

## FOOD TOURISM: THE ROLE OF LOCAL SPECIAL FOOD IN INCREASING AND DEVELOPING TOURISM IN INDONESIA

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### *Abstract*

*This research aims to determine (1) the potential of local specialties as food tourism; and (2) local specialty food strategies as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia. This research uses SWOT analysis to analyze local specialty food strategies as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia. The results of this research show that (1) the diversity of typical foods that exist in each region is a potential that needs to be developed and is of concern to the government to manage it professionally which can increase the interest of tourists to come to visit Indonesia and generate foreign exchange in the tourism sector; and (2) the local specialty food strategy as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia consisting of the SO strategy through the promotion of food tourism by displaying local Indonesian specialties, the WO strategy by developing a food tourism concept to attract tourists, the ST strategy through collaboration with Tourism stakeholders support food tourism, and WT strategies through educating food tourism managers, especially tourism actors.*

**Keywords:** Food tourism, increasing, developing, SWOT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Culinary is one of the cultures that supports tourism. Food culture can be viewed as the product of codes of behavior towards food that are acceptable or unacceptable within a particular social group. It also regulates the structure of social relations between members of a society and is an everyday reaffirmation of cultural identity through the symbolic meaning of rituals, traditions, and special events within a social group. This means that Food is considered a cultural practice that differentiates one culture from another. Food has been recognized as an expression of identity and culture and has emerged as a popular aspect of cultural tourism. Discussions about food cannot be separated from culture (Wibawati, 2021).

Each ethnic group has its own local specialties, giving rise to diverse characters and uniqueness. With huge geographical and cultural diversