

Authentic \$2 White Coffee Brewed By Ipoh Native At Bishan Kiosk; Tamago Sando Sold Too

The Daily Cup serves both traditional and mod takes on Ipoh white coffee. There's also good kaya toast from \$2 or fancier \$4.50 Japanese-inspired egg sarnies.



Alvin Lim

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Ipoh, the capital city of Perak in Malaysia, is a foodie destination with a number of popular dishes like [curry mee](#), [hor fun](#) and white coffee. The famous brew gets its characteristic fragrance and hue from coffee beans slow-roasted with margarine so that it's a lighter beige but not 'white' per se (as opposed to the darker blend of typical Malaysian coffee roasted with margarine and also sugar). It made such an impact on hawker Janson Chew (left in pic) on his recent visit to the city that the 35-year-old "immediately decided that it was something [he] wanted to explore".

"In the very first Ipoh coffeeshop we went to, when my wife and I took our first sips, we looked at each other and I knew we were thinking the same thing," says the At-Sunrice GlobalChef Academy culinary school grad.

After several more trips to nail down a supplier and months of planning, The Daily Cup was born. The takeaway-only kiosk has been selling both traditional and modern takes on Ipoh white coffee, alongside a simple menu of toast and buns, since January 7 at Bishan North Shopping Mall (which, despite its name, is an open-air complex and not air-conditioned).

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Not his first attempt as a biz owner

It might seem like a hasty decision, but Janson (below, left) has more than a decade of experience in both cooking and running a hawker business. He was first an intern, then an entry-level chef at various restaurants in The Ritz-Carlton, Millennia Singapore for about two years before working as a cook for the next three years at “coffeeshop Western stalls and cafes” to gain exposure.

His first business venture was a Western food stall in Hougang kopitiam, which unfortunately “failed after a few months”. But he bounced back with Big Boys Western Steakhouse on the fourth floor of Beauty World Food Centre in 2018, which saw snaking queues after receiving media coverage.

But it was when he started to expand the business that he faced a new issue – hiring and training skilled manpower. “I opened a second outlet at a canteen in Nanyang Technological University, but it didn’t last long. The cooks we hired would often take shortcuts when preparing the food, and we got a lot of complaints. It was a big headache (*laughs*).” The original outlet in Beauty World Food Centre is still operating and it’s where Janson cooks daily.



Ipoh-born barista in charge at The Daily Cup

Naturally, hiring someone who would “care as much as me about the food or drinks they’re making” was one of his key considerations when it came to hiring a head barista to manage The Daily Cup.

Enter Ipoh-born Hinrich Hee (right), 30, whom Janson was introduced to by a mutual acquaintance. The introverted Malaysian citizen was a “perfect fit” for the job – after all, coffee runs in his veins. He first started brewing white coffee in his late teens at his father’s kopitiam in Ipoh, before moving to Singapore to work as a barista at various Toast Box outlets (under the BreadTalk group) as well as eateries belonging to Fei Siong Group.



Heartland vibes

It cost Janson around \$40K to set up his no-frills takeaway kiosk at the sprawling neighbourhood complex in Bishan, which he chose for its proximity to residential areas. “We wanted to be smack-bang in the middle of the heartlands, as we would be able to reach the most people,” he says, gesturing to the nearby old-school bakeries and fresh fruit stalls.

Indeed, the ‘shopping mall’ is jam-packed throughout our 90-minute shoot, despite the light drizzle during our mid-morning weekday visit. Janson estimates that they sell about 150 cups a day.



Sock brewing method used here

Expect a largely traditional kopi and toast experience at The Daily Cup, with coffee pulled through a sock rather than a fancy espresso machine, alongside classic brown toast or soft buns layered with kaya and butter.

The bread and spreads come from local suppliers, while the beans – a blend of “Arabica, Robusta and Liberica” roasted the classic Ipoh way – are supplied from an Ipoh-based company that’s been “running for more than 30 years, and supplies many kopitiam in Malaysia” (Janson declines to reveal its name).

