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Memorable outing

By STEPHEN NG



SEREMBAN may be just an hour's drive from the Federal Capital, but it can be a great getaway outing for city folks during the weekends, just to escape the hustle and bustle of city life.

The hike in petrol prices aside, the most economical way of travelling to Seremban is actually by hopping onto the KTM Komuter train.



How it's done: An employee showing how rattan baskets are made.

A convenient one-day package tour of Seremban offered by KH Holidays is worth checking out.

"On arrival at the KTM station, our local tourist guide will bring the group for a buffet breakfast at Empayar Seremban Siew Pow," explains local tourist guide, Yeoh Yap Seng.

A good place to visit is a 34-acre Herbal Farm near Jalan Pantai, which features over 700 species of herbs. The two-hour stint at the farm can be a real educational visit, because its local proprietor, Tiang Koon Cheong is always enthusiastic

about sharing his knowledge about the medicinal values in herbs.

Tiang, who has been in the herbal business for the past 30 years, is working in partnership with a local public university to develop the herbal industry in Malaysia.

"Herbs may have their medicinal values, but there is nothing better than to make it part of one's daily diet," he said.

"We have plans to introduce our herbs into the local market so that housewives can learn to prepare their dishes using these natural herbs."

Tiang said that most people have herbs in their garden without realising they are there. "The Bougainvillea is in fact a form of herb, as its petals can be used in preparing omelettes," he adds. "It helps with blood circulation."

Next on the list is the Jelita Ostrich Show Farm.

Its farm manager, 34-year-old Kevin Suresh, who has been working with ostriches since 1997, is always ready to share his knowledge about the big birds. It is here that one learns that ostriches do not bury their small heads in the sand.

"This is nothing but a myth," assures Suresh.

"In reality, ostriches do not bury their heads in the sand. They are in fact, territorial birds and are known to attack humans. Therefore, it is important that visitors do not wander around the farm by themselves."

Standing at 10-feet tall is "Big Show", an ostrich of South African ostrich breed, which was born in Malaysia five years ago.

"We call him 'Big Show' because he is our show bird, and at about 180kg,



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he is the biggest bird on the farm," said Suresh.

There are some 70 ostriches, mainly imported from South Africa.

Considering that the life span of the ostriches is about 70 years, most of the birds here are relatively young, but they can run at a speed of some 70km per hour.

The farm's proprietor, S. S. Abraham reveals that he is now conducting more research into the use of ostrich oil with the help of Monash University's medical faculty in Petaling

Jaya. Currently, he has produced a number of products using ostrich oil, such as Essence of Ostrich, Pure Ostrich Oil, Hair Shampoo, Face Cream, Facial Cleanser, Soap, Hand & Body Lotion, Scalp Stimulator (for those who are losing their hair) and Body Shampoo.

Next on the itinerary, after a hearty lunch at Empayar Seremban Siew Pow, is the Handicraft Complex in Seremban.

According to Rita Zain, Karyaneka regional manager the old colonial building located at Jalan Dato' Abdul Kadir has recently been refurbished.

It is currently used by Karyaneka to showcase its wide variety of local handicraft, which she said, are highly sought-after by foreign tourists.

"We also conduct a special demonstration to show our guests how the local handicraft is made," she elaborates, as one of her staff, Lipah Marshidi works on the rattan basket.

Depending on the time available, the day trip can also include visits to Seremban Two City Park, snake farm and other interesting spots around town.

All three meals are taken care of at the famed Empayar Seremban Siew Pow.

The one-day Seremban tour for local and foreign tourists is offered by KH Holidays and for more information, contact Yeoh Yap Seng at 012-6126829 or Amy Chew of Empayar Seremban Siew Pow at 016-3737811.



For the more adventurous: A Jelita Ostrich farm employee showing how to ride on an ostrich.

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