

fly  
With  
me



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Good Chance presents



# 20th August 2022

Fly With Me is an epic kite flying festival in solidarity with the people of Afghanistan. It invites people across the UK and Europe to make and fly Afghan kites on 20th August 2022, marking one year since the fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban.

With over 15 events taking place across 6 countries, Fly With Me is open to all. It invites people from everywhere to celebrate Afghan culture through the simple joy of kite flying, and calls for equal and fair treatment of all people seeking asylum. It sends a message to the world to 'Remember Afghanistan'.

Join us to fill the skies with colour in this massive act of welcome and hope.

Get your friends, family and community together to fly your kites!  
Tips on making your own event are here:

[www.goodchance.org.uk/flywithme](http://www.goodchance.org.uk/flywithme)



**Afghanaid**



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Salam, my name is Zaki. I'm twelve years old and live in Kabul.

I have an older brother called Bahram. We were very close growing up. Each autumn when the kite flying season was about to start, Bahram would send me on errands to collect as many discarded light bulbs as I could find around the streets.

Together, me and my brother would crush the bulbs into tiny little pieces of glass, and mix the glass with grinded half-boiled rice our mum made for us. Bahram would apply this sticky, gritty paste across the length of the kite string. I wasn't allowed to do this part because I was too young and would probably cut my fingers!

Our little sister Marwa would help by finding two trees close together that we could wrap this sharp string around and leave it there to dry overnight, so that the string and crushed glass become one.

A sharp, strong kite string is very important because in Afghanistan kite flying season is also kite fighting season. Kite fighting is a sport where people compete against each other to be the last kite in the sky.

At any time of day - on the top of the hills of Ghole Ghondee or the rooves of buildings - a kite fight could begin. The ultimate goal of every flyer is to be the last kite left in the air and eventually be crowned the Shartee Maidan - the Champion of the Square. My brother became a champion before his 17th birthday!

When the best kite fliers are fighting it's like watching an orchestra play out in the sky. The kite fliers are like conductors, their arms swooping and their hands twitching while the kites play above their heads. Those kites play the music of our land.





If you are flying your kite and you see a Shartee Maidan enter the skies with their kite, you better scamper because they can wrap their string around a kite like an anaconda and pull hard until your kite tumbles to the ground. And there goes the kite that you saved up for all summer.

When a kite does fall, it plummets into the waiting arms of kids younger than me, who run to claim the fallen kites as trophies to take home. Marwa is one of the best at this. She has quite a few kites she has claimed up on her bedroom wall.

Year after year, I would watch my brother make and fly kites while I got to hold the spool. Bahram made kites of all different colours and sizes. There is the Pajak (really small), Neem Parcha (a bit bigger), Yak Parcha (One Piece), Say Parcha (3 pieces), Chaar Parcha (4 pieces), Haft Parcha (seven pieces) and Da Parcha (the size of me)! A good kite flier knows you need different kites for all winds and weathers.

I remember one year, Bahram made the biggest kite ever - the Da Parcha. If I held it up, I was completely hidden behind it, almost like a magic trick. He made it in the same red and orange colours as the Kabul skies in the evening and kept it in a hidden place in his room.

Bahram let me into a little secret - he had written a love poem on the kite and sent it flying up over our neighbour's rooftop because he was in love with their daughter Layla. He would fly the kite as close as he could to Layla's roof so she could read his message, but he would pray her father wasn't home to see the kite. Many kite-crossed lovers did this - spoke to each other through silent love letters floating up in the sky.





I had a go at flying the Da Parcha, but it flew up so high and was so big that my feet left the ground. Bahram caught me, took hold of the string and said, 'you're not old enough yet azizum'. Afterwards, there were small cuts on my fingers from the kite string. I felt very grown up - the Shartee Maidens always have cuts on the hands and it's something to be proud of. It's the price champions pay to be the best.

Last August, just before the kite flying season and our school holidays, Bahram suddenly had to flee Kabul when the Taliban were at the edges of the city, ready to take over the country. He had no choice but to leave our family behind.

I didn't get to say goodbye because Bahram had to leave so quickly, and he now lives far away in the UK.

In the evening, when I go outside to play with my friends, I look up at the pigeons swooping over the city. They remind me of the soaring kites, and I miss my brother. I miss him all the time, but this is when I miss him the most.

