

Tempe “Mendol” as Traditional Side Dish for Rural Gastronomy Tourism in Malang, East Java.

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Abstrak

Indonesia terkenal dengan makanan hasil olahannya yang disebut tempe. Orang-orang jatuh cinta dengan rasa yang dihasilkan tempe melalui proses fermentasi dari bahan baku kedelai. Produk tempe memiliki banyak variasi dalam bentuk dan teknik pengolahannya. Salah satu olahan tempe yang dikenal adalah mendol. Mendol dibuat dengan membiarkan tempe melewati tahap kematangan dan puncak kualitasnya hingga hampir mulai membusuk perlahan. Hidangan unik ini memungkinkan sebagian besar masyarakat lokal mengolah produk yang telah melewati tanggal kedaluwarsanya namun masih dapat dimakan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji potensi mendol untuk menjadi produk ikonik bagi Gastronomi di Jawa Timur. Penelitian ini menggunakan tinjauan literatur dan Analisa deskriptif untuk melihat potensi mendol dalam Pariwisata Gastronomi dan mencari pasar yang mungkin untuk jenis pariwisata ini. Penelitian ini menghasilkan kemungkinan untuk mengembalikan Mendol sebagai bagian dari hidangan komersial dalam pariwisata gastronomi daerah yang tampaknya dapat diterapkan. Ini juga membantu destinasi dalam mempertahankan serta menarik pengunjung baru melalui pemasaran makanan lokal dan mendol adalah salah satu makanan tradisional yang memiliki cerita unik sendiri.

Kata Kunci: Lokal, Makanan, Tempe, Mendol, Gastronomi, Jawa Timur, Indonesia.

Abstract

Indonesia is well known for its manmade food creation called tempe. People fell in love with the taste that tempe produced due to its fermentation process of raw soybean. Tempe product is highly varied upon its forms and processing techniques. One of the most famous tempe menu is mendol, created by letting Tempe pass beyond the ripping stage, passing the peak of its condition but still edible. This unique dish has made most of the local people able to process a product that way passed its expiry date and still edible. This study aims to examine the potential of mendol to become the iconic product for rural gastronomy in East Java. The study uses literature review and descriptive analysis method to see the potential in exposing mendol for gastronomy tourism and to seek the possible market for this kind of tourism. the research resulted in the possibility of bringing back mendol as part of the commercial dishes in gastronomy tourism seems to be applicable. This also helps the rural destination in retaining and gaining new visitor via the marketing of local food and mendol is regarded as one of the traditional food that has its own unique story of making.

Keywords: Rural, Food, Tempe, Gastronomy, Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tempe as originated from Indonesia has been so famous in the national as well as international dishes line-up. Its rich of nutritional value, and easy to be found as well in almost every grocery shop in Indonesia. Many people in Indonesia have been using tempe as their source of protein and the substitutes of animal protein in their daily dishes. It has been regarded as superfood as the process of making tempe involves the present of microorganisms (Bacteria, yeast etc) through the process of fermentation resulted in healthy nutrients that are beneficial for the human body (Tamam, 2022). Due to its commercial value and affordable prices, tempe is consumed by all social classes. Tempe also considered a staple in everyday cooking and is also enjoyed during various festive events, including religious celebrations, life milestones, and ceremonies. In rural areas of Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces It is used as a common dish at significant social gatherings like kenduri or selamatan (Romulo & Surya, 2021). One of a dish made entirely out of tempe is mendol (Budiarto, Kiranawati, & Shirakane, 2023).

The research focus on getting to know more about the potential of mendol, one of the traditional dishes made from tempe, that originated in east java dating back to the early days when Indonesia is still under the Dutch colonialism. Gastronomy in Indonesia is varied, and one of the all-round dish inside the journey would come from processing tempe into a dish that most local will consume daily. Mendol as a unique product from tempe has its own distinctive characteristic. It is known for its bizarre processing of letting it ripped pass the normal way of fermenting soybean. The process that let tempe to go into the stage where more bacteria start to grow within the body of tempe thus creating a strong odour of damp and fusty.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. TEMPE

As one of the traditional foods in Indonesia that originated from Java, Tempe is made out of Fermenting Soybean seeds using the *Rhizopus* spp. That forms into a united solid shape with mild grey and white colour and producing a succulent aroma Tempe is affordable as well, and is used to tackle any lack of nutrients of citizens. Tempe is considered superfood with not only rich in nutritional content, but also its bioactive essential (Romulo & Surya, 2021). It also contains vitamin and minerals such as Folic acids, vitamin B12, iron, cuprum, and zinc (Fitriah, Kristianto, & Pudjirahaju, 2017). Mendol is one of the traditional dish of Malang and originally made out of tempe. Its shape is typically elongated and cylindrical, similar to small sausage, and its surfaces are rough (Budiarto, Kiranawati, & Shirakane, 2023). It's usually deep-fried to give it a crispy exterior while maintaining a firm, compact texture inside.

