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Potential of gastronomy tourism from traditional culinary in Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara

Rosalina Andriyani Ebang Pareira[1*], Agung Yuliyanto Nugroho[2], and Aurelius Fredimento[1]

Abstract
Lekun is one of the traditional cakes from Sikka Regency, East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and it is a part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Lekun, as a traditional cake, is difficult to find as it is usually made during wedding ceremonies of the Sikka Krowe ethnic group in Sikka Regency. This research aims to understand: (1) the philosophy, historical tradition, and social aspects of Lekun in Sikka Regency, (2) the standard recipe for making and serving Lekun, (3) the government's preservation efforts, and (4) the presence of Lekun as a gastronomic tourist attraction in Sikka Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, literature reviews, and documentation. The results of this study describe: (1) Lekun's origin and its philosophical, traditional, and social value closely tied to the Sikka Krowe ethnic group. Apart from being a traditional snack, Lekun is also used in wedding ceremonies. (2) The process of making Lekun into a product is important. (3) There is a need for government support to preserve Lekun by providing education and supporting Lekun producers to grow their businesses. (4) There is a need to preserve Lekun as a gastronomic tourism package, offering tourists a unique attraction when visiting Sikka Regency.

Keywords Lekun, Traditional Food, Gastronomy, Tourism Attraction

This article has been retracted because it does not meet the Journal's quality standards.

Introduction

Indonesia is a country with immense natural and cultural diversity that stretches from Sabang to Merauke. One of the industries with significant potential from this diversity is tourism, which can be highly beneficial when utilized appropriately. For a developing country like Indonesia, tourism is a tool for economic development that doesn't require large investments over the long term.

Tourism is travel undertaken by individuals or groups for the purpose of gaining satisfaction and fulfilling desires for enjoyment temporarily and for a short period. It can also relate to activities such as business, religion, education, and others. Tourism potential includes all objects (natural, cultural, man-made) that, when properly managed, can offer value and attract tourists (Weber, 2006: 11). Today, tourism is becoming increasingly essential for everyone as it encompasses all human activities. Types of tourism in Indonesia include nature tourism, marine tourism, religious tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, educational tourism, and gastronomic tourism. The variety of tourism in Indonesia makes it a unique attraction for both local and international tourists.

*Correspondence:
Rosalina Andriyani Ebang Pareira
andriyanipareira@gmail.com
[1,3]Politeknik Cristo Re, Maumere, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Cendekia Mitra Indonesia, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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East Nusa Tenggara Province is one of the tourist destinations in eastern Indonesia, offering nature, historical, cultural, religious, marine, and gastronomic tourism. The provincial capital is Kupang, and it comprises 22 regencies/cities. The development of a tourist destination can be seen from the aspects of attractions, accessibility, and facilities. Currently, the level of government support for tourism development in NTT is increasing, with growing awareness that tourism is a significant and promising industry. However, competition in global tourism markets is becoming increasingly tight.

The tourism sector in Sikka Regency is supported not only by a variety of natural attractions but also by unique traditional foods. Sikka Regency offers a wide range of traditional foods, such as "rumpu rampe," "wogi mage," "wair lawar," "filu," "lekun," "ohu ai," and "pungan." Among these, Lekun is a sweet snack that is difficult to find, as few people produce it, and it is becoming forgotten.

The central region of Sikka Regency, commonly inhabited by the Sikka Krowe ethnic group, is the origin of the traditional Lekun cake, particularly from Kewapante, Hewokloang, Bola, and Doreng districts. Lekun is a sweet treat made from black sticky rice flour mixed with grated coconut, salt, and palm sugar. It has a slightly grainy texture and is not too sweet. Lekun can serve as a gastronomic tourism opportunity in Sikka Regency. Its unique appearance, long cylindrical shape cut into small pieces when served, and the cultural traditions surrounding its preparation offer potential for culinary tourism.