Kites have been flown across Afghanistan for over 800 years. In Kabul during kite season, thousands of kites dance over the city in bright reds, greens, blues. Teenagers and older neighbours whoop and holler as they place bets on which kites will be cut first, cheering the winning ones on.

It's been part of our family for many generations, and we want to keep it that way. Don't be fooled into thinking the tradition will stop with me. Marwa is already keen to take over my role of collecting light bulbs and eventually plans to fly kites herself. And one day, I hope we'll be back with Bahram again and the three of us will all be big enough to fly kites together in the sky.

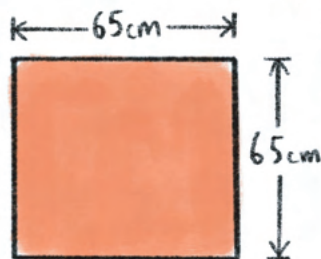
And the best thing is, I want to share our kite flying tradition with you. You can make a kite too and fly it high in your skies, wherever they are, and know that my kite will meet you there. If you're any good, you might be the next Shartee Maidan...



## To make an Afghan kite you will need:

Tissue paper sheet at least

65cm Square  
to make  
the sail.



Ruler Pencil Scissors tape



Lightweight polyester fabric or colourful tissue paper for decorating. Newspaper, plastic bags or bin bags also work well.



PVA / glue stick Strong Polyester String thread



x5 Rounded bamboo skewers



In Afghanistan, kites are made with long flexible bamboo sticks. For this version we will use rounded bamboo skewers, easily available in UK supermarkets.



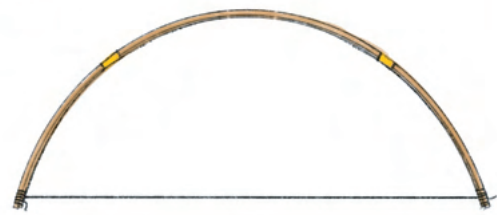
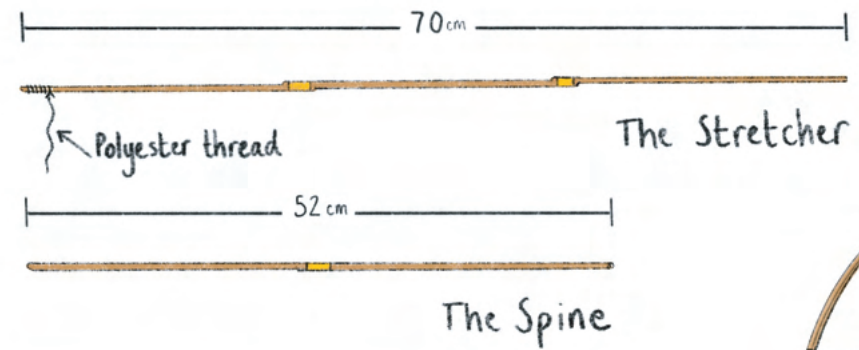
### For younger kite lovers

If you're making with younger children, why not make a flag by breaking the pointy bit off the bamboo and gluing some decorated paper to it so the whole family can be involved!



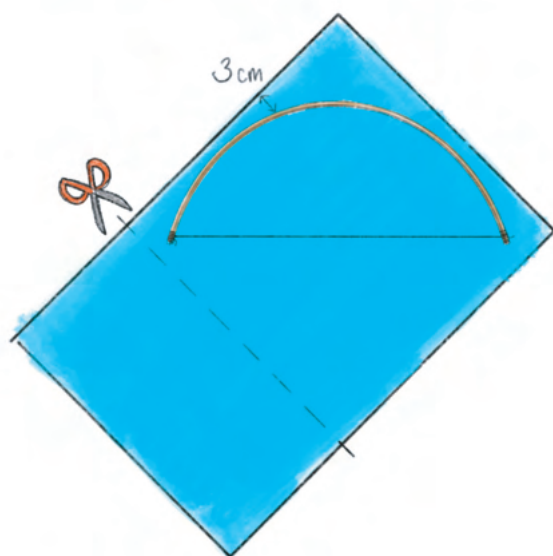
# 1. Making the frame

- a) Tape the pointed ends of 2 sticks together to make one 52cm stick: The spine.
- b) Tape three sticks together to make one 70cm stick: The stretcher.

