



To toll or not to toll...

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After prices for five tolled roads were raised on Jan 1, Life & Times set out to find some worthy alternative routes. SHANNON TEOH writes, with additional reporting from YEANG SOO CHING, MANVEET KAUR and RIDZWAN RAHIM. **LEBUHRAYA DAMANSARA-PUCHONG**

Used to be: Three RM1 tolls.

The damage now: Three RM1.60 tolls.

Residents in Puchong are practically surrounded by tolls in all directions but there is apparently a simple way out of this.

WK Lim has a particularly useful route that he uses to and from his university in Cyberjaya.

If you're headed back to Puchong from Cyberjaya, just take the last exit which heads to Serdang/Sri Kembangan.

Next, when you hit the traffic light, turn left onto Jalan Persiaran Kota Perdana until you reach a roundabout. Take the 3 o'clock and watchout for a sharp right-hand at a dumpsite. Then its the next left, then a right at the T-junction onto Jalan Puncak Bukit Jalil. Continue until the next junction and turn left into Jalan Kinrara 6.

This will eventually take you to Bandar Kinrara where a right will take you to the Bukit Jalil Highway, a left to Puchong and straight will eventually lead to Old Klang Road.

He claims the distance from Cyberjaya to Bandar Kinrara is exactly the same (25km) and takes just five minutes more.

Lee Chin-Ken has a different route to bypass the same Puchong Selatan toll.

Take the Pulau Meranti exit, and at the third traffic light, make a U-turn and then a left.

This road will take you to Bukit Puchong, which is basically just past the toll booths.

He says this route is about 9km, which is about the same taking the highway, but admits that it'll take more time and the road condition isn't perfect.

For the northern end of Puchong, if you're headed towards KL, take Jalan Puchong which ends up in Old Klang Road and then turn left to Petaling Jaya or right to KL.

Tan Chee Leong, 31, a factory manager, lives on Jalan Gasing which basically connects via Jalan Templer to Old Klang Road.

After trying this route to his office in Pusat Bandar Puchong, he now neglects the tolled route which involves

one New Pantai Expressway toll (RM1.60) and the Petaling Jaya Selatan toll into Puchong.

“Previously I only used the tolled road assuming it was faster and better. But this way is just five minutes longer after the roadworks were completed.

And according to the onboard computer this results in lower consumption per kilometre and is in fact, only 14.5km long against the 16km of the tolled route.”

But at peak hours, the untolled route requires double the 20 minutes that the tolled route takes and is the only time one might want to consider the toll.

Liow Mei Fong, however, finds the 25km or so commute from her home in Sg Besi to Puchong Industrial Park to be fastest via the NPE and LDP, resulting in RM4.80 in toll.

The route heading towards the KL-Seremban toll but turning off at Mines near the race course and heading up at the Bukit Jalil Highway to Puchong takes twice as long, at half an hour.

This 24-year-old project coordinator finds that she’ll definitely pay the toll whenever she’s in a rush.



> **CHERAS-KAJANG**

Used to be: 70 sen and 60 sen for Batu 9 and 11 respectively.

The damage now: Up 30 sen each.

One intrepid commuter has two alternative routes to the Cheras-Kajang which takes her from her home in Cheras to her workplace in Cyberjaya.

For starters, her original route also passes by the SILK Sungai Balak toll which links up Putrajaya and the Cheras-Kajang, bringing her total toll to RM2.90 each way.

June Tham, a 23-year-old sub-editor, says that this route is the fastest, taking just over half-an-hour and guarantees that you will avoid any jams or flash floods.

However, there is also another option of going through MINES, taking the Besraya Highway, which costs just RM1.30 in toll.

From the Connaught Highway, you get onto the MRR2 and head past the toll and onwards past the Serdang KTM Komuter station and into Cyberjaya via the Serdang Hospital and Putrajaya.

This route in fact, while taking about five minutes more due to the bottleneck on the MRR2, is actually 3km

shorter.

There is the possibility of a flash flood after the Sg Besi LRT station though and the Connaught is usually jammed up after 6.15pm if you try to take this way home.

