



THE LAND OF GRACE  
**perak**  
Old Trades

## Trades of Past Days

Once upon a time, there were legends of rings wearing robes of gold thread, warriors wielding curved daggers with spiritual powers, and clay jars storing healing water. This booklet was written in hopes of reviving a fading culture of local art and trade in Perak, and appreciating passionate individuals who skillfully weave generations of tradition into local treasures.

# FADING TRADITIONS

keeping old crafts alive

More than half a century ago, the story of this land began with barter and trade, of skill and strife. Walking down paved streets and past brick walls, you might wave to your friendly neighborhood uncle with clay stained palms, walk past ladies etching gold embroidery on velvety sleeves, or watch the sun set beyond the horizon as fishermen drag their boats to shore and sort their catch.

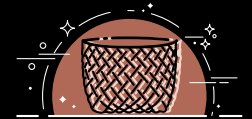
Today, families gather around the table, just the sight of hair covering faces with casted shadows of dimly lit screens. Artificial intelligence

is taking over problem solving, and machinery taking over labor. Everything is fast, instant, and connectedly disconnected. Local trades previously passed down for generations are fearing extinction within the drastic changes of a decade; and technology threatens the very livelihood and existence of the cultural treasures of our land.

By embracing, learning, and preserving these old trades, we uncover within our land a revived culture, lest bygone the traditions of local art that makes our nation so beautifully unique.



Mother Earth Water Jug



Before Plastic



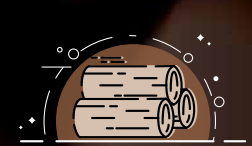
Jars of Clay



Weaving Furniture



Threading Gold



The Black Gold



The King's Keris Maker



A Cup of History



Pipe Making



A Poor Man's Food



Lights of Hope



Handmade Boats



# Perak Map of TREASURES

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Labu Sayong is a traditional water pitcher for kitchen or daily use, made from clay molded from local earth.

## 02 JARS OF CLAY

Traditional ceramic pottery wood-fired in dragon kilns is a rare sight today, but Ipoh master artisan Fatt Gor is keeping the art alive.

## 03 THREADING GOLD

A unique cultural heritage in Kuala Kangsar, Tekat Benang Emas (gold thread embroidery) is popular for its beauty and elegance, highly sought after by royalty and nobility.

## 04 A NEW ART

Former newspaper photographer Zul stumbles upon a new career as the pipe maker, creating a unique form of local art.

## 05 LIGHTS OF HOPE

A cultural art, lanterns carry a bright symbol of goodwill and blessings, welcoming visitors on the doorways of local houses.

## 06 THE KING'S KERIS MAKER

The keris (or Kris in English) is a Malay dagger with a wavy blade, an old legendary weapon alleged to contain magical powers.

## 07 WEAVING FURNITURE

Handmade rattan woven furniture was a common household sight of local homes, due to its cooling nature in Malaysian heat.

## 08 BEFORE PLASTIC

Before plastic, bamboo woven baskets were the common storage containers and marketplace necessity.

## 09 THE BLACK GOLD

Hidden away in rural Perak, these traditional charcoal kilns carry a nostalgic tinge of history, keeping "The Black Gold" alive.

## 10 A CUP OF HISTORY

The nation's oldest operating coffee mill, where you get to taste roasted charcoal coffee at its source, while uncovering the historical past of Sun Yat Sen (the Father of Modern China).

## 11 A POOR MAN'S FOOD

Ikan Bilis (anchovies) is a staple in the Malaysian kitchen. In the Satay Factory, visitors can observe first-hand the process of this old trade.

## 12 HANDMADE BOATS

Here, large fishing boats are made without drafts nor blueprints, only following a simple template by orders of master boatbuilders.

# Mother Earth WATER JUG

Labu Sayong Pottery Making in Kuala Kangsar **F4**



**Duration :**  
2 hours

**Transportation :**

**Booking Notice :**  
2 days



Xtream Craft Deco N Pottery

12, Jalan Kampung, Kampung Batang Kulim, 33040 Kuala Kangsar, Perak

+6012-292 2884

Mon – Sat, 9:00am – 6:30pm

RM 48.00/pax

Labu Sayong is a traditional water pitcher for kitchen or daily use, molded from the earth in the district. It has a slightly porous nature that cools the water it contains, creating an old belief that the water is fresher, cooler, and tastier – even containing nutritional benefits. The process of it uses clay soil found along the riverbanks, a mineral produced when rocks break down. The clay soil is pounded and filtered into fine powder. When this clay powder is wet, it can then be kneaded and shaped into pottery. The unhardened pottery is then smoked on coconut husks and firewood at a traditional woodfire kiln for several hours. To create a rich, black and shiny ebony color, the fired pottery is then rolled in old rice husks.

