

THE AUTHENTIC CULINARY CHARM OF BANYUMAS: EXPLORING THE LEGACY OF MENDOAN AND GETUK GORENG AS ICONIC DISHES

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Abstract

Mendoan and Getuk Goreng are two iconic culinary delights that have become part of the culinary heritage of Banyumas Regency, Central Java. As traditional foods, these two dishes are known not only for their distinctive, authentic taste but also for their deep historical and cultural values for the local community. Mendoan, a thin-fried tempeh fried until half-cooked, offers a soft texture with distinctive spices. Meanwhile, Getuk Goreng, made from cassava processed with brown sugar and fried until crispy, provides an alluring blend of sweet and savory flavors. This study aims to explore the culinary appeal of Mendoan and Getuk Goreng as part of Banyumas' gastronomic heritage and identify the factors that make them local culinary icons that remain relevant amidst the competition of the modern culinary industry. With a qualitative approach, this study examines the historical aspects, production processes, and social roles of Mendoan and Getuk Goreng in the lives of the Banyumas community. Data were collected through interviews with local culinary entrepreneurs, cultural observers, and the local community and supported by a literature review of regional culinary traditions. The results of the study indicate that the continued popularity of Mendoan and Getuk Goreng is driven by several factors, including strong local identity, unique taste, and adaptation to modern consumer tastes without losing the authenticity of the recipe. In addition, these two dishes have become an essential part of Banyumas' culinary tourism, attracting tourists interested in tasting authentic local flavors. With the growing culinary industry in Indonesia, Mendoan and Getuk Goreng remain symbols of Banyumas culinary appeal, which has the potential to be promoted more widely in the international arena.

Keywords: Mendoan, Getuk Goreng, Authentic Culinary, Banyumas, Culinary Tourism.

A. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, known for its extraordinary cultural diversity, is a country rich in traditions that manifest across various forms, such as traditional architecture, dances, attire, ceremonies, songs, music, weapons, and even regional specialties (Putri, 2024). Each of Indonesia's regions boasts unique cultural customs and traditional foods that serve as cultural symbols and contribute significantly to the nation's heritage (Hermawan et al., 2024). Regional culinary specialties, in particular, stand as iconic representations of their respective areas, embodying both tradition and local identity.

The culinary sector in Indonesia has witnessed rapid growth in recent years, reflecting an increasing appreciation and demand for both traditional and modern food varieties. This growth is crucial, as the Food and Beverage Industry plays a significant role in driving Indonesia's

economy (Handani et al., 2016). In the first quarter of 2024, the GDP structure of the Non-Oil and Gas Processing Industry was heavily influenced by the Food and Beverage sector, which contributed 39.91% and 6.47% to the total national GDP (Direktorat Jenderal Industri Kecil, Menengah dan Aneka, 2024). This indicates the culinary industry's immense potential to sustain and boost the country's economic performance. With the rising global interest in diverse culinary experiences, it is essential to preserve and promote Indonesia's authentic regional foods.

Despite the emergence of various modern and international food trends, such as instant meals, junk food, and Korean cuisine, there remains a strong attachment to traditional culinary delights among Indonesians. However, the rise of viral and globally popular food options has introduced challenges to the competitiveness of traditional dishes. Young people, for instance, are increasingly inclined toward junk food and modern culinary trends. To address this challenge, innovative strategies are necessary to ensure that regional authentic foods remain relevant and appealing to new generations of consumers (Rambe et al., 2019). Developing new products that captivate consumers while preserving the authenticity of traditional flavors is key. The competitive advantage is crucial for survival in today's dynamic culinary landscape, necessitating continuous innovation and creativity (Kurniasari & Utama, 2018).

Despite the stiff competition posed by modern and viral culinary trends, traditional Banyumas dishes such as *Mendoan* and *Getuk Goreng* have retained their charm and cultural significance. These two iconic foods, originating from Banyumas Regency in Central Java, have withstood the test of time and continue to captivate locals and visitors alike. The term "culinary" encompasses a wide array of activities related to the art of preparing, cooking, and serving food (Arifianto & Nofrizaldi, 2020), and *Mendoan* and *Getuk Goreng* exemplify this art form. Their unique flavors and cultural roots make them stand out among Indonesia's many traditional foods.

This paper seeks to delve deeper into the gastronomy of *Mendoan* and *Getuk Goreng*, exploring their cultural significance, unique taste profiles, and the factors that have enabled these dishes to endure and remain popular. By examining the allure of these iconic foods, the study aims to highlight the importance of preserving Indonesia's culinary heritage while adapting to modern challenges, ensuring that traditional flavors continue to thrive alongside contemporary food innovations.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method through a comprehensive literature review. A literature review is a systematic approach used to gather, analyze, and synthesize information from various credible sources (Saputra et al., 2023), providing detailed and clear insights into the research topic (Hasanah et al., 2024). By utilizing this method, the study can construct a well-rounded understanding of the cultural and culinary significance of *Mendoan* and *Getuk Goreng* in Banyumas.

The data collection process involves accessing a variety of reputable sources, including official publications from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) Indonesia, official reports from the Banyumas regional government, academic books, historical archives, and peer-reviewed journals. These sources are carefully selected to ensure the reliability and relevance of the information gathered. The study emphasizes both historical and contemporary perspectives on Banyumas cuisine, drawing connections between cultural heritage and the evolving culinary landscape.

Once collected, the data is meticulously analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and cultural elements that contribute to the enduring popularity of *Mendoan* and *Getuk Goreng*. The analysis is

conducted descriptively, providing a narrative that articulates the cultural context, historical evolution, and current status of these iconic dishes. This descriptive approach allows for a thorough examination of the subject, ensuring that key aspects are clearly articulated and well-supported by evidence.

The findings are then synthesized to present a cohesive and insightful understanding of the research topic, culminating in a well-founded conclusion that addresses the core objectives of the study. By employing this qualitative literature review method, the research not only contributes to the academic discussion surrounding Indonesian culinary heritage but also offers practical insights into the preservation and promotion of traditional foods in the face of modern culinary trends.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Banyumas is one of the regencies in Central Java that has a wet tropical climate because it is located in the southern part of the equator. Banyumas has potential natural wealth, as well as diverse cultures that are characteristic and different from other regions. Banyumas also has a variety of culinary specialties, even Banyumas is called the birthplace of Mendoan. However, in addition to Mendoan which is a culinary characteristic of Banyumas regency, there are other famous culinary dishes from Banyumas regency such as Getuk Goreng, Soto Sokaraja, Jenang Jaket, Buntil, Kraca, Dage, Nopia, Togean, and soft. Iconic dishes that are considered to be typical culinary dishes from Banyumas regency are Mendoan and Getuk Goreng.

We can see the cultural identity and traditions of an area from its culinary characteristics. From the typical regional food, it will explain the customs, beliefs, customs, history, and values contained in it. The existence of typical foods will continue to be maintained if their allure and advantages continue to be improved. Attraction or allure according to KBBI means the ability to attract attention. Attraction can be interpreted as an attitude that makes a person happy about a certain object or situation followed by a tendency to always look for the object that they like (Charlotta & Iskandar, 2023). Thus, attraction is a first step to maintain the existence of timeless products/culinary. Banyumas has food with a distinctive flavor allure, such as Mendoan and Getuk Goreng.

Mendoan

Mendoan comes from the word "mendo" in the Banyumasan language which means "half-cooked". Banyumas' typical food is Mendoan, made from tempeh cooked with flour and spices, then fried half-cooked (Rastuti et al., 2020). In the early 1960s, tempe Mendoan, which was previously a traditional food, began to be managed as a business in the Banyumas tourism industry. This is an important part of culinary tourism and tourist attractions in the Banyumas area and its surroundings. Mendoan tempeh used to be made as a fast food so that the time to make it was short and not wasted waiting for the tempeh to dry. Mendoan tempeh itself emerged when soy-based foods (tempeh) have spread and are widely consumed around the Southeast Asian region, even to China and Indochina. Soybeans brought by the people of Central Asia then migrated to the Southeast and that's when tempe Mendoan emerged and became a ready-to-eat snack (Rizal et al., 2022).



Figure 1. The Mendoan Banyumas
Source: (Luthfi, 2020)

Mendoan culinary comes from the habit of Banyumas people who want to eat fast food. Mendoan can be made quickly but still delicious by frying half-cooked tempeh. The tempeh used for Mendoan is usually sliced thinly and widely, so that the dough covers the tempeh without losing its characteristic texture after frying. How to make your own Mendoan is relatively easy; First, cut the tempeh into thin slices, for a measure of 250 grams of tempeh, add 100 grams of stiff flour, 2 tablespoons of rice flour, 1 teaspoon of ground coriander, half a teaspoon of ground pepper, 3 cloves of crushed garlic, half a teaspoon of salt, and 200ml of water. Tempeh that has been cut into thin pieces is put into the dough and then fried until half cooked, then removed and served (Syaifudin & Fahma, 2022). Mendoan tempeh can be enjoyed with various sauces and chili sauces. The original Mendoan of the Banyumas people is fried half-cooked and has a soft and greasy taste. Nowadays, Mendoan begins to vary in size and various types, such as cayenne Mendoan, grilled Mendoan, mozzarella, and others. This makes Mendoan one of the most interesting places to visit in Banyumas (Shila, 2024).

Mendoan is a typical Banyumas food that has unique characteristics that make popular with the community to this day, some of the characteristics of Mendoan include such as;

1. The inside is chewy and soft while the outside is a little dry. This is what makes Mendoan different from others.
2. Mendoan is usually made from wheat flour mixed with spices such as garlic, coriander, salt, and green onions. One of the characteristics of Mendoan is its distinctive taste and aroma added by green onions.
3. Mendoan with thin and wide tempeh so that it remains crispy on the outside but soft on the inside (Syaifudin & Fahma, 2022).

Tempe Mendoan, known as mendo-mendo, has an implicit meaning as a subtle means of communication with others and as a way of uniting with others. Mendoan has a function as a traditional means of communication. This is intended to familiarize a sense of family. When served when it is still warm, Mendoan is useful for warming up the atmosphere when talking in the family. In addition to being considered a food that many people like, Mendoan also plays an important role in Banyumas cultural heritage. At various events, both formal and informal, Mendoan is almost always present as the main dish. Mendoan is usually used as a delicious afternoon snack to enjoy with hot tea or coffee. In the Banyumas area, especially in Purwokerto, Mendoan has become a symbol of togetherness and family. In a calm atmosphere, people often gather while enjoying the still warm Mendoan. This atmosphere creates a deep sense of closeness and familiarity. For tourists who visit Banyumas, Mendoan is symbolized as a typical souvenir that is worth tasting. Mendoan tempe has been recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural

heritage. This is an achievement in itself as a typical Indonesian cultural and culinary value of Banyumas.

Mendoan is one of the Banyumas specialties that is very famous everywhere, even throughout Indonesia. In almost every traditional food stall or restaurant that carries the concept of Central Javanese cuisine, Mendoan can be easily found in various major cities in Indonesia. One of the culinary centers in Purwokerto is Mendoan Mega which is famous for Mendoan food, a typical food of Banyumas, which has become a local culinary icon. Mendoan has a variety of prices depending on the size. Mendoan has become a popular food among the upper, middle, and lower circles that can be purchased in restaurants, restaurants, and hotels in Banyumas. Out-of-town tourists who want to bring Mendoan souvenirs can bring thin tempeh that has not been finished and flour that has been seasoned.

Some ways to preserve Mendoan are as follows:

1. Introduction in Schools and Local Communities: Teaching children how to make Mendoan through extracurricular activities at school or workshops in the community. This will inform the generation about young traditional foods.
2. Promotion on Social Media: Promote Mendoan by using social media platforms. Creating interesting history, manufacturing process, and variations of Mendoan can expand the reach and attract the interest of the younger generation.
3. Local Culinary Festivals: Holding or participating in festivals that promote traditional foods, such as Mendoan. This can increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining local food.
4. Product Innovation: Changing Mendoan with various flavors or additives while maintaining its characteristics, such as using organic ingredients or creating vegetarian versions.
5. Attractive packaging and branding: Attractive packaging for Mendoan souvenirs or ready-to-eat food can attract local and international customers (Arifianto & Nofrizaldi, 2020).

Getuk Goreng

People in the city and outside the city are familiar with Getuk Goreng which is one of the mainstays of typical souvenirs from the Sokaraja of Banyumas regency. Getuk itself is a food made from cassava and then filled with Javanese sugar or granulated sugar. Getuk Goreng started from Sanpirngad which was the first pioneer in 1918 which made Getuk Goreng Sokaraja popular to this day. Previously, sanpirngad was only a mobile rice seller in the Sokaraja area. At that time, he observed that many of the Getuk sold did not sell well and he was looking for a way to make the Getuk that did not sell still be consumed for tomorrow. He tried something new by frying Getuk which was not sold out and then sold the next day. The idea of frying Getuk that is not sold out turns out to be popular with people who buy it.



Figure 2. The Getuk Goreng

Source: (Agmasari, 2021)

Nowadays, Getuk Goreng can be easily found along Sokaraja Street. The Getuk Goreng is no longer a Getuk that was not sold out yesterday but is deliberately made by frying. The process of serving Getuk Goreng Sokaraja is also distinctive, namely Getuk Goreng is put into besek (woven boxes made of bamboo). This Getuk marketing involves shops and tourist attractions in Sokaraja and its surroundings. Because many people love Getuk Goreng, new innovations were created by creating a variety of delicious flavors to enjoy. At first, Getuk Goreng was only made from original ingredients and java sugar. However, currently Getuk Goreng has a variety of flavor variants such as durian, chocolate, jackfruit, pineapple, and others. Getuk Goreng can be stored for ten days without going stale or smelling bad (Nila, 2021).

The production of Getuk Goreng in Sokaraja District plays an important role in the economy of the area. This business generates income for local residents and is also a promising business opportunity to create jobs in the vicinity, so as to reduce the unemployment rate in Sokaraja. The production of Getuk Goreng in Sokaraja District plays an important role in the economy of the area. This business generates income for local residents and is also a promising business opportunity to create jobs in the vicinity, so as to reduce the unemployment rate in Sokaraja District.