But her real gem find is the toll-less route that goes via Connaught, Bandar Tasik Selatan, MRR2, Astro, Seri Kembangan and onto Cyberjaya.

“If you leave before 7am, it only takes 45 minutes but can take more than an hour if you hit bad traffic later on. Road surfacing also isn’t the best but it’s only 32km long.”

She figures that her petrol cost are the same for all these routes and the savings on toll make the last option the best for going to work since she doesn’t mind leaving early, but on the way home, the rush hour means that it’s either of the tolled routes.

“What I can save is time. I’d rather pay more for peace of mind than be stuck in a traffic jam or flood waters.”



> **KESAS (SHAH ALAM HIGHWAY)**

Used to be: Three RM1.50 tolls

The damage now: Each toll up by 70 sen.

To begin with, there are many ways from KL to Klang and vice versa and so the Kesas is not by any stretch of the imagination the only resort.

The Federal Highway costs less in toll (RM2.10) if you can take the nearly perpetual congestion.

Then there’s the NKVE which is pretty smooth all the way except whenever you’re queuing up at the Damansara tollbooth.

The third route is to pick your way out of the Federal Highway towards Subang Airport and then turning into Glenmarie before rejoining the Federal after passing by Shah Alam Stadium, which is basically just after the Batu Tiga toll.

Just before the Sg Rasau toll, head into Padang Jawa and then it’s basically Klang.

Rest assured, this will take half-an-hour more than just paying up for the RM2.10 for both Federal Highway tolls.

If you're taking the Kesas to head towards Banting, consider using the above strategies to get to Cyberjaya, then head to Banting via Dengkil.

Once again, we're certain this will cost you an hour's more grief.

However, Liow (see above) has a route to get to work which involves just one Kesas toll (Awan Kecil/Besar interchange) that takes around five minutes more as compared to her RM4.80 route involving the NPE and LDP.

So perhaps, another 10 minutes of driving to avoid this RM2.20 by detouring through Bukit Jalil is worth it. Perhaps.



> **KUALA LUMPUR-KARAK**

Used to be: RM2.50 at Bentong then RM4 at Gombak.

The damage now: RM3 at Bentong and RM5 at Gombak.

Very few of us would be heading out to Bentong/Genting Highlands or Karak as part of our daily commute, so this is more of a holiday route.

And if you have the resources to embark on such a trip, surely RM1.50 each way is doable.

But if you are one of the rare few for whom this is a business trip, then the hilly and windy road via the spectacular Sg Tua Dam is an option.

The route starts opposite the EPF building in Selayang and you just follow signs saying Genting Highlands. This takes about 15-20 minutes longer than via the highway.

From there, you can make your way to the Bukit Tinggi exit and continue along the Genting Sempah rest stop, and take the backroad to Bentong, which is quite a long, windy road. Meaning from KL-Bentong, avoiding the highway might eat up in excess of an hour in extra drivetime, not to mention the petrol.



> **GUTHRIE CORRIDOR EXPRESSWAY**

Used to be: Three RM1 stops.

The damage now: Each up by 40 sen.

This is, undoubtedly, the fastest way from Shah Alam to Rawang. And while it did come at a price before, that price just got heftier.

Plus the 80 sen PLUS Highway toll to get into Rawang town, that's RM5 altogether.

Imagine if you started from Puchong like CK Cha, a 34-year-old engineer.

That's RM1.60 from the LDP and another RM1.60 for the elite stretch from USJ to Shah Alam.

Taking the PLUS Highway direct from Shah Alam to Rawang, however, costs just RM4.30 and alternatively, RM5.50 from USJ.

Another alternative to Rawang is to take the LDP through to Kepong and continue from there, a total toll cost of RM3.20.

The GCE route takes him 45 minutes, PLUS Highway takes an extra 10 minutes and the LDP route takes 90 minutes.

No surprise that Cha is willing to spare the extra 10 minutes to save the RM1.10 by using the PLUS Highway but not doubling his drivetime via the LDP.

The trunk road all the way from Bukit Jelutong to Rawang is probably not worth discussing at all.