniel at  
[lonelyplanet.com/members/danielmccrohan](http://lonelyplanet.com/members/danielmccrohan)

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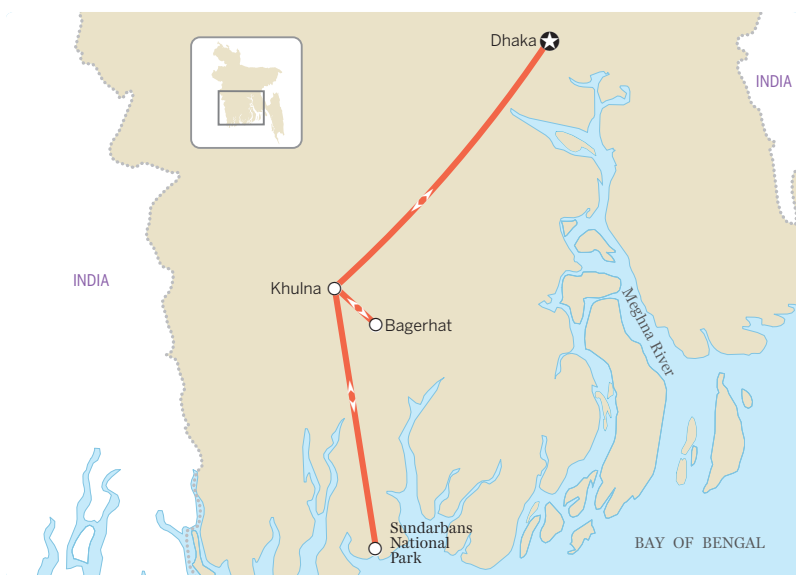
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# itineraries

*Whether you've got six days or 60, these itineraries provide a starting point for the trip of a lifetime. Want more inspiration? Head online to [lonelyplanet.com/thorntree](http://lonelyplanet.com/thorntree) to chat with other travellers.*



## One Week Sampling the Sundarbans

One week is just enough time to dip into Dhaka before going on the boat trip of a lifetime through the tiger-filled mangrove swamps of the Sundarbans.

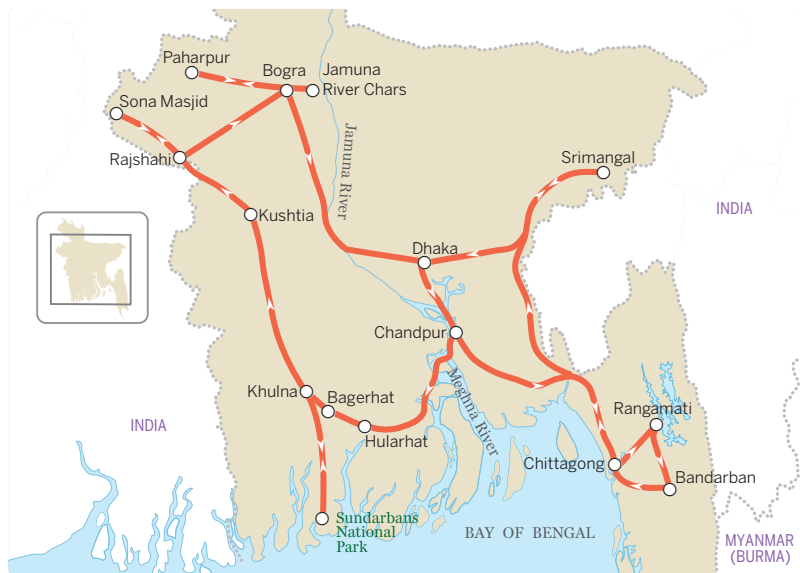
Ease yourself into **Dhaka** by spending your first day in the more upmarket neighbourhood of **Banani** before delving into the chaos with a sightseeing tour of **Old Dhaka** on day two. Don't miss Sadarghat for a rowboat trip on the **Buriganga River**.

You haven't got time to ride the Rocket (you'll need an extra two days for that). Instead, take an overnight bus to **Khulna** to meet up with your Sundarbans tour company, which you'll need in order to properly explore the **Sundarbans National Park**. Then relax on the deck of your boat and enjoy three days of tiger-tinged river adventure before floating back to Khulna.

Consider a day trip to **Bagerhat** before taking the bus back to **Dhaka** for one final day in the capital.

