

# Preserving Indonesian Traditional Food

## An Overview of Food Museum Attraction

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**Abstract**— This paper explores the Indonesian traditional food as heritage. It demonstrates that it has an important role in tourism beside its role in fulfilling man's basic necessity. This role is including destination identity, marketing, and income generation. There is global trend for having food museum attraction as representation of local food identity. In line, Indonesian traditional food is booming and trending. Conservation Indonesian traditional food is one of the efforts to make it as heritage attraction. For the sense of conservation a food museum attraction is suggested. This paper provides an overview of food museum attraction for Indonesia context. It employs descriptive approach in data collection and analysis. The result recommends that food museum attraction is highly potential to be developed. As heritage attraction, it needs to consider aspects such as financial, education, entertainment, recreation, and quality besides the conservation aspect.

**Keywords:** *Traditional, Food, Museum, Attraction, Heritage*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Food tourism, culinary tourism or gastronomy tourism is tourism activity related to food or travel for food. The definitions of gastronomy and cuisine also diverse attention, gastronomy have been defined as the art, or science, of good eating. Cuisine is defined as manner of preparing food; style of cooking; or the food prepared. Thus, culinary, gastronomic, or cuisine tourism involves learning about food and beverage products and different styles of cooking. It is about the discovery and enjoyment of different tastes and flavors. It links visitors with foods and beverages produced locally [1]. These terms have the same meaning: travelers travel to a specific destination for the purpose of finding foods and reasons of seeking culinary experience. Food is a motivator for travelers [2]. Food tourism has become a trend in many countries in the world. Food is one of the tourism activities.

Food tourism has gained world-wide reputation as niche marketing in the tourism industry. In addition, destinations are capitalizing the potential to promote their cuisines as a unique product. Additionally, culinary tourism focuses on travel especially motivated by food and drinks or everything that is related to food, from preparation to dining-out at a particular destination [3]. Countries popular with their food are Italy, France and Thailand. Japanese and UK tourists ranked food as

the most important part of a good vacation. Australians ranked food as the third most important thing [4]. These countries have made culinary tourism as one of the reasons for travelers to visit.

Traditional food can be categorized as a cultural heritage. A range of heritage sites emerged includes a mix of tangible and intangible element like traditional lifestyles including food, drink, and sport. Food associated by culture point of view resulting several keywords and important concept such as: cultural heritage includes not only special interest physical aspect (e.g. built heritage) but also the element of gastronomy. Food and wine is being expression of regional culture [1]. The cultural aspect of food by pointing out that there are observable cultural differences in the ingredients, in the way in which food prepared, cooked, and preserved, and in the traditions of serving and eating food. And, the food we consume and the way we consume it forms and supports our identities, meals and eating traditions are culturally bound. Food is also a cultural symbol [5]; it is one of the cultural traits that humans learn first from childhood, and one that consumers change with the greatest reluctance at older age. Since every person must eat, what people eat becomes a most powerful symbol of who they are. Each traditional food has a historical side and several expressions such as; attitudes, values, behaviors and beliefs. This has made traditional food as heritage attraction. The development of local and regional food heritage has been identified as a platform for tourist attractions by various researchers [6]. Prioritization of elements in the mission of heritage attraction includes conservation, accessibility, education, finance, quality, relevance, recreation [7].

In Indonesia, food and drink is the second highest income from tourist expenditure after accommodation. Its role in economy is vital. In 2013, of the average amount of USD \$1,142 that a foreign tourist spends during his holiday in Indonesia, 48.9 percent is allocated to accommodation expenses, 17.7 percent to food and drinks, and 7.9 percent to souvenirs [8].