With their signature white coffee starting at \$2, The Daily Cup’s prices are fairly affordable compared to local outlets of Malaysian white coffee giant OldTown White Coffee, where a cuppa costs \$3.40 – though of course, those come with seats in comfier air-conditioned malls.



Signature Butter Kaya Toast, \$2 (8 DAYS Pick!)

A thick slice of brown toast is crisped up in a petite toaster oven and split into two halves before being slathered with sweet, pandan-y kaya and a slab of salted butter. An unfussy and satisfying classic.



The Set

Going for the set costs an extra \$2.50 for a hot drink of your choice and soft-boiled eggs.

We sample the signature **Ipoh White Coffee** (\$2 a la carte), which Hinrich froths with a whisk prior to serving. “Everyone in Ipoh does this,” he explains. “It mixes the coffee well, cools it down and brings out the fragrance, similar to how some places *tarik* (Malay for pull) their tea.”



The aromatic brew has a velvety mouthfeel, with slight bitterness that's mellowed out by the sweet condensed milk, allowing the chocolatey, caramelly notes to shine through. The kopi isn't exactly white though, as it's only a shade or two lighter than usual. That said, this tastes almost as good as a cuppa at the famous Nam Heong coffeeshop in Ipoh's Old Town.



As for the eggs, they are cooked sous vide in a big batch to make operations easier for Hinrich (who usually runs things alone, or with the help of Janson's wife). Unfortunately, due to the kiosk's lack of seating, the eggs have to be cracked into a plastic cup – which doesn't make for ideal eating, even with the spoon provided. No wonder Janson tells us that many opt to get just toast and kopi instead. "It can't be helped. If we were to get a place with seats, the price for our food won't be where it is anymore," he explains.



**All Time Favourite Bun Toast,
\$2 (8 DAYS Pick!)**

That same kaya and butter combo feature on a soft Hainanese bun, which, when toasted, turns crusty on the outside while remaining utterly soft and fluffy within.



**Traditional Peanut Butter
Toast, \$2**

This simple sandwich features a generous schmear of peanut butter, paired with the usual chunk of butter – which quickly melts due to the residual heat from the toasty white bread, creating a gooey, sinful, and delicious mess.



Tamago Sando, \$4.50

There are a couple of fusion items on the menu to “attract the younger crowd”, including this IG-worthy Japanese-influenced egg sando. Fluffy white bread cradles mashed egg mayo plus a strategically positioned jammy-yolked boiled egg. Tastier than most cheaper egg mayo sarnies from kopi chains, though we feel that the traditional toast sets here make better companions for the white coffee.



Signature Ipoh 3-Layer Tea, \$3.50

Another newfangled item: a three-layered beverage comprising milk tea (made with ground Ceylon leaves), layered over evaporated milk, on a base of gula melaka syrup.

Thankfully, you normally get less palm sugar syrup than what’s pictured above (which was just for the camera) – the actual drink strikes a nice balance between the fragrant, caramelly notes of palm sugar and bittersweet tea. FYI: there’s a three-layered Ipoh kopi offering of this drink too.



Ipoh White Coffee Frappe, \$4

An ice-blended version of Ipoh white coffee that's still a "work-in-progress". No wonder — there were larger chunks of under-blended ice in the mix. Nonetheless, a decent drink with added richness from a whipped cream topping.

Bottom line

The Daily Cup offers more than decent Ipoh-style kopi cheaper than a cuppa from its famous rival chain brands, though you don't get to enjoy it in the comfort of a cafe setting. Its traditional kaya toast and other made-to-order sarnies are worth trying too, if you don't mind snacking on the go.



The details

The Daily Cup is at #01-105 Bishan North Shopping Mall, 282 Bishan St 22, S570282. Tel: 9383-7475. Open daily 7am – 8.30pm. More info via [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#).

Photos: Alvin Teo

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