



Coffee Chronicles...

By Isma Noornisa Ismail

A Journey Through Cafes in Bertam



Bertam - the image that comes to mind when people talk about this place is a sleepy small town located in Kepala Batas, the northernmost part of Penang. For those that have not had the chance to explore Bertam, they might not know that it has slowly become more vibrant with the sprung of many quaint cafes and fancy eateries. These past few months, I have taken the task of exploring some of the cafes here upon myself, as well as forcing my colleagues and family members to join me in this café hunt so that the next time you find yourself in Bertam, you'll know where to go for a cuppa.

1. Qah-wa Café

The word 'qahwa' is the Arabic translation of coffee, hence its specialty. This café opened its flagship store in Pusat Bandar Bertam Perdana quite recently, in 2021 and it received massive publicity to the point that it went viral for quite some time. Now the excitement about this new café in town has subsided, leaving a calm atmosphere for those who want to enjoy some relaxing coffee time. The signature drinks that you should try are definitely the Qahwa Crafted Drinks which comprise of an assortment of tamar series - among them, my favourites are Tamar Salted Caramel Latte and Tamar Hazelnut Latte. To complete your coffee quest here, you can order the selection of delightful pastries of even the yummy, savoury quesadillas. Albeit pricey, they're definitely worth your money.



2. Hantu Café

Despite the name, there is absolutely nothing scary or other-worldly about this café. I forgot to ask the owner regarding the history behind its name. Upon entering this café, you can feast your eyes on the calming, aesthetically designed bohemian décor style. You will feel confused as the name suggests eerie supernatural beings but what you see is the total opposite. Once you have decided what to feel, you can try their Kopi Hantu or Latte Hantu and choose whether to eat their local or western delicacies. I had their Lasagna and of course it is delish! It is also claimed that they have one of the best Asam Laksa, though I can't claim to be a good Laksa judge, but I'd say the taste is not bad at all. Re-disclaimer, please do not be frustrated by the lack of actual *Hantu* in this café.



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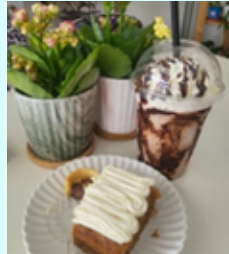


Head over Meals

by Nazima Versay Kudus



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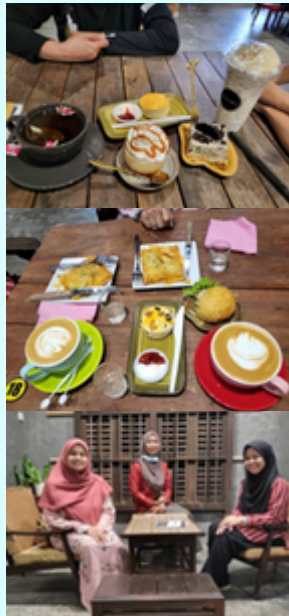
3. Nuhayra Brew & Nuhayra Pretty Leaf

If you are a garden enthusiast, this place is your sanctuary. You get to enjoy your latte while nestled amongst petite pots of indoor plants and flowers as this place is a combination of nursery and café. Apart from the usual selection of coffees that you normally get in other cafes, Nuhayra also serves their signature Bandung Latte and Rose Latte. This café does not provide heavier meal options as it only offers desserts as the beverage accompaniment, thus, making it the

perfect choice for those who are watching their diet but are still looking for some minor indulgence. You can feast with their assortment of mini cakes, Nutella pods, or the fruity croffles. Rather than being stuck at the office after your afternoon class, why not drop by here and indulge with your favorite coffee as well as increase your oxygen intake from these potted plants?

4. AcoCafe

For those with bigger appetites, you can head over to Bertam Putra where you will see AcoCafe among the shop houses. At first glance, it's just a normal café – but inside is actually a sleek industrial design café featuring a mixture of antiques and eclectic furniture. The setup is cozy and you get the feeling of entering someone's living room with different furniture styles. The selection of food and of course, coffee is diverse, ranging from Western to Malay Kampung style food. There are so many to choose from but I love the crême caramel, the scones, cheese biscoff, and I actually can't list them all here. You can also try the Kopi Kampung set which comes with the classic crackers just to walk down the memory lane. In short, this is a must visit if you come to Bertam.



5. Nickey's by TKT

If you're the kind of person who needs their brewed coffee before going to work, this is the place to be. Open from 7am to 11am, this is the only coffee place in my list that serves coffee as soon as the sun rises! Apart from coffee, Nickey's also serves English Breakfast Set with Bagels as their specialty. So if you're tired of the usual nasi lemak / roti canai combo for breakfast, head on over here for their yummy, juicy bagels. A bit of a warning though, despite being a 'gerai tepi jalan', do expect the price of the food to be similar to actual cafés.



6. Laman Tok Mah

Imagine relaxing at your kampung verandah while having a cup of coffee, watching the kids play all sorts of traditional games at the yard – this is the place where you can have it all.



Laman Tok Mah will make you feel as if you are going back to your village with its nostalgic ambience and the carefully maintained heritage kampung house. Located in Tasek Gelugor, you can never guess that this place is a café if you come on weekdays as it only operates on weekends from 3pm onwards. This place has recently gone viral, so if you want a spot in the Laman, be sure to go there early as latecomers might not even be able to enter the compound due to the traffic. You can expect the usual brewed coffees and teas, but the choice of food is still limited as they were sourced from vendors. However, the classic food such as *peknga* or lempeng (coconut pancake) or ubi rebus can be found here which adds to the nostalgic memories for some. The traditional environment is what makes this place special and many visitors come for this, just like the famous saying among the Kelantanese; "*Nok ko suasana jah!*"

7. Kopi Gantung

Last but not least, I really cannot skip describing this coffee joint – it's not a café but a roadside stall selling only 2 types of coffee, Kopi Gantung and Kopi Jerman. My personal favorite is Kopi Jerman as it helps me revive my energy after being lethargic (marking papers all day long) in the late afternoon, and it is also a plus point that the price is so '*rahmah!*' For RM6, you get the kopi kampung topped with a generous amount of vanilla ice-cream, whipped cream, and caramel! So if you pass by the stall at Bertam Kiosk, be sure to stop by for a cuppa!

