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Genre: Nonfiction (Bangladeshi traditional food)

Level: Intermediate to Upper Intermediate

Title: Bogura's Curd

Bogura's Curd: An epic 'poem' of tradition filled with the scent of earth



In the very small streets of Bogura, there's a **tradition** of curd making, also known as *Bogura's Doi* *. When **cow's** milk is heated for many hours in a large **pot** and becomes **thick**, a beautiful **smell** spreads all around it. When we add **sugar** and caramel, that milk changes from white to a **copper** or reddish colour. It's not just a **dessert**, rather it is part of a story that has come from hundreds of years of Bengali **culture**.

The magic of this curd is in the '*sanki*' or a pot made of **clay**. When the milk and caramel changes in that clay pot, a **conversation** begins. The thousands of fine **holes** in the clay pot take in some of the water content of the milk. In modern science we call this '*osmosis*'*.

This natural action makes the curd thick like milk. The sweet smell of the earth that comes from the clay pot makes the yoghurt **taste** special. It's not possible to get this same taste in a plastic or glass container. The waiting, and the effort that goes into making this yoghurt is like life in the countryside of Bangladesh — **calm**, **slow** and deep.



In Bengali hospitality, giving this yoghurt to **guests** is an important tradition. It is usually the ‘last **plate**’ of a special festival **meal**. You may eat it under the **yellow** lights of a wedding, or at the happy **lunch** of *Eid-ul-Fitr* * — Bogura's yoghurt has a kind of nobility at these times.

This yoghurt also has close **ties** to Bengali folk beliefs. A taste of yoghurt and the **invitation** of *khai** on a **journey** acts like a *good luck charm* *. It carries a **message** of good wishes to those who eat it.

Bogura’s dai began in the Bogura district, from a secret recipe of the Ghosh family. For over 250 years, until today, it is now a food of national **pride**. In 2023, Bogura’s dai received *GI recognition* *. Winning this GI recognition was like placing a royal crown on the head of this important Bengali food.

Research by Hossain and others in 2012+ also shows that it is **unique**, because it is very different from any other yoghurt in the world. It not only tastes great to us, but also makes us think of our **roots**, the people of Bangladesh who work hard to make it, and the earth that feeds us, cares for us, and makes our Bengali food culture so special. Nothing else anywhere tastes or smells like it.

Bogura yoghurt is, therefore, not just a unique food. It is a delicious **treasure** of great value in Bengal's cultural life.

+ M.F. Hossain, S.F. Elahi, S.K. White, Q.K. Alam, J.A. Rother, J.L. Gaunt. (2012) *Nitrogen budgets for Boro rice (Oryza sativa L.) fields in Bangladesh*. Field Crops Research, Volume 131, Pages 97-109. ISSN 0378-4290, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fcr.2012.02.029>.

(<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378429012000858>)

Vocabulary lists

1. Words from the second 1000 High Frequency General Service Word List

calm, clay, conversation, copper, cow, guests, holes, invitation, journey, lunch, meal, message, plate, pot, pride, roots, slow, smell, sugar, taste, thick, ties, treasure, yellow.

2. Words from the Academic High Frequency Word List

culture, tradition, unique.

3. Off List Words (These words are less common in English. Check the meaning in your dictionary if you need to, but focus on learning the words in lists 1 and 2 above first.)

caramel, countryside, curd, delicious, dessert, festival, folk, hospitality, magic, plastic, recipe, wedding, yoghurt.

4. Glossary (words in the reading text with * after them)

- *Bogura's Doi* - a famous traditional sweet yogurt from the Bogura region in Bangladesh.
- *Eid-ul-Fitr* - The "Festival of Breaking the Fast" that marks the end of the month of Ramadan.
- *GI recognition* - GI means "Geographical Indication". This means that a product is recognised by world authorities as unique and important. With GI recognition, the product is legally protected because it comes from one particular place or area, where it is considered unique and special to that place and is not original to any other area.
- *Good luck charm* - a small object that people carry, or give to others, that they hope will help them be well and safe.
- *Khai* - a Bangladeshi word used by hosts when offering hospitality to guests, to encourage them to eat and drink well.
- *Osmosis* - the movement of water (or other liquid) through a membrane (which is a kind of wall with small holes in it). The water goes naturally from an area where it is thick, to an area where it is less thick, so that in the end there is an equal balance of 'thickness' on both sides.

Questions and Activity Suggestions (Based on the revised Bloom's Taxonomy of higher thinking skills.)

1. **Remembering** - What are four things that take place when they turn cow's milk into *Bogura's doi*?
2. **Understanding** - Why is it important to use a clay pot when making *Bogura's doi*?
3. **Analysing** - Make a list of some adjectives that can be used to describe the unique taste and smell of *Bogura's doi*. Now make a list of adjectives that describe another kind of food you like. Are there any similar words in the two lists? How are the two lists different?
4. **Applying** - Have you ever eaten *Bogura's doi*? What other foods do you know of that are unique to Bangladesh? Which ones have you eaten? Which ones do you like a lot. Which ones do you not like so much?

5. Evaluating - What do you think of the idea of giving GI recognition to food? Do you think it is a good idea or not? Why? In your view, are there other kinds of food in Bangladesh that should also have GI recognition? Give reasons for your answer.

6. Creating -

- Work with a partner and write a recipe for making yoghurt or curd. Use the chart on the page below to help you write your ideas. Use English as you work together.
- If you can, try making some yoghurt using your recipe. You could have a class or group competition. Choose two or three people from another class to be the judges of the taste. The judges should think about
 - taste
 - smell
 - colour
 - texture
 - appearance

Which recipes get ‘five stars’?

Recipe Chart

Title
Equipment we need
Ingredients (include the quantities. E.g. 1 cup, 1 tablespoon)
Method
Other important notes
Names of the writers of this recipe

You could also use this chart to write a recipe for a different kind of dish that you enjoy eating. If you write different recipes, share them with your classmates and friends. Perhaps you could put them all together and make a recipe book in English for everyone to keep. If you do that, make sure to add an attractive cover and even some photos!