



One college student encouraged me to visit a coffee shop called Mood. I asked him what made him go there. He replied, "Their great atmosphere and the beautiful decor." Then he remembered at the end to mention that they have good coffee too. Coffee was his least concern, an afterthought.

Not all coffee shops are designed to hang around - like coffee bars, where the main concept is to finish your drink quickly and leave to give room to other customers. Additionally, a new type of coffee shop is emerging in Kuwait - pop-up coffee booths. They change their locations every once in a while in harmony with the spirit of youths who seek new discoveries.

A period in the mid-2000s brought the idea of coffee shops that mimicked the heritage of Kuwait, evoking nostalgia. Soon, their popularity ebbed, faced with the urban style typhoon. The social culture of cafes has become the sum of dating scenes, happy moments between friends and graceful coincidences of Western movies and sitcoms that represent life in urban centers like London, Paris or New York. There are social cafes where you can spend long hours to chat. Also, art cafes are on the rise to support local artists who can't afford to display their works at distinguished platforms.

In the same fashion, literary cafes are available for those who want to organize cultural forums and workshops. More significant, but not widespread, are music cafes. Music is their mainstay for drawing customers. And through a personal experience, I can aver that they have succeeded in creating a social environment that encourages strangers to exchange conversations as human beings. This is rare at a time when eyes are pinched to phone screens.

The majority of patrons at these urban coffee shops are Kuwaitis. Conversely, music coffee shops were able to breach this barrier between expats and Kuwaitis.

Riding the global wave of the flourishing cafe culture in Kuwait may negatively impact the popularity of the diwaniya, which has been dominating the society for more than 200 years as the nucleus of social communication, cohesion and solidarity between its spectrums. Who knows, perhaps one day the diwaniya could become something of the past!