Today, it is more seen as a household decorative rather than a water jug. Modern ceramics have been glazed for appearance, but in Kuala Kangsar, the labu sayong is mostly preserved in its natural, rugged appearance. In Xtream Craft Deco N Pottery, you'll see pottery of all shapes and sizes, colors, and decorative patterns. You might also see craftsmen on the job, sculpting the clay with artistic precision, each piece emerging as a unique handiwork of art.



Cultural



Hands-on Fun



Shopping

\* Refer to coordinates on Page 4 to locate the site on the district map

# JARS OF CLAY

Traditional Wood-fired Pottery in Ipoh **F5**



**Duration :**  
3 hours

**Transportation :**

**Booking Notice :**  
1 day



Xin Fa Pottery

Jalan Kuala Kangsar, 30010 Ipoh, Perak

+6012-501 5983

Daily, 9:00am – 5:00pm

RM 65.00/pax

The clay spun between his fingers, as he skillfully shaped the jar in the palms of his hands. It was like magic to see a chunk of earth transform into an elegant jar within the blink of an eye. It seemed simple at first glance, but attaining the right moisture while controlling the soft, slimy clay to mold it to the desired shape was no easy feat. It required patience, focus, and a steady hand to create the perfect piece of pottery.

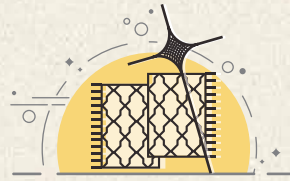
Once well known for traditional ceramic pottery wood-fired in dragon kilns, Ipoh's talent has been fading over the decade with the increase of modern machinery. Few surviving master artisans remain in the old-fashioned trade, as many would rather save time by automating the process.

On the side table, lays a variety of differently shaped ceramic pottery. Some had holes, some were imbalanced and some were oddly shaped. When asked, Fatt Gor simply said that he had kept his students' works of art, because every piece was unique and carried their personal touch. With these old trades you get a glimpse of the past, of skill and of imperfection, and of hard work and soft human touch.

\* Workshop bookings can be made through [www.lokalocal.com](http://www.lokalocal.com)

# THREADING GOLD

Gold Embroidery  
at Kuala Kangsar E3



Duration :  
2 hours

Transportation :

Booking Notice :  
2 days



Gesamas Sdn. Bhd.

33700 Kuala Kangsar,  
Perak

+6019-214 1866

RM 228.00/pax

Leaning over a wooden loom, she picked up her needle and cardboard cut-out, her fingers nimbly weaving the silky gold thread through the velvet with focused precision, creating the petal outline of a delicate floral pattern. Mardziah binti Abu Kassim came from a long line of embroiderers in her family, and dedicated herself to the trade for over 3 decades. Her handiwork is widely recognized, even featured in the coronation of the 13th King, Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abiden.

A unique cultural heritage in Kuala Kangsar, Tekat Benang Emas (gold thread embroidery) is popular for its beauty and elegance. The history of tekak benang emas stems from our country's history of trade, brought in by traders from the Middle East in the 15th century. The embroidery was sought after by royalty and nobility to decorate clothes and household items such as curtains, cushions, bedsheets, and table cloths. Today, it is still used ceremonially on important occasions such as weddings, engagements, and births.

# The King's KERIS MAKER

The Keris Making Expert  
of Kuala Kangsar E4



Duration :  
8 hours

Transportation :

Booking Notice :  
3 days



Pak Mazin  
4th Generation Keris Maker

Kampung Padang Changkat,  
Bukit Chandan,  
33000 Kuala Kangsar, Perak

+6017-656 1040

RM 290.00/pax

The *keris* (or *Kris* in English) is a Malay dagger with a wavy blade, an old weapon alleged to contain magical powers of good or bad. Everything about the *keris* is intertwined with Malay beliefs and traditions, handmade using seven types of iron materials, each carrying symbolic meanings such as protection, strength, and unity, its patterns and curves customized to mirror the personality of its owner. Kuala Kangsar once had more than 30 *keris* craftsmen back in the 1960's, but the numbers have dwindled significantly over time.