The *agro-industry activities of* Getuk Goreng have long been empowered starting in 1918. Initially, some Getuk Goreng entrepreneurs tried this business because of the factor of continuing the business that had been run by their parents or family. But at this time, the Getuk Goreng business is not only dominated by one family, as evidenced by the many Getuk Goreng artisans who are doing this business on the grounds that the Getuk Goreng business is very profitable, has a high selling price and the availability of raw materials that are easy to obtain.

The emergence of community expertise from Sokaraja in making Getuk Goreng is largely due to the teachings passed down from generation to generation. Getuk Goreng Sokaraja is a cassava-based food that has a legit sweet taste. Basically, the processing of Getuk Goreng is almost the same as Getuk cassava in general, but of course there are some differences in terms of making and processing. In Sokaraja District, there are various age levels of Getuk Goreng artisans. Most (50%) of the Getuk Goreng artisans are between the ages of 51 and 60. People in this class are considered older and less productive at work. However, although they are less productive in their work, the craftsmen are more experienced in the management and quality of the company.

The ingredients needed to make Getuk Goreng Sokaraja are quite cheap and easy to find, especially in the Banyumas area, which is famous as the center of making java sugar and brown sugar. No wonder there are many coconut trees in the village, where the sap is tapped to make java sugar. The source of high-quality cassava trees usually comes from Wonosobo. The ideal growing period for cassava trees is ten to eleven months. However, if it is a rainy season, the cassava produced is usually not suitable for making fried cassava because there is too much air. The Getuk Goreng industry is widespread in Sokaraja District, Banyumas Regency. Most large home businesses don't pay attention to the variety of product development (Mutmainah et al., 2008). To make Getuk Goreng, the darma variety of cassava is brought directly from Wonosobo. Farmers in Sokaraja District and surrounding areas still lack this type of cassava. The cassava used to make tapioca flour is a type of cassava cultivated in Sokaraja District. To make Getuk Goreng, coconut sugar is also needed as a complementary ingredient to give the food a sweet taste and brown color. This business uses coconut sugar from areas around Sokaraja District, including Kalibagor, Somagede, and Cilongok. Rice flour, cooking oil, and vanilla are also used as

complementary ingredients. Many people use firewood to steam cassava and fry Getuk that has been cut into small pieces. Business owners can get firewood in the area around Sokaraja District.

The process of making Getuk Goreng is done every day and some every 2 days. The tools used in the process of making Getuk Goreng include: stoves, boilers, steamers, frying pans, mortar and pestles, baskets, knives, and buckets. The process of making Getuk Goreng consists of 5 stages, namely: Cassava peeling stage, cassava cutting, cassava boiling, making wet Getuk and frying wet Getuk into Getuk Goreng. The grating of Getuk is carried out in stages, that is, if the stock of Getuk Goreng in the store runs out, then the frying is carried out again.

In order for the marketing of Getuk Goreng to maintain its traditional image, the place to package Getuk Goreng uses besek that comes from woven bamboo of various sizes. The size of the besek used is 0.5 kg and 1 kg. Getuk Goreng artisans directly sell their products at stores that are integrated with the place where Getuk Goreng is made. The selling price at the consumer level per 1 kg of Getuk Goreng is around Rp.12,000.00-Rp.13,000.00.

D. CONCLUSION

The culinary sector has a significant impact on GDP growth. Regional culinary specialties are a characteristic of regional cultural identity. Regional specialties remain to this day because of their great attractiveness and competitiveness. Banyumas is one of the regions in Central Java that is rich in culture and culinary specialties. Banyumas specialties such as soto sokaraja, getuk goreng, jenang jacket, buntil, kulaka, daji, noupia, tegean, and soft. Mendoan and getuk goreng are often referred to as culinary icons typical of Banyumas.

Mendoan comes from the word "mendo" in the Banyumasan language which means "half-cooked". Banyumas' typical food is mendoan, made from tempeh cooked with flour and spices, then fried half-cooked. Mendoan currently has many variants that are very popular such as mendoan cayenne, grilled mendoan, mozzarella, and others.

Getuk goreng is a typical souvenir from Sokaraja Kkabupaten Banyumas which is very popular with people both from inside and outside the city. Getuk is a food made by adding java sugar or granulated sugar to cassava. Initially, getuk goreng only had the original flavor and java sugar. However, getuk goreng is now present in various flavors, including durian, chocolate, jackfruit, and pineapple. The special thing about the fried getuk, even though it is stored for 10 days, tastes bad and smells musty. The charm of Mendoan and Getuk Goreng typical of Banyumas makes this typical food still exist today.

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