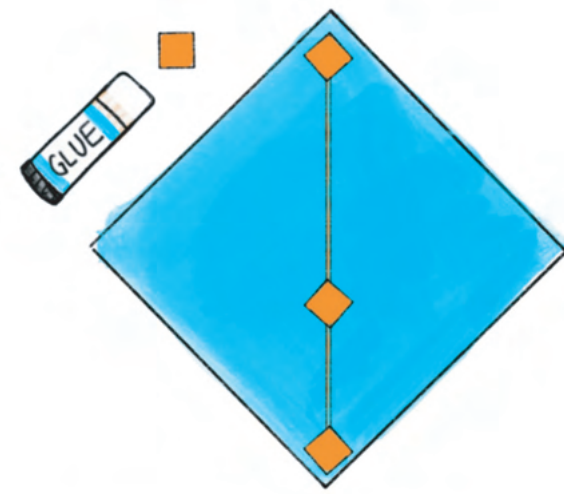


- c) Tie the thread to both ends of the stretcher to make an arc.

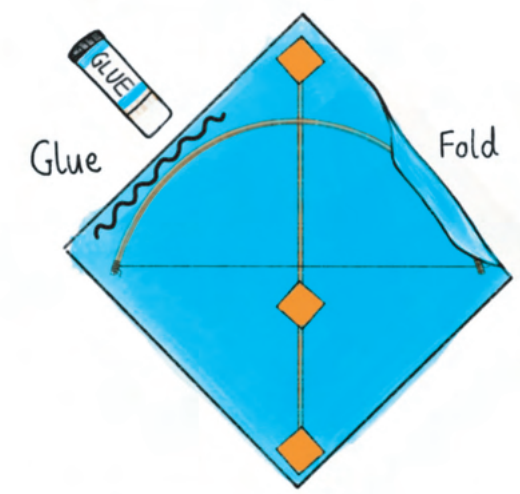
# 2. Making the sail



- a) Place the Stretcher 3cm from the top edge of the tissue paper/plastic. Trim to a square 65cm x 65cm.



- b) Glue the spine down the length of the paper. Secure with 4cm square pieces of tissue paper.



- c) Glue the stretcher down to the paper. Then apply glue on the top edges of the paper and fold them over the stretcher.



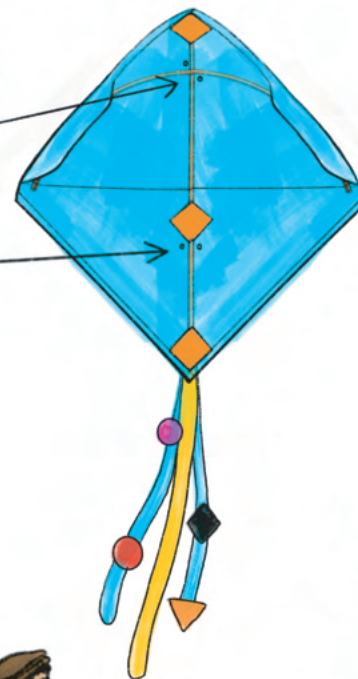
### 3. Decorating the kite

Flip the kite over and decorate the sail however you like with coloured paper. You can also draw or write on the kite if you like. Add long strips and shapes to make a fancy tail!



### 4. Bridling the kite

a) Make two small holes either side of the Spine where it meets the Stretcher, and two more holes further down the Spine.



b) Cut a piece of string a little longer than the kite's wingspan. Flip the kite over and tie each end of the piece of string to the Spine, through the small holes.



c) Hold the kite by the string, balancing it so that the head hangs higher than the tail. Attach one end of a long ball of string with a knot. Now you are ready to fly the kite!

### 5. Flying the kite!

You will need a partner. Stand with your back to the wind, so its blowing towards the kite. Your partner holds the kite by the sides, standing about 5m away from you. If you're doing this on a hill, your partner should be on the higher ground. The head should be pointing to the sky, your partner will throw the kite up towards the sky. Yank the string to rotate/spin your kite. If you want the kite to change direction, release the tension of the string. If you want it to continue in the same direction, pull the string. Don't forget to have fun!



Take a picture of your kite and share it with us!  
@goodchancetheatre @goodchancecal #flywithme

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