



Quaint old buildings, like the Chop Guan Kee coffee house, dot the quiet town of Sungai Pelek.



Discover a different side of Sepang through the HoHo bus tour.



HL Dragon Fruit Eco Farm is home to the world's largest dragon fruit-shaped structure, which stands at a height of 9.3m. — Photos: GISELE SOO/The Star

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# Uncovering local gems

Board a hop-on, hop-off bus and explore Selangor's quaint town of Sepang.

THE vast spread of cactus fields, which dominate the landscape at HL Dragon Fruit Eco Farm, make for a truly unique sight in Sepang, Selangor.

These cacti produce the tropical fruits indicated in the farm's name. But among the many dragon fruits on the 12.1ha plantation, one immediately stands out for its massive size.

This particular "dragon fruit" is a multi-level building that towers over 9.3m, earning it a spot in the Guinness World Records as the world's largest dragon fruit-shaped structure in 2023. It doubles as a museum, with an air-conditioned interior that recounts the history of the farm through detailed murals and a rooftop deck that offers scenic views of the district.

We recently had the opportunity to visit this farm during a trip with Hop-On, Hop-Off Selangor – or HoHo for short. The Selangor HoHo started operations in June 2023, with a mission to introduce the state's attractions to local and international tourists.

On our day trip around Sepang, led by our amiable tourist guides Low Poh Kee and Christine, we experienced firsthand some of the sights and activities in town.

One of these was the aforementioned award-winning dragon fruit plantation that opened in 2011. Among its accolades is the



A mural depicting Sungai Sepang Besar, an important waterway in the district.

2022 Agriculture Innovation Award by the Selangor Department of Agriculture. On the same property is the HL

Restaurant and Café. The unique diner, which employs a farm-to-table concept, started welcoming visitors in 2016. Its menu consists

of local dishes such as nasi lemak and the "golden pillow" chicken curry bun – but all with a tasty dragon fruit spin!

Here are other interesting landmarks in and around Sepang that you can see on the bus tour.

## BBST Walk: Colourful alleys

Stretched along the vibrant alleys of the two-storey shop lots, the Bandar Baru Salak Tinggi Walk (aka BBST Walk) is a unique mural attraction that illustrates the lifestyle and rich cultures of Sepang.

"The local councils spruced up the back lane with various pieces of murals in December 2021 as a way to share its history with the visiting public," Low explained.

The murals here include *Kapal Korek Dengkil*, *Sungai Sepang Besar* and *Kampung Orang Asli* – all done by local artists.

*Kapal Korek Dengkil* depicts the abandoned Sri Banting Dredge, which was once said to be the biggest floating factory in Malaysia, weighing over 5,000 tonnes. The council has plans to revive and convert the dredger into a museum.

The *Sungai Sepang Besar* mural showcases how the waterway is used by locals to navigate the area, while the *Kampung Orang Asli* painting of three women in a traditional bamboo hut represents the Orang Asli villages found in Dengkil.

## Jeti Sirip Biru: Water activities galore

Located at Kampung Bagan Lalang, Jeti Sirip Biru or Sirip Biru Recreation Club hosts a variety of exciting adventures for visitors. You can spend the night on the boathouses, formerly fishermen's homes, or on a boat

cruise through the mangrove forests.

"Those who are more adventurous can go for a little kayak trip and get a taste of nature as they paddle along the calm waters," Low said.

"They can also try their hand at fishing."

He told us that the ikan bakar and pisang goreng sold at the stalls are not to be missed when visiting the jetty. "Even though the stalls are only open on the weekends, many visitors find themselves savouring the food during their time here."

## Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort: Over-water getaway

A five-star hotel offering stays in water villas, Avani Sepang Goldcoast Resort – when viewed from above – resembles a palm, formed by its 315 over-water villas and rooms.

A HoHo stop here means visitors get to take photos at the designated zone overlooking the villas and sea, while exploring the resort's offerings.

Located just 40 minutes from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), the resort is good for guests who seek a beach getaway. There are plenty of activities here, such as ATV rides, mangrove tours, village tours and dragon fruit planting.

## Sungai Pelek: A heritage-rich village

On the way to the next stop, Sungai Pelek, Low regaled us with history lessons on how some of the villages in Sepang were formed.

For Sungai Pelek, the charming place was among 450 Chinese new villages that were formed in the 1950s, a result of the 12-year conflict between the British and Communist parties in then Malaya.

A majority of the people living in these villages were from the Chinese ethnic subgroups Hokkien and Hakka.

Sungai Pelek has a handful of old buildings that are decorated to reflect the cultural heritage of its people.

Do check out some of the old-school kopitiam here.



The HoHo bus also offers open-air top deck seating. — FLOREY D. MIKIL/The Star

There are plenty of things to do at Jeti Sirip Biru, like kayaking, fishing and going on a river cruise.

## Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA Sepang: Time to shop

For shopaholics, this sprawling mall that houses more than 200 shops is a must-visit. A joint venture by Malaysia Airports and Japan's Mitsui Fudosan, Mitsui Outlet Park KLIA Sepang is the perfect place for travellers to get some shopping done before catching a flight.

The outlet shopping mall is located a mere 6km from both KLIA's Terminal 1 and 2, and there is a free shuttle bus that runs between the two terminals and the mall every 20 minutes.

Since this is an outlet mall, you can bet that most of the items sold here are much cheaper than what you can find at regular retail stores.

There are also many restaurant and cafe options within the mall, so you can spend long

hours shopping here without ever getting hungry, thirsty or bored.

## Other stops

There are a few other places that are on the HoHo route. These include the IOI City Mall (Symphony 3), Farm Fresh at University Putra Malaysia (UPM), Xiamen University Malaysia and the Sepang International Circuit.

The tour bus only operates on the weekends, and the route for Saturday is slightly different than the one for Sunday. Both routes will, however, begin and end at MRT Stadium Kajang.

Ticket prices start from RM25. For more information, check out the HoHo Selangor website (hohoselangor.com) and its social media.