

Have rail will travel

Travel by train is a cheap and fun way to see Malaysia, discover the beauty and charm of the countryside and experience life in smaller towns. A network of railroads laid by the British before independence connects all states in the peninsula, except Terengganu. Apart from the two main lines i.e the west and east coast, Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad also operates several branch lines. One interesting feature of travel by train in Malaysia is its railway stations, some of which are architectural marvels. Most have similar designs and ambience and are located in the heart of town, a testimony on the importance of train as a mode of transportation.

1. KUALA LUMPUR STATION

Completed in 1910, the building is famous for its mixture of Eastern and Western architecture. Once the city's railway hub, its role diminished following the construction of the KL Sentral. The building has undergone renovations, upgrades and changes over the years. It houses the Station Hotel, which was later renamed Heritage Station Hotel. Equally imposing is its similarly-designed neighbouring structure, the Keretapi Tanah Melayu headquarters.

2. IPOH STATION

One look at this station and one can understand why it is affectionately known as the Taj Mahal of Ipoh. The structure, designed by A.B. Hubback and completed in 1917, boasts of British Raj Mogul style and Moorish-inspired domes. The imposing colonial-style architecture is without doubt one of Ipoh's landmarks.

3. ALOR STAR STATION

One of the major train stations on the west coast of the peninsula. Its design is typical of railway stations in the country, a long building with a clock tower in the middle. It has train services to Singapore, Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur, Padang Besar, and Hat Yai and Bangkok in Thailand.

4. JOHOR BARU STATION

Like Padang Besar up north, this station is the last stop in the south before entering Singapore. It is located near the border checkpoint.



5. KL SENTRAL

Opened in 2001, it houses the main railway station of Kuala Lumpur. The facility is designed as the city's rail-based transportation hub, hence its different look compared with older railway stations in the country.

6. PADANG BESAR STATION

The last station at the border with Thailand. Hence, it has immigration facilities and a long platform manned by railway officials from both countries.

7. MENTAKAB STATION

Trains from Gemas to Tumpat pass through this station, located at the edge of the town, which makes the small building difficult for outsiders to find.

8. SEREMBAN STATION

Constructed some 100 years ago, it has undergone several changes, chiefly to cater to the KTM Komuter train services. Like other KTM stations, it has administration and ticketing offices and passenger waiting area.

9. KLUANG STATION

This station is famous for another reason — its kopitiam, which is often packed, especially during breakfast time. Some go to the station just to sample the homemade and original dishes where the recipes have been passed through generations. The outlet has been in operations since the 1930s.

10. PORT WELD STATION

Nothing is left of the station except a stone signboard, said to be the only one in the country with four languages — Bahasa Malaysia, Jawi, Chinese and Tamil. The station has a rich history as it is here (now Kuala Sepetang) where the country's first railway track to Taiping was laid in 1885.

11. TAMPIN STATION

This town is in Negri Sembilan but its railway station is located in Pulau Sebang, the southern part of the town which comes under the administration of Malacca. Another town that has benefited from the railroads.

12. ARAU STATION

The second-last stop before reaching the Malaysia-Thailand border i.e Padang Besar station. Train travellers going to Pulau Langkawi normally disembark at this station before heading to Kuala Perlis.

13. GUA MUSANG STATION

Being the main inland town in Kelantan, Gua Musang station, located at the foot of a limestone hill, is a major stop along the east coast line or more popularly known as the jungle railway. For many years, train is the only mode of transportation as the area is not connected by roads.

14. TAPAH ROAD STATION

The station, one of the oldest in Malaysia, has been upgraded and now spots a new and modern design. It is considered a major stop as it is linked to the Penang-Singapore line.

BUTTERWORTH STATION

A major station for trains heading south to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore and up north to Hat Yai, Thailand. It is strategically located next to the bus and ferry terminal.

SENTUL STATION

One of the few stations constructed out of wood. It comes alive especially during the Hindu Thaipusam celebration, when a special train to ferry devotees to the Batu Caves temple is put into service.

TAIPING STATION

The station was built in 1885 to facilitate the transfer of tin to nearby Port Weld. The station was formerly located at the spot which is now the King Edward VII primary school. It was relocated to its present site when the railway line was extended to Ipoh and Butterworth in the 1890s.