2.2. RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism a promising sector for fostering development in both urban and rural areas. Within rural settings, tourism destinations contribute to community empowerment and facilitate sustainable local economic growth (Wijijayanti, Agustina, Winarno, Istanti, & Dharma, 2020). According to Rosalina, et al. (2021) There are 4 fundamental features that would determines rural tourism:

1. Location plays a crucial role, commonly seen from both geographic and social perspectives.
2. Sustainable development is a fundamental principle of rural tourism.
3. Indigenous communities play a significant role in managing rural tourism.
4. Rural tourism aims to offer authentic rural experiences.

The below graph can be seen as the gastronomy tourism and related to the motivations of tourist.

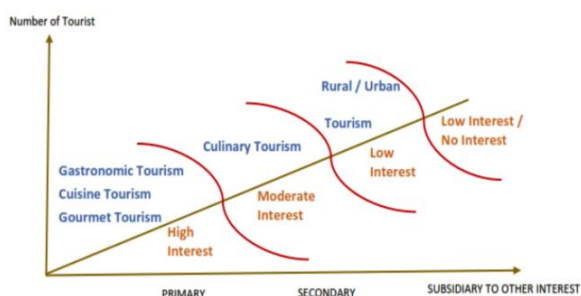


Figure 2.1 Tourist interest Based on the Type of Tourism according to Hall, et al (2004), cited in (Putra, 2021).

The Graph above shows the interest comparison between tourism agenda. The rural tourism has relatively lower interest than gastronomic tourism.

2.3. GASTRONOMY

In tourism industry, travellers mainly come to visit a place not only for its attraction, but for the food offered by the locals as well. Thus, this activity called gastronomy tourism are increasing and making food becomes the influential elements that build the destinations overall encounter (Widjaja, Jokom, Kristanti, & Wijaya, 2020). In Indonesia, Food has been acknowledged by government, business, academic world as an essential part of tourism. it has also be a distinguisher between tourism destinations. The local food also has a role that could help in shaping new experiences and as well increasing the charm and appeal of one destination (Turgarini, Baiquni, & Harmayani, 2018). Gastronomy tourism encompasses visitation to destinations intertwined with food production and consumption, incorporating cultural events that highlight the preparation and enjoyment of specific dishes, along with opportunities to witness the culinary craftsmanship involved (Razpotnik Visković & Komac, 2021). In gastronomy tourism, food has become the main priority and reason for tourist to be motivated in visiting a destination in favor of seeking a particular food and beverage in specific areas in that destination (Putra, 2021).

2.4 PREVIOUS STUDY

Table 1. Previous Study

No.	Title and Source	Variables	Results and Findings
1.	Literature Review of Food Tourism, Culinary Tourism, and Gastronomy Tourism (Putra, 2021).	Variables in this study relates to Culinary, Gastronomy, Food, Tourism. The research combines each variable with tourism activity, to	The study resulted that tourism will always incorporate food as part of the experience. The food industry has become part of the development in local region. The gastronomy tourism encourage travelers to find

		gain relation to each tourism motivation within food related activity.	the story behind the food from the aspect of geography to the cooking methods.
2.	Tempe: Pangan Lokal unggul (<i>Superfood</i>) Khasanah Budaya Bangsa (Tamam, 2022).	The research describes the tempe and its nutritional content as well as its existence in the society locally. The research also have the future challenges for the development of tempe amidst the high competition.	The study concludes that there are steps to improve the existence of tempe among the society as the <i>superfood</i> with beneficial nutritional content. Some of the suggestions are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving a detailed education tempe production houses to process tempe in a more hygienic manner. 2. Spreading the benefit of tempe or food with tempe as its ingredients, and the methods of processing them into varied menus. 3. Diversification in tempe production and tempe based product variety. 4. More research on tempe in Indonesia to disperse the origin of tempe.
3.	Comparative Study of Mendol as an Indonesian Traditional Side Dish in Food Tourism (Budiarto, Kiranawati, & Shirakane, 2023)	The study examines tempe product production which is called mendol. Python programing was used to analyze the data from twitter to see compatibility of mendol with any other menu.	The study resulted with combination of mendol and rawon was perceive to be the most compatible. The study also finds that promoting mendol food in malang as the major attraction in Malang culinary tourism. The further development of mendol would lead to positive contribution in Malang culinary industry.
4.	Tourism Village: Challenges and Opportunities in New Normal (Risdawati AP, Imron, & Pertiwi, 2020)	This research review village tourism activity for their contributions towards rural community seen from the development after the pandemic. Descriptive analysis was done in the research.	The study finds that rural area has been impacted from the pandemic situation, but still have the chance of carried out tourist activities by maximizing the use of information and the technology of communication.
5.	Gastronomy tourism: A brief introduction (Razpotnik Visković & Komac, 2021)	The study evaluates the interaction food and the area displayed in the gastronomy tourism. There are four perspective that are focused in this study, which are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sustainability 2. The part of history 3. The possibility of rural area advancement 4. The connections of the shareholders. 	Study resulted in showing that geography aspect clearly showed different perspective. There are also challenges present in host communities, the businesses, farmers, the person in charge in policy makers, and the travelers. The study also results in the findings for the shareholders who are involved in the development in the respective territory.

