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Tour de Ipoh

Discover the city by bike after a short train ride from KL

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THE Electric Train Service from Kuala Lumpur Sentral to Ipoh was something that I wanted to try.

Initially, I thought of having a walking tour of Ipoh's old town and jumping back onto the train as the last coach leaves for Kuala Lumpur at 6.30pm.

And after months of procrastination, I finally made a trip to this city up north recently.

The ETS was introduced in August last year with a single journey fare of RM30.

The usual inter-city train service costs about RM22, but the ETS offers a faster trip which is about two hours.

Instead of walking, I packed my Dahon Speed P8 folding bicycle and my mission was to identify a cycling route for a group of friends.

The ETS stops in major towns like Rawang, Tanjung Malim,

Sungkai, Bidor, Tapah road and Batu Gajah. I may have skipped a few towns as I had a tough time memorising most of them.

When I arrived in Ipoh, the first thing that greeted me was a heavy morning shower.

But that didn't deter me from cycling towards Jalan Bandar Timah where I had my breakfast.

Later, I made my way to the Ipoh Central Market as well as other parts of the city which was bustling with morning traffic.

Since this is a large city, there are some interesting parts that one can tour on a bicycle.

Noteworthy, is the Ipoh heritage trail which comes in two sections.

You can get a pamphlet from the state tourism office near the Ipoh *padang* and this literature is packed with details and maps which you can utilise for your walkabout.

My cycling tour ended at Lou

Wong chicken rice shop in Jalan Yau Tet Shin.

This was said to be one of the best *makan* places around and when it came to taste and price, I couldn't agree more.

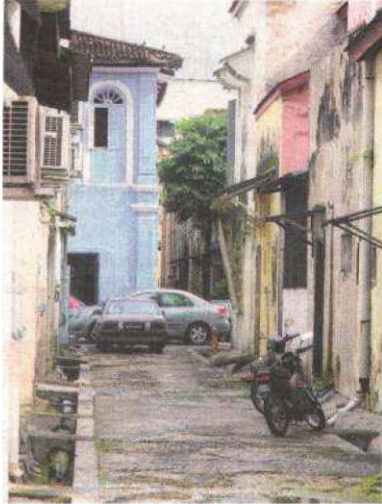
My breakfast and lunch was just fantastic and as the day came to an end, I boarded the ETS back to Kuala Lumpur Sentral.

A week later, I led a group of 11 folding bicycle cyclists to Ipoh again and repeated the fun I had touring parts of this historical city.

Our trip also coincided with the 'Lost Heritage of Perak' exhibition held at the Garden Villa, about 4km away from the Ipoh Central train station.

The ETS service departs daily to Ipoh with the earliest train at 6.30am and the last train from Ipoh at 6.30pm.

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Frozen in time: The backlanes in Ipoh's old town



A dying art: A Chinese lion head maker at work in her shop near the Ipoh Central Market.



Comfortable: The ETS coaches are spacious and luxurious.



Where tauchs rule: Lou Wong chicken rice shop in Ipoh

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Good food and great company: The cyclists having lunch in Ipoh before heading back to Kuala Lumpur.



Fast coach: The ETS service from Kuala Lumpur Sentral to Ipoh takes about two hours.



The cycling tour: Riding folding bikes around Ipoh provides a memorable experience.



Group photo: The folding bike cyclists at Ipoh's Garden Villa.



Old charm: Ipoh's central railway station.



Cheap and tasty: The famous Ipoh chicken rice.



Full of goodness: The writer's sar hor fun breakfast in Jalan Bandar Timah, Ipoh.