

Do's and Don'ts sheet for Bangladesh  
Partners Worldwide 2006

1. Do not think you are in your country. Pay attention to your surroundings and imitate behaviors that seem to be common.
2. Take things with your right hand. Avoid using your left hand while eating, giving something, receiving something or touching someone. Also, do not hold Bibles or other holy books with your left hand.
3. When greeted, nod a little in response to show respect.
4. Wash your hands before eating.
5. Men do not shake hands with women unless the woman extends her hand to you first. Women do not shake hands with men, unless the man extends his hand to you first.
6. In villages, men do not show much willingness to talk to women and vice versa, unless the situation demands it.
7. Men and women do not mix freely in the village. Men tend to be around men and women tend to be around women.
8. Men do not give women anything unless the situation demands that you do so.
9. Women should wear Shalwar Kameez, which are easily available in Bangladesh, or in Indian neighborhoods of large North American cities. If this is not possible, women should avoid shorts, sleeveless shirts, and transparent dresses. Men can wear normal office clothes and shoes, but not shorts.
10. Do not sit with your legs crossed while a chair, or ever sit with your legs pointed towards another person.
11. Take toilet paper to the village.
12. If you are offered fruit in the village, you may eat it. If a guide is around, it never hurts to ask if it is ok to eat the fruit. Do not eat food that is prepared on the roadside.
13. To every extent possible, eat what is given to you. Bangladesh has a generous culture. Graciously eating food that which is given allows even poor people the pleasure of giving and building relationships with you. However, it is not offensive to ask if the water has been boiled or otherwise purified.
14. Do not have your picture taken with women. Ask before taking pictures of women.
15. Show proper respect to older people.
16. Do not go into a house without permission. Even after permission is granted, women should wait a little while to enter the interior part of the home.
17. If you ever have questions, never hesitate to ask a Bangladeshi or a guide for help.