Today, few remain, but the most distinguished of them is the famous *keris* master Pak Mazin. Renowned for his skilled craftsmanship, he was even commissioned to forge a *keris* for the King of Malaysia (Yang di-Pertuan Agong). At the age of 10, Pak Mazin decided to follow the family's footsteps as the 4th generation to take upon the family tradition of *keris* making, keeping the ancient tradition alive for the past 5 decades, and soon passing it down to his own son. Knowing this is a dying craft, Pak Mazin is outspoken about the secrets of his trade, and encouraging the younger generation to preserve the *keris* as a national pride and identity.

## A NEW ART

Customised Handmade  
Wooden Pipes in Ipoh **F4**



Duration :

-

Transportation :



Booking Notice :

-



ZK9 Handmade Pipes

📍 Jalan Chepor Indah 26,  
30000 Ipoh, Perak

☎ +6014-603 3066

📌 ZK9 Handmade Pipes

Not many can say their fame started from a single Facebook post, but this is the told story of former newspaper photographer Zulkarnain Saidin, or as he prefers to be called – Zul. The story begins 4 years ago, when an odd-looking branch from a Jering tree randomly caught his attention. It was shaped like a pipe, and he was curious to see if it could actually become one. After some Internet research, he attempted to smoothen the surface, apply shellac, and drill a hole through. The result? A usable pipe. He was so proud of his first work that he posted a photo of it on Facebook – and the rest was history.

Pipe enthusiasts started noticing his work and placing customised orders on Facebook. Since finding a new-found passion and sharing it with the world, Zul continued to learn and practice his art with a sudden burst in motivation, learning the variations in wood types and equipment tools, and mastering his precision and skill in crafting each pipe to his customer's unique preferences. Today, Zul has big dreams to open a store of his local craft, perhaps even a café for pipe enthusiasts to gather and marvel at his collection and skill.



\* Refer to coordinates on Page 4 to locate the site on the district map



Cultural



Hands-on Fun



Shopping

## LIGHTS OF HOPE

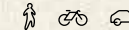
Traditional Lantern  
Making Workshop in Ipoh **F5**



Duration :

2.5 hours

Transportation :



Booking Notice :

2 days



\*Photo credited to lokalocal.com



In the olden days, candlelit lanterns were an important source of light. The folks of a bygone era believed that these lanterns carried blessings in each light, and were a bright symbol of goodwill. However, when electricity became a common convenience, the popularity of these traditional lanterns faded away, though the symbolism remained.

Today, Ipoh boy Chuen Mun Wai (better known as Tjoan) is one of few lantern makers keeping this light alive. The art of lantern making sounds simple, but it is a tedious process requiring much dedicated skill and patience, which Tjoan offers workshops to teach. Simply put, the frame of the lantern is first shaped using bamboo, then secured using thread and glue. The fastened structure is then wrapped with white cotton cloth, and painted with 7 or 8 coats of acrylic or natural paint. According to Tjoan, even though lanterns that are made using natural ingredients take a longer time to make, the colours are sharper. To prevent paint from seeping through the cloth, agar-agar paste is finally used to coat the fabric.

In modern society, these lanterns are used as surname lanterns, and are passed down through generations. There are a large variety of shapes, sizes, and styles of lanterns, carrying the artist's personal touch and cultural heritage. Today, you can still see some traditional lanterns hanging on doorways of Peranakan houses, shining beams of hope and goodwill for all those who enters.

### TJOAN's Lantern Workshop

📍 52B, JALAN MASJID,  
30300 IPOH, PERAK

☎ +6012-512 2119

💰 RM 60.00/pax

\* Workshop bookings can be made through [www.lokalocal.com](http://www.lokalocal.com)

\* Photo credited to lokalocal.com

# Weaving FURNITURE

Rattan Store in Ipoh **F5**



Duration :

-

Transportation :



Booking Notice :

-



Ken Rattan Furniture Store

📍 301, Jalan Gunung Rapat, Gunung Rapat, 31350 Ipoh, Perak

☎️ +6012-519 2776

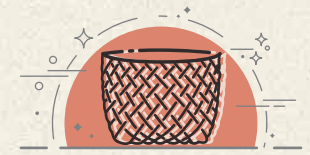
🕒 Mon – Sat, 10:00am – 6:00pm

Widely used to make furniture, baskets and household objects, rattan furniture was a common household sight of the past. Rattan-made chairs are cooling in Malaysia's tropical heat, durable for long term use, and good for sitting posture. There are many different types of rattan furniture with different designs, and a chair can be made using different types of rattan such as mantang, semambu and manau canes. Many rattan craftsmen spend their lives learning from masters of generations past, perfecting the craft to start a business.