Note that you will need to have booked your Sundarbans trip at least three weeks in advance, so start planning this one from home.





## One Month Best of Bangladesh

Bangladesh is relatively small, so if you have a full month you can see pretty much all the main highlights. This tour takes in Dhaka, the Sundarbans and part of history-rich Rajshahi before whisking you over to the east to sample the tea estates of Srimangal and the forested mountains of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Your first job when you arrive in **Dhaka** is to book your cabin on the **Rocket** for your ferry ride the following evening. Tickets in hand, you can spend the rest of that day and the next taking in the sights of Old Dhaka before leaving on the 6pm boat.

Sit back and enjoy the lazy 20-hour river trip to **Hularhat**. Having disembarked mid-morning, grab a rickshaw to the bus stand, then a bus to **Bagerhat**, where you can spend the afternoon admiring the Islamic ruins before hopping on another bus to **Khulna** where you'll meet your Sundarbans tour company. Note: you will have had to have booked your Sundarbans trip at least three weeks in advance.

The next morning, board your boat and enjoy three or four days of unrivalled river adventure as you track tigers in the mangrove forests of the **Sundarbans National Park**.

Back in Khulna, take a bus north, pit-stopping in **Kushtia** – the cultural capital of Bengal – before continuing on to **Rajshahi**.

Take a day trip to **Sona Masjid** to see the scattered ruins of the ancient city of Gaud before catching a bus to **Bogra**.

Not much to see here – although you could consider an unusual day trip to the sand **chars** on the Jamuna River – but Bogra is only a day trip away from the Unesco-protected Buddhist ruins of **Paharpur**.

Catch a bus from Bogra back to **Dhaka**, but don't dally; the next morning you'll be river-bound again, this time a morning ferry from Dhaka's Sadarghat to **Chandpur** before catching the train to **Chittagong**.

Sort out your permit for the hill tracts region while you're in Chittagong, then spend four or five days exploring **Rangamati** and **Bandarban** before heading back to Chittagong.

Take the scenic day train to **Srimangal** where you can rent a bicycle to enjoy the surrounding tea estates, forest reserves and Adivasi villages before catching the train back to **Dhaka**.



## Two Weeks Ruins of the Northwest

This tour points you towards the older side of Dhaka before exploring the dusty ruins of history-rich Rajshahi and Rangpur.

Spend your first day visiting the museums and Raj-era architecture of **Central Dhaka** before diving into the living history of **Old Dhaka**. Try to track down the hard-to-find ruins of Bara Katra and Chota Katra in among the chaos of the bazars. A day trip to **Sonargaon** makes an easy day three before you set off by bus to the temple-strewn village of **Puthia**, en route to **Rajshahi**.

Day trip from Rajshahi to **Sona Masjid**, to see the scattered ruins of the lost city of Gaud, before catching the bus to **Bogra**. The ruined settlement of **Mahastangarh** makes a fun half-day trip before you head to the Unesco-protected Buddhist ruins of **Paharpur**, where you can stay the night.

From Paharpur, take a bus to **Dinajpur** (via Jaipurhat and Fulbari) so you can visit the stunning Hindu temple of **Kantanagar** before heading to nearby **Rangpur**, which has a sprinkling of Raj-era architecture, a top-class guesthouse and a daily train to Dhaka.

## Two to Three Weeks Exploring Chittagong

The most diverse region of Bangladesh, Chittagong has mountains, forests, Adivasi villages, elephants and even beaches. This tour has the lot.

After a day visiting the must-see sights of **Dhaka**, hop on a morning ferry to **Chandpur**, from where you can catch a train to **Chittagong**. Sort out your permit for the hill tracts here before taking a bus to laid-back **Rangamati** for a couple of relaxing days by Kaptai Lake. From Rangamati, take a bus to **Bandarban**, the heart of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and the best place to base yourself for hiking.

After your hill-tracts exertions, take the bus to **Cox's Bazar** where you can rest up by the beach – but don't forget to visit **Maheshkhali Island**.

Heading further south, catch a bus to **Teknaf Game Reserve**, home to some of Bangladesh's few remaining wild elephants, before riding the waves to **St Martin's Island** for a more shanty beach experience.

The restrictive ferry schedule means you'll need two days to get back to **Dhaka** from here, via Cox's Bazar (bus) and Chittagong (train), although you could fly back from Cox's Bazar, or take a night bus, if you're pushed for time.

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