Augustana College
PAKISTANI STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

PSA EXPLAINS

What even is a mehndi?

a quick guide before our Mock Mehendi on Nov 21

FIRST THINGS FIRST

So what is it?

The mehndi is the night before the shaadi, when both families come together for music, dancing, henna and way too much food.

If the shaadi is the formal one, the mehndi is the fun one. Bright colors, loud music, no one sitting still for long.

It's usually the event everyone remembers most.

WHY IT MATTERS

Why it's such a big deal

In Pakistani families, a wedding isn't one day. It's a whole season, and the mehndi is the heart of it.

Cousins spend weeks practicing dances. Aunties bring out songs they've sung at every wedding for 30 years. Friends and family who haven't seen each other in ages end up in the same room.

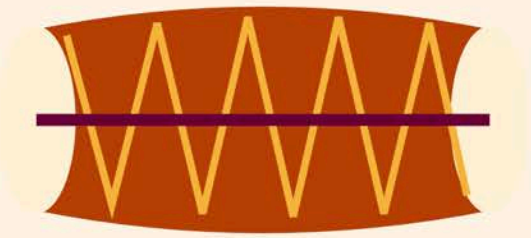
It's less about the couple and more about everyone around them celebrating together.

BEFORE THE MEHNDI

Dholki nights

In the days before the wedding, everyone sits on the floor around a dholak (a two-sided drum). Someone keeps the beat, someone taps a spoon on the side, and everyone else sings.

Expect tappay and boliyan, short call-and-response lines that tease the bride, the groom and their families. Being roasted in song is part of the love.



This is basically what our Mock Mehendi is.

RASM-E-HENNA

The mehndi itself

The bride gets detailed henna on her hands and feet, often taking hours. Friends and guests get some too.

The darker the color

the more her in-laws will love her. At least, that's what everyone says.

Hidden name

the groom's name is often hidden somewhere in the design, and he has to find it.

ON THE NIGHT

The rasms

Mehndi lagana

Elders put a little mehndi on the couple's palm, feed them mithai, and bless them.

Salami

Family slip the couple some money as a blessing. Very important. Very counted.

The entrance

The families walk in with decorated thaals, candles and diyas, usually with a song and a lot of noise.

THE COLOR CODE

Why so yellow, orange and green?



Yellow

for haldi. The mayun before the mehndi is all yellow, with turmeric paste (ubtan) on the bride.



Green

for the henna leaves the whole night is named after.



Orange

for marigolds, which end up on every surface, string and plate.

Bright colors mean celebration, and they're meant to look nothing like the formal shaadi outfits.

GET UP

The dances

Luddi

A Punjabi folk dance full of clapping and swinging arms. Easy to join, hard to stop.

Bhangra

High energy, shoulders up, everyone in. The uncles come alive for this one.

Attan

The Pashtun circle dance that keeps getting faster.

The dance-off

Bride's side vs groom's side. Weeks of practice for three minutes of glory.

BONUS: AT THE SHAADI

More rasms you'll see

Joota chupai

The bride's sisters and cousins steal the groom's shoes and won't give them back until he pays.

Doodh pilai

They hand the groom a glass of milk, then charge him for it.

Rasta rokna

They block his way in until he pays up. Yes, there's a theme.

GUARANTEED

Things you'll hear at every mehndi

"Beta, you've gotten so thin."
and later that night: "Beta, you've gotten so healthy."

"Beta, when is yours?"

"Where's the chai?"

"Do you remember me? I held you when you were a baby."

"Khana kab khulega?"
(when is the food opening up?)

"Whose side are you on?"

"Who's that girl? Whose daughter is she?"

NOW COME EXPERIENCE IT

Mock

Mehendi

Dholki, henna, dance-offs and desi food

Sat, Nov 21 • 7:30 PM

GÄVLE ROOMS

Eastern formal · RSVP at the link in our bio

11 / 11 · @PSA_AUGUSTANA