But this career is not one without its challenges. Materials are increasing in price and availability, manpower is lacking, and modern furniture is more viable for businesses. Manual rattan weaving can be tiring on the eyes and back, and it is common to have cuts caused by the sharp rattan skins. For a simple chair, the cane poles are heated in fire and bent while hot to create the curves. Strips of rattan skin are then woven and interwoven into the seat of the chair for its backing. Chair joints are tied and woven with more rattan, ensuring the stability and durability of the chair. A beautiful handiwork of art woven into common daily necessities, finding a rattan furniture shop today is like finding a gem in your backyard, with only a few remaining rattan craftsmen left in Perak.

# BEFORE PLASTIC

Bamboo Basket Making  
in Chemor village **F4**



Duration :

1.5 hours

Transportation :



Booking Notice :

1 day



📍 29, Kanthan Baru 8, 31200 Chemor, Perak

☎️ +6016-513 9935

🕒 Mon – Sat, 8:00am – 11:00am

💰 RM 180.00/pax

About half a century ago, bamboo woven baskets were the common storage containers and carrier of vegetables and fruits to and from the market. The business of weaving bamboo baskets used to be a successful industry in the village until the 1990s. However today, they are being replaced by plastic baskets that are easily mass-produced, cheaper and more durable. This is an issue faced by traditional bamboo basket makers who make their living from selling these handwoven baskets. Not only is it a laborious job, the material sourcing is limited and requires appropriate licensing; its cost is high while its profit margin is low.

However, you will still find one surviving place where they still produce bamboo baskets. Madam Lau explains how her family has been working in this industry for more than 30 years, and finds it difficult to sustain. The business is no longer viable due to the difficulty in sourcing of raw material and drop in demand, causing them to work other jobs on the side to put food on the table. But as you watch their skilled hands weaving the bamboo from crude strands into a neatly woven basket, you'd almost wish you could preserve this local trade for generations to come.

\* Refer to coordinates on Page 4 to locate the site on the district map



Cultural



Hands-on Fun

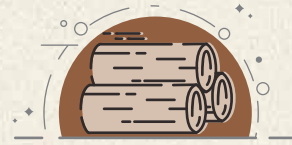


Shopping

\* Workshop bookings can be made through [www.lokalocal.com](http://www.lokalocal.com)

# THE BLACK GOLD

Kuala Sepetang  
Charcoal Factory B4



Duration :

-

Transportation :



Booking Notice :

-



Khay Hor Holdings Sdn. Bhd.  
Charcoal Factory & Dealer

Jalan Taiping,  
34650 Kuala Sepetang, Perak

+6012-573 9563

Daily, 9:00am – 5:00pm

Free admission

16.3 kilometres away from Taiping is a quiet town called Kuala Sepetang, known for its rural environment of fishing villages, mangrove swamps, and forest reserve. Unbeknown to most, this small town is where seemingly lost old-world trades like traditional charcoal production are still kept alive by the generations, producing charcoal so fine, it was coined "The Black Gold".

The charcoal making process is a long and laborious one. The mangrove logs are first shipped through a manmade canal, which can only be transported during high tide. To smoke the wood, workers have to watch the fire for weeks, and it takes roughly one month to complete each cycle. Set up by the Japanese and subsequently destroyed at the end of their occupation of Malaya, these traditional charcoal kilns carry a nostalgic tinge of history, telling of the local's strength to regain from the ashes what was lost and rebuild the industry for themselves.



Khay Hor Charcoal Factory is the largest traditional charcoal factory in Kuala Sepetang. Established in the 1930s, the family business is now run by the third generation of Chuahs. Expanding into new strategies to keep the business sustainable in modern times, Chuah is diversifying the range into modern charcoal products including shampoos, soaps, hair dyes and mosquito repellents. Apparently, it looks like the black gold is here to stay.



Cultural



Hands-on Fun



Shopping



# A CUP OF HISTORY

The Historical Coffee Mill  
In Taiping **C4**



Duration :  
1 hour

Transportation :

Booking Notice :  
-



## Antong Coffee Mill

- Kampung Asam Kumbang, 34000 Taiping, Perak
- +605-807 5189
- Daily, 8:30am – 5:30pm
- Free admission



Coffee is a daily necessity that many of us struggle to go a day without. The culture of “kopitiam” (local coffee shops) is a norm in Malaysia in Malaysia, where mornings see frequent locals with their usual breakfast of white buttered toasted bread and soft boiled eggs, with a cup of Kopi-O (Sweet Black coffee).