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Literature Review

Tourism

Goelner (2012) "The activities of people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the pursuit of an income. This definition highlights several key elements:

- Travel Activity: Involves traveling to and staying in places outside an individual's usual environment.
- Purpose: Typically for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to earning an income.
- Duration: Although not specifically mentioned in the definition, it generally refers to temporary and non-residential travel.

"Tourism is a travel activity undertaken by an individual or a group of people from one place to another with the purpose of recreation, education, business, or other temporary objectives, outside of daily routines. Tourism encompasses various aspects such as tourist attractions, transportation, accommodation, cuisine, and other activities that support the travel experience. The tourism industry often serves as an important source of income for many countries and regions, as it can drive economic growth, create jobs, and enhance cultural and environmental understanding between tourists and local communities.

Culinary Tourism Potential

Culinary tourism differs from other tourism products like marine, cultural, or nature tourism, as it is often marketed as a supporting product. According to the International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA), culinary tourism is the unique eating and drinking experiences of travelers. In Indonesia, culinary tourism is an integral part of general tourism. Travelers, whether in groups, individually, spontaneously, or in an organized manner, seek out local culinary experiences. Trying local food has become a vital aspect of the travel experience, and while it may not be the main tourism product, culinary tourism supports existing tourism potential. Preserving culinary heritage is crucial for this reason.

Gastronomy

Gastronomy refers to the art or science of good eating. It encompasses the enjoyment of food and drink, a concept first introduced in a French poem in 1801 (Berchoux, 1804 in Scarpato, 2002). According to Ardika (2011), gastronomy also includes detailed knowledge of national

foods and drinks from around the world. The role of gastronomy is to understand how food and drink are used in various situations. Gastronomy can be divided into five aspects: practical gastronomy, theoretical gastronomy, technical gastronomy, molecular gastronomy, and food gastronomy. A gastronomist does not need to be a skilled cook but should understand cooking techniques and the art of good food.

Gastronomy tourism, also known as "culinary tourism," is a form of tourism that focuses on exploring local food and drink as the main attraction. Gastronomy tourism allows travelers to enjoy and learn about the culinary uniqueness of a region or country, including ingredients, cooking techniques, traditions, and local food culture.

Gastronomy tourism includes various experiences such as:

- Tasting local food: Travelers are often interested in trying local specialties found only in certain regions, such as traditional dishes, street food, or meals based on local ingredients.
- Culinary tours: Some destinations offer tours that take travelers to local markets, restaurants, and food production sites such as farms, beverage factories, or dairies.
- Cooking classes: Many travelers are keen to learn how to cook local dishes directly from culinary experts or local communities.
- Food festivals: Culinary festivals attract travelers by showcasing regional dishes, famous chefs, and local food products in a festive atmosphere.
- Traditional markets and stalls: Travelers can visit traditional markets to see local ingredients firsthand and sample food sold at local stalls.

Long (2004) Gastronomy is not just about food but also about cultural heritage and local identity, making gastronomy tourism a way for travelers to delve deeper into a region's culture. It can also support sustainability by promoting local food and strengthening the local economy through culinary-based tourism.

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Methode

This research on Lekun was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach. This means that the discussion is presented in descriptive form without delving into statistics. The data is sourced from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through interviews, and secondary data came from relevant literature.

Findings and discussion

The research covers four key aspects: (1) The philosophy, history, and social value of the traditional Lekun cake for the Sikka Krowe ethnic group. (2) The standard recipe and presentation of Lekun. (3) The government's role in preserving the traditional Lekun cake. (4) Lekun's potential as a gastronomic tourist attraction.

Philosophy and Tradition of Lekun

Lekun holds deep philosophical meaning for the Sikka Krowe ethnic group. The cake represents the importance of being a quality person and the values of education, patience, and spiritual growth on the journey to success.

Conclusion

Food is a fundamental human need. As humans learned to cook and use spices, culinary diversity expanded. Lekun, with its profound cultural significance, must be preserved. It is essential for both the community and local government, particularly the Department of Tourism, to contribute to the preservation of Lekun. The Department of Tourism and Culture in Sikka should take more active measures to preserve the local culture, including Lekun, through festivals and annual cultural events.

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