Despite its large population and densely populated regions, Indonesia is unique in terms of food. With influences from

Asia, the Middle East and Europe, plus the abundance of fresh and exotic produce grown locally, one can expect the cuisine of Indonesia to be varied. There is wide variety of Indonesian traditional food. The Indonesian Ministry of Tourism has listed 30 icons of Indonesian Traditional Food, they include food such as *Rendang*, *Nasi Goreng*, *Nasi Tumpeng*, *Gado-Gado*, *Soto*, and *Sate*. Although international mainstream food has been booming and popular in all over Indonesia such as Fried Chicken, Hamburgers, Pizza, Spaghetti, and Sushi. Traditional food is also growing with modern packaging. Restaurant Padang which was firstly established in 1978 is now widespread all over Indonesia. There are now some food court centrals at big malls that sell traditional Indonesian food, e.g. *Eat n Eat* and *Eat Republic* food court. In addition, various food festivals are held annually in celebrating man's basic necessity „Eating“. These festivals have been used by food suppliers as marketing for their products. Despite of the trend, some of Indonesian traditional foods are difficult to find or rare; some of them for example: Babanci, Lethek Noodle, Gala Puan, Basang, Kidu, Grontol [9].

Traditional food represents the identity of a country, thus its sustainability is important. To sustain the traditional food, studies suggest Food Museum. Food museum is not something new, many countries have established food museum on their countries. CNN in 2015 released list of top 11 food museum all around the world in which 3 of them are located in Asia. (See table 1).

In Indonesia, there is a food related museum in Ternate-Maluku Utara called as Spice Museum or *Museum Rempah*. The museum was initiated in 2014 and is currently to be publicized [10]. Given the fact that Museum is not a favorite tourist attraction to the local, this paper is trying to describe the potential of food museum development in Indonesia. The objective is to describe specific features of food museum that are already exists and to find out the Indonesian people's view on the idea of Food museum. It is hopeful that the answers can provide some useful insight to food enthusiasts and readers on this field.

TABLE 1  
List of 11 of World's Top Food Museum

| No | Name of Museum                 | Main Object      | Country                      |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1  | Colman Mustard Shop and Museum | Mustard          | Norwich, England             |
| 2  | Shin-Yokohama Ramen Museum     | Noodles          | Yokohama, Japan              |
| 3  | Friet Museum                   | French Fries     | Bruges, Belgium              |
| 4  | Udon Museum                    | Noodles          | Kyoto, Japan                 |
| 5  | Dutch Cheese Museum            | Cheese           | Alkmaar, Netherland          |
| 6  | York Chocolate Story           | Chocolate        | York, England                |
| 7  | Kimchi Museum                  | Kimchi           | Seoul, South Korea           |
| 8  | Currywurst Museum              | Curried Sausage  | Berlin                       |
| 9  | Southern Food and Beverage     | Southern cuisine | New Orleans                  |
| 10 | Canadian Potato Museum         | Potato           | Prince Edward Island, Canada |
| 11 | Olive Oil Production           | Olive oil        | Greece                       |

Source: www.edition.cnn.co

## II. METHOD

The research method used in this study is descriptive method. Descriptive research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens. It may be used to justify current practice, make judgment and also to develop theories. For the purpose of the research, the descriptive method is employed to obtain the picture of food museum phenomenon and the possibility to justify its potential development in Indonesia. This study employed quantitative measurement. Secondary data is obtained from conducting a library study to describe the food museum phenomenon. The primary data is obtained from pilot survey is conducted to find out local people's view on Food Museum. This study employs a questionnaire format asking the local Indonesian view on the idea of food museum. A sample of 50 respondents is involved using convenient sampling method.

## III. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### A. Features of Food Museum

Food Museum has been very popular in the world. There are many varieties of food museum on place. Food museum provides a media for the visitors to appreciate food which is has a vital role of human being. Food museum is a center for learning and conservation of local or traditional food. The food museum has marked a symbol of local characteristic, history, and culture. Food museum entails the characteristic of tourism object which includes something to see, something to do, and something to buy. In food museum, visitors are able to see where the food comes from, history, the tools, production, consumption, and distribution process. It can also showcase other related information to the food, such as the philosophy and nutrition. Food museum is also connected with other field such as agriculture, science and technology, or art. Thus, food museum can be combined or seen from the perspective of those fields.

