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HIKING, MALAYSIA, SELANGOR

Bukit Tunggul hike

NOVEMBER 12, 2021 | POKOKKELAPA | LEAVE A COMMENT

Bukit Tunggul in Dengkil is the weekend playground for Malaysia's dirt bikers, and for that reason flies under the radar of most hikers. It's a relatively easy foray with pleasant views, and is a fantastic example of harmonious co-existence between disparate forest users.

My first taste of Bukit Tunggul was in early 2019 with KL Hiking. It came after a jaunt around Paya Indah Wetland, the highlight of which was staring at crocodiles and the inside of a hippo's mouth.



What a croc....

For whatever reason, our exploration of the wetland was curtailed by heavy-handed officials. Undeterred we decamped to nearby Bukit Tunggul instead.

Much of *that* Bukit Tunggul hike is a blur to me. I remember several things: the trig and nondescript views, which were of Nilai; parking at the end of Jalan Tok Abu in Kampung Jenderam Hilir and approaching the trig from the south via an oil palm plantation; and the way it ended – a chunk of forest had been clear felled and instead of hiking under the tree canopy we hiked across a barren wasteland. Perhaps this was an omen of the struggle nature lovers would face protecting their wild spaces in the near future.



Bukit Unggul 2019: How it started.....



Bukit Unggul 2019: How it ended.....

In contrast, my hike with the Trailblazers on Malaysia Day 2021 began from the end of Jalan Sahabat, and approached Bukit Tunggal peak and its trig from the north.

Traversing a series of undulating hills punctuated by electric pylons, we made a clockwise loop of the hilltop, traversing a mix of wide, mostly shady track and clear forested trail before returning the way we came.



Bukit Tunggul 2021 – first group hike after MCO3.



To the right, Bukit 1000, to the left, the trail that we took.

Our first obstacle: Bukit 1000. Marked by a TNB substation, Bukit 1000's hill face is a focal point for daredevil dirt bikers during Enduro competitions. The objective is to surmount it. Judging by this hilarious video by Bin Chin (<https://www.youtube.com/c/BinChin/videos>) the odds of succeeding are not great, but hey, extra points for trying....

With no wheels, just legs, we took the shorter, gentler trail to the left, and once out of the forest made for the pylon for views across a lake towards the administrative capital of Putrajaya.



Home, just across the water....



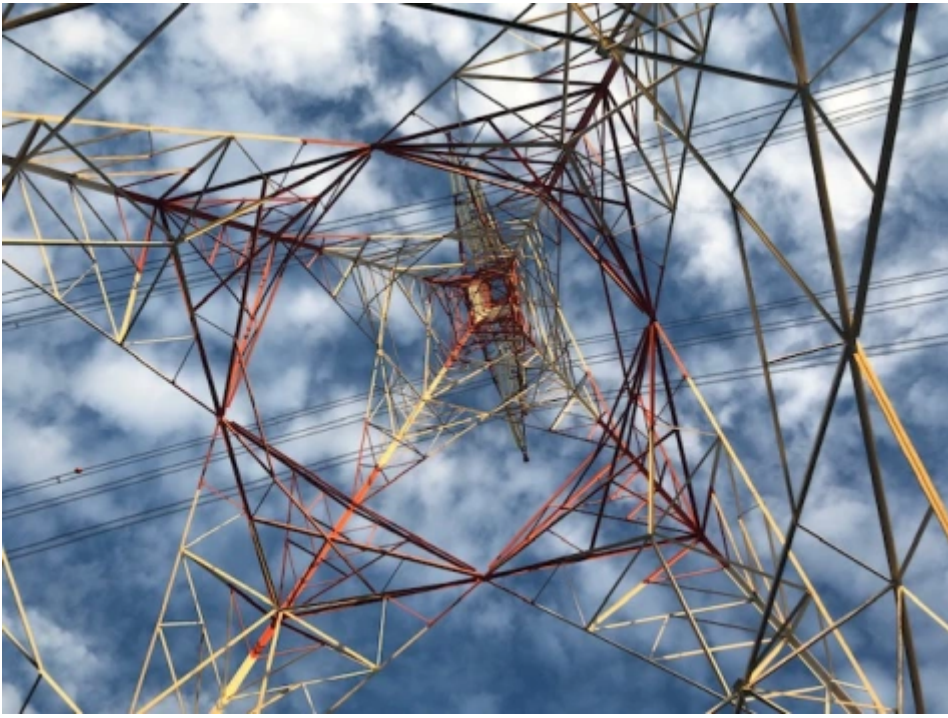
The hilltop trail towards the red and white pylon.

Entering the forest on the other side, we emerged at another pylon. Rather than duck into the the copse of trees beyond it, we made our way along an open trail until we came to a colossal red and white monster of a pylon.



The overlord of Bukit Tunggul pylons.





Into the thick of it....

Following the trail into the forest, our path soon widened into a broad undulating track. Commonly used by 2-wheel vehicles, it can easily accommodate 4-wheelers, and has numerous trails and other dirt tracks radiating from it, some of which are labelled "B" or "C" (but not "A").



The broad trail on the other side of the thicket....



Like life, this ones has a lot of ups and downs....

We stuck to the most obvious trail until we arrived at a fork 30 to 40 minutes after starting out. Proceeding left we climbed up towards Bukit Janda, itself a fork. This time we went right passing Bukit Bujang along the way.



The first major fork in the road.



After heading left, we began our ascent....



Bukit Janda, the second of the forks in the road.





Hiking up past Bukit Bujang. The locations, which have been named by the bikers that use these trails are witty descriptions rather than geological/topographical features. Neither Bukit Janda nor Bukit Bujang are peaks.



The wide track eventually narrows into a foot trail.