3. METHOD

This research uses qualitative method with Literature review and descriptive analysis approach to provide the earlier reviews and analysis of other research that would help build the results. According to Snyder (2019), Literature reviews are as essential as they provide the foundation for all research types, support knowledge development, offer evidence of impacts, and, when well-conducted, inspire new ideas and directions in a specific field. With effective and good execution of reviews, literature review as a research method builds a strong foundation to improve knowledge and facilitates the development of theories. Descriptive analysis helps this study to dissect each of the elements of research to be described as 1 topic to be analyzed further with the pivot of the research scope. Using a descriptive analysis approach, the researcher is provided with facts and evidence through the narratives of previous research findings (Risawati AP, Imron, & Pertiwi, 2020).

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 TEMPE AS MENDOL

Nutrient gained from 100gr of Tempe is 199,1 calories, with 19gr of protein, it also has a high amino acid that is 85 times higher than soybean (Fitriah, Kristianto, & Pudjirahaju, 2017). It means that mendol also contain some of the nutrients from tempe while coagulating with other component caused by the prolonged shelf life. Wira Hardiyansyah who works as a food educator travelling chef, Mendol originated from the Malang city, dating back when the Dutch Colonialism still exist. This menu is inspired by the Dutch culture of creating a Dutch food called “Perkedel”, it mimics the form, shaped into a lump and deep fried (Wijaya & Agma, 2021).

4.2 MENDOL FOR GASTRONOMY

In Tourism, gastronomy plays an important role in attracting travellers towards the destination. Here culture plays a huge role behind the dishes created to distinct one destination from the others, despite their natural or manmade sites and attraction. In tourism, the development of rural area as tourist destination helps the communities and helps in the local economic development (Wijijayanti, Agustina, Winarno, Istanti, & Dharma, 2020). To promote a destination especially rural destination, many ways could be used, and one of them is using food to market the destination. in Sardinia, most people are aware of the most dangerous cheese served in this Island in Italy called Casu Marzu. This exotic creation of cheese that has maggot infested in it has created a whole new food experience, even if it's not commercially sold, it has been registered as the traditional product of Sardinia Island, and it is locally protected (Petroni & Serelly, 2021). This phenomena in Italy could be the key to increase exotic foods and therefore improve the variety of gastronomy tourism in Malang Area, as well as Indonesia as a whole.

Mendol is proved to be edible, thus it is quite similar with other edible exotic foods produced. As mendol is born from the tempe products that has passed its peak consumption period and being creatively used and cooked by locals to produce a whole new food that are still edible, people learn to survive better with what they have. This recipe was originally developed to reduce food waste by converting fermented, spoiled tempeh into an edible dish (Budiarto, Kiranawati, & Shirakane, 2023). This value born from concerns of throwing away foods because of the social economic condition at that

time could become an inspiration for other and create an uplifting story. In 2021 mendol is slowly diminished with the growing population of modern food chain and influence internationally. With development in modern packaging, mendol existencies could be maintained and gained broader market (Budiarto, Kiranawati, & Shirakane, 2023). Keeping tradition and culture could be supported by story like mendol making processes and the history behind the creation to touch each traveller with the destinations food culture and value. With ethnic food has become more popular, the globalization has made trade and movement of different ethnicities become a crucial element in accepting ethnical food (Romulo & Surya, 2021). The phenomena would includes fermented ethnic food such as mendol. According to figure 2.1 The idea of rural gastronomy tourism might have increased the potential of tourists motivated to visit rural area because of its ethnical cuisine (Putra, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the consumption of mendol is still favourable for some. But is slowly missing from the commercial food establishment in rural to urban areas. The fact that its battling competition with modern food and other internationally influenced dishes is favours by the market especially young generations. However, tourism will always be connected to gastronomy, especially in rural areas with its relation to culture. Thus, this kind of creation called mendol could revive the story, connect the culture with the travellers and distinct one destination with other as well. Though it's created from a stale tempeh, it's proven to be still edible and have a strong distinctive taste than regular tempe. So, keeping this menu and reviving its popularity in local restaurant or small food stall is one way to create a new story for the destination.

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