In terms of what tourist can do in food museum. Visitors can do in food museum is „Eating“. Visitors can taste and try out the local traditional food that they may not find it on their home country. While for something to buy, visitors can buy from raw materials to packaged food or other souvenir related to food. From the food museum all over the world, it shows that food museum does not necessarily showcasing about the past. In fact, it also shows contemporary and future culture.

Food museum can be managed by government or private sector in context decentralization and democratization. If the private sector is the owner, traditional food museum is the similar concept with propagating “heritage industry” and heritage industrialization in postmodern society where heritage and nostalgic things become something that being commoditized or something that can be bought and sold.

Nowadays, “*museumization*” trend is resulting from a tendency to lead everyone who wants to generate money by building their own museum.

Indonesia is a country known for its agriculture, rice and spices. It has also variety of cultures and food. These can be the source of potentials to be developed as Food museum attraction. The Spice Museum or *Museum Rempah* that is available in Indonesia showcases spice as the Indonesian top commodity and its relation to the history of the colonial era. It is related to the past.

#### B. Respondent's Profile and View on Food Museum

The writer conducts a survey to fifty people with Indonesian nationality. The respondents consist of 13 males (26%) and 37 females (74%). The respondents age ranges: 20 of the respondents aged 15-25 years old (40%), 9 respondents aged 26-35 years old (9%), 20 of the respondents aged 36-45 years old (40%), and 1 respondent aged >45 (1%).

The result of this study is similar to the survey conducted by telegraph.co.uk where 95% percent out of 335 of the respondents agreed that food museum is a good idea to build. The survey showed that food museum is highly potential to be developed in Indonesia. It is also found out that education and gender may influence people's view on Food Museum.

TABLE 2  
Respondent's Profile and View on Food Museum

| No | Description  | Total | Percentage (%) |
|----|--|-------|----------------|
| 1  | Sex  |       |                |
|    | Male   | 13    | 26             |
|    | Female   | 37    | 74             |
| 2  | Age  |       |                |
|    | 15-25  | 20    | 40             |
|    | 26-35  | 9     | 18             |
|    | 36-45  | 20    | 40             |
|    | >45  | 1     | 2              |
| 3  | Education  |       |                |
|    | High School  | 8     | 16             |
|    | Bachelor   | 21    | 42             |
|    | Post Graduate Study                                    | 21    | 42             |
| 4  | View on food museum                                    |       |                |
|    | a. It's a brilliant idea, what a mouthwatering subject | 46    | 92             |
|    | b. It's a silly idea, I'd rather see dinosaurs         | 1     | 2              |
|    | c. I have no idea what food museum is                  | 3     | 6              |

#### C. Discussion

Indonesian traditional food and culinary tourism is growing fast in Indonesia, this can be seen from various events which have taken place either on food courts, restaurants and festivals. These are the media to preserve the Indonesian traditional food. Tourists can look into these for culinary experiences. However, global trend for having food museum attraction is also on the rise, as many countries all over the world build it. Food museum attraction suggests that there are other aspects of food that can attract tourists' interest. It suggests that food can satisfy the basic needs as well as intellectual needs of the people. It can provide richer understanding and appreciation toward the food. Involvement and synergy of different sectors such as government, industry, and community play an important role in developing food museum as tourist attractions.

In terms of food as heritage attraction one thing that needs to consider is not only the conservation aspect but also needs to consider other aspects such as entertainment, relevance, accessibility, financial, quality, education and recreation. The idea of museum that should be related to the past or history is not permanent; there is possibility for museum to link the past or history with current situation and context.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Indonesian traditional food represents diversity of many regions. Already an important in the special interest tourism market, Indonesian traditional food is expected to become integrated into the mainstream tourism industry in certain destination. It can be categorized as heritage by historical value, cultural traditions; knowledge, culturally tourism, experience of local cultural traditions. The first priority of heritage attraction elements is conservation. For actualizing it, Food museum attraction also needs to consider aspects such as financial, education, recreation, entertainment, and quality.

This study suggests that further study to investigate further and deeper the existence of food related museum in Indonesia, the perception and attitude toward the museum, how is the effectiveness of the museum in conservation and education of Indonesian traditional food.

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