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**TRAVEL**

**&**

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## THE UNHURRIED BEAUTY OF

# YAN, TELUK INTAN AND BAGAN DATUK

As age advances, the allure of traveling to far-off lands, to some, tends to diminish. Fortunately, our own backyard presents travel destinations that, if not equivalent, are often more appealing than foreign lands. In this light, I would like to showcase three small towns I recently visited: Yan, Teluk Intan and Bagan Datuk.

The trip to Yan was unplanned. It was prompted by a family friend's need to oversee their family homestay. We accepted the offer to accompany them. While it's not uncommon for people to visit Gunung Jerai, Yan is just a town you pass by. Despite its lesser-known status, the charm and uniqueness of Yan unfolded as we explored the town. Their homestay, LamGlaz Homes, has the backdrop of Gunung Jerai. The mountain was still misty at the time we reached. Despite the poor transmission signal, we welcomed this as a sign to disconnect from our mobile phones and immerse ourselves in the natural surroundings.

The prevailing ambiance was dominated by the soothing sound of silence, accompanied by a refreshing drop in temperature. Many family lands in the area were turned into family holiday homestays and airbnb suitable for family or company bonding and recreation. Visitors can engage in various activities, including swimming in the nearby river and cycling or hiking into the mountain. Beyond these nature-centric pursuits, Yan proved to be a town steeped in historical connections to Aceh. One notable site was Kampung Aceh, a village that served as a reminder of the town's Indonesian heritage. In a surau (or menasah as it is called there), the Acehese terms for ladies and gentlemen lavatories were thoughtfully labeled as "inong" and "agam" respectively offering visitors a glimpse into the town's cultural tapestry. I was also informed that the locals still pepper their vocabulary with Acehese words!



Yan's scenic escape



Unlike Yan, I had harboured a desire to visit Teluk Intan for quite some time—perhaps driven by a lingering sense of guilt from having visited the Pisa many years ago, yet failing to

explore its equivalent in Teluk Intan. Finally, a trip was planned and we found ourselves at the foot of the Leaning Tower of Teluk Intan in the evening. Lit by lights at night, the building exuded a captivating charm, its structure reminiscent of a pagoda. Returning the next morning, we ascended the tower. The narrow steps leading to the top triggered memories of climbing the Galata. The experience was both nostalgic and exhilarating, offering a unique perspective of the town and its iconic tower that in the past served as a water tank but now merely as a clock tower.



Pulau Bangau where the locals have feathers and speak in tweets



In every place that we visit, my family never fails to include its waterways in our itinerary. Among the attractions that can be witnessed along the Teluk Intan river cruise of Sungai Perak are the countryside scenery, local life, engineering marvel and wildlife. Economic activities observed along the river banks include fishermen's boats, seafood restaurants and a bamboo industry. On the river, docked a gigantic steel sand mining ship, functioning to deepen the river by suctioning river sand, which was later sold for local development. The highlight of the cruise would be witnessing thousands of birds flocking home to a sandbar, now forming a small island called Pulau Bangau. Remarkably, the initial group of birds would settle in the back part of the island, while the subsequent arrivals would neatly occupy the front part, maintaining order and avoiding any clashes with each other. As dusk approaches, the island is full of the presence of black and white birds, returning home to rest.





I seized the opportunity to explore a nearby town to Teluk Intan, Bagan Datuk, driven by my childhood memories of studying about the town's significance in my Ilmu Alam (Geography) class as once, the largest producer of coconuts in Malaysia. As we entered Bagan Datuk, the landscape didn't quite match the vast coconut tree plantations depicted in my Geography class. Instead, the landscape was replaced by and dominated with palm oil plantations. Undeterred, we ventured deeper into the outskirts until I finally stumbled upon a reasonably sized coconut plantation with rows of neatly planted trees that towered impressively into the sky. My joy was evident as I eagerly stepped out of the car and happily posed in front of the coconut trees, fulfilling a nostalgic moment from my past.



Nutty Connection



In short, the journey through Yan, Teluk Intan and Bagan Datuk has been a captivating exploration of hidden gems and cherished memories. These small towns become not just destinations but repositories of memories, reminding us that the journey is as significant as the destination itself.