Perak boasts some of the best local coffee around, housing the nation’s oldest operating coffee mill at Antong Coffee Factory in Taiping, where you get to taste the signature charcoal coffee at its source. Watch with your own eyes the most primitive process of wood-fire coffee roasting as workers manually pour and shovel coffee beans into mixers and hot plates. Listen to the fire sparks crackling, with clouds of smoke rising from the heat of the furnace, carrying with it the aroma of freshly roasted coffee beans. Taste test a range of coffee varieties, and buy your favorite flavor home to share.

The site also has historical significance, showcasing a preserved room that takes you back in time to the early ninety’s, to the home of revolutionary Sun Yat Sen’s mistress Chen Cui Fen. Sun Yat Sen is known to be the “Father of Modern China”, and led the historical revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty and formed the Republic of China.

\* Refer to coordinates on Page 4 to locate the site on the district map



Cultural

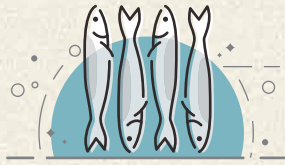


Hands-on Fun



Shopping

## A POOR MAN'S FOOD



Dried Seafood Snacks  
In Pangkor **B7**



Hai Seng Hin  
Satay Fish Factory

📍 200A, Sungai Pinang Kecil,  
32300 Pulau Pangkor, Perak

☎️ +605-688 2333

🕒 Daily, 8:30am – 6:00pm

### Transportation :



Once termed a “poor man’s food”, Ikan Bilis (anchovies) is a staple in the Malaysian kitchen. Salted and dried anchovies add a unique flavor to simple dishes such as hot rice porridge or our national dish Nasi Lemak. Sitting on the coastal edge of Perak’s famous Pangkor Island is the Pangkor Fish Satay Factory (also known as Kilang Satay Ikan Hai Seng Hin) – the source of the freshest dried seafood around, especially famous for its Ikan Bilis. The fishing industry is Pangkor’s major economic occupation, and the island is known for its rich ecosystem and “back in time” nature that welcomes its visitors to experience authentic island culture.

In the Satay Factory, visitors can observe first-hand the process of this old trade. Walking along the dock and gazing at the jetty leading into the horizon, you can see fishing boats anchored on shore, draped with nets and ropes, and quaint fishing villages lining the shore. If you visit at the right time, you might see fishermen getting ready to go out into sea. Fish are caught, stored on the boats, and then brought back to the shore for sorting, drying, and packing at the factory. Most of the produce is then exported nationally, but there is also a little store for visitors to buy a variety of dried seafood snacks such as crispy satay cuttlefish, barbequed fish, prawn crackers, and dried squid – fresh from its source.

## HANDMADE BOATS



Traditional Boatbuilding  
in Pangkor **B7**

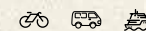


Hoo Huat Boat Builder  
(Tukang Bot)

📍 Sungai Pinang Kecil, Pangkor

🕒 Daily, 9:00am – 6:00pm

### Transportation :



Hidden away in the coast of Pangkor island is another local gem of Perak. Here, large fishing boats are made without drafts nor blueprints, only following a simple template by orders of master boatbuilders. If you visit the site, a door down from the Pangkor Fish Satay Factory, you may see workers in their process of handcrafting simple planks of wood into strong and majestic boats. This tradecraft has been passed down for generations amongst the local Chinese, thriving in the 1970s and 1980s, but is now facing the possibility of discontinuation.

The price of building these boats have risen drastically over the years, due to depleting raw material of wood, raising prices of these boat masterpieces up to RMI.5 million each. Each boat takes months of daily manual labour to complete, and only a handful of boats are completed each year. Sustaining such tedious and laborious work is challenging, as there are only a handful of skilled master boatbuilders left on the island. Even though they offer training workshops, and are eager to pass it to younger generations, most young adults would rather venture into urban cities for higher paying skilled jobs. This traditional process of boatbuilding is a heritage practice of Malaysian culture, and if we do not spread the appreciation for these old trades, we risk the extinction of this beautiful handiwork and others that make Perak so unique.



**TOURISM PERAK MANAGEMENT BERHAD**

22, 22A & 22B, Jalan Teh Hawa, 30300 Ipoh, Perak

Tel | +605-249 9966 / +605-241 2372

Email | [wow@tourismperakmalaysia.com](mailto:wow@tourismperakmalaysia.com)

[www.tourismperakmalaysia.com](http://www.tourismperakmalaysia.com)



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霹靂州旅游局

All information stated in the brochure is correct at the time of printing.