After some slogging, the ascending track narrows to a single footpath just before Bukit Beirut. The name is something of a misnomer since Bukit Beirut lacks a Beirut (or trig as it's also known). What it did have is great views of Bukit Unggul Country Club's 18-hole golf course and the faint outline of KL city's most prominent buildings through the early morning haze.



Bukit Beirut.



Bukit Unggul Country Club's golfing greens at the foot of Bukit Tunggul.

Oh wait, did I say Bukit Unggul? Don't I mean Bukit Tunggul? This had me stumped too but my guess is that the Country Club (where the golf course is located) chose to drop the "T" to convey prestige, since "unggul" is the Malay word for excellence and "tunggul" is the Malay word for stump and colloquially means stupid. Lol!



The short distance between Bukit Beirut and the trig at Bukit Tunggul is blessed with great views northwards of Putrajaya and Kuala Lumpur.

The most impressive views are immediately following Bukit Beirut when we are out into the open. The hill's actual peak is within view then, as is a near 180 degree panorama of the Klang Valley as viewed from the south.



The beirut aka trig. You can spot it from Bukit Beirut but technically it's located atop Bukit Tunggul.





Trailblazer head honcho Kelvin Weng takes a load off.

We took a short break at the summit of Bukit Tunggul and celebrated Malaysia Day with photos by the trig, and cups of coffee and slices of Kelvin's butter cake beneath the peak-side pylon.



Happy Malaysia Day, everyone! Image courtesy of Trailblazer Hiking Club.

30 minutes later we resumed our journey and headed down the slope on the far side of the pylon into the forest towards the southern most point of the hike.



Bike tyre tracks even up here....



Through the forest on the other side of the pylon at the peak to the pylon at the border with Negeri Sembilan.

Sparse but leafy, we emerged 15 minutes later by yet another pylon (ugh, if I have to use that word one more time). This one is on the border of Negeri Sembilan with views of Nilai.



Still not allowed across the border when this was shot but we got pretty close to it....

Now on our return journey, we entered the forest opposite, ignoring the B junction and continued along the flat C route to Bukit Cuak.



Ducking back into the forest on the opposite side to begin our homeward journey.



Bukit Cuak.

It was here that we detoured in search of a hidden waterfall. Videos from 2018 like this one (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cZwG8kFaFWk>) (click on the link and fast forward to the 6 minute mark) are proof Air Terjun Jenderam Hulu's existence, but we abandoned the idea once Kelvin realised from his GPS readings that it might have become the victim of clearing and development.

On a subsequent excursion, my hiking buddy Eric and I didn't have much luck either, but we did discover a lovely stream nicknamed Sungai Romania.



Eric and I happened upon Sungai Romania by accident.

After backtracking to the bottom of Bukit Cuak, we continued our return marching along a mostly flat trail past Bukit Kacang until Bukit Tiga Beradik.

The trail continues here, but Kelvin sent us up Bukit Tiga Beradik's challenging slope instead, where we took a shortcut at the top through the forest to emerge just above Bukit Bujang.



From the bottom of Bukit Cuak we continue along the mostly straight flat trail to Bukit Tiga Beradik.



Passing Bukit Kacang. No peanuts found, so either it's named because it's an easy hill to conquer or the bikers who named it are being ironic and it's a tough nut to crack....



At Bukit Tiga Beradik, Kelvin had us proceed up the slope. Eric and I went straight on a separate hike and lived to regret it. Lol!



Head up here for a quicker way back to Bukit Bujang.

I recommend that you take the same route if you're heading back to Jalan Sahabat. A week later, when Eric and I returned to explore, we proceeded straight at Bukit Tiga Beradik and ended up going round in circles between Sign 19 and a rocky ridge, before finally locating the main trail somewhere between the red pylon and the first fork. By that time our phone battery life and his water was almost used up. Fortunately we had started our hike early so we would have had the whole day to find our way out if it had come to that....



At the top of the hill we made a quick detour through the forest to emerge just above Bukit Bujang.



One of the bikers we met on the way back to our vehicles.....

Loop completed, the Trailblazers and I were making our way back along the wide dirt track when several motorbikes roared past us. Their presence signalled the unofficial end of the hiking shift and beginning of the biking shift. Though I'm not usually a fan of high impact forest use, it was clear that it's the bikers that maintain these trails and the pleasure derived from their use is a shared one, for which I'm grateful.



The last leg, approaching Bukit 1000.

Altitude 278 metres.

Distance and time My loop with the Trailblazers took approximately 3 1/2 hours to complete at a leisurely pace with lots of stops and covered 7 kilometres.

Pros Suitable for beginners. Nice views.

Cons If you're unfamiliar with Bukit Tunggul, the criss-crossing trails and junctions can be confusing.

Rating Easy.

Leech count Yes but rare.

Tip Get in early before it gets hot and the bikers arrive. If you decide to explore the smaller trails, do come prepared with water, a trail app and a power bank.

Permits No indication that a forestry department permit is required.

Facilities None but there is a Shell petrol station located on the other side of the Kampung Jenderam Hilir traffic lights.

Parking At the top of Jalan Bahagia where the trailhead is located. Avoid parking on the road, it's a narrow residential lane, and don't park opposite the link houses at the bottom of the road. We were informed that parking there could burst the underground water pipe.

GPS coordinates (trailhead) 2.88686, 101.73749

You can review my AllTrails route of Bukit Tunggul here

(<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/bukit-unggul-c2964ca>). Keep in mind that at Bukit Cuak we veered off trail for an unsuccessful exploration, so ignore it and proceed directly towards Bukit Kacang. **You can also check out HikeGuy aka Jeffery's wonderfully representative video of our hike here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MuGtIApqOo>).**

Wanna come along on the next hike? Join Trailblazer Hiking Club Malaysia, here (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2458926291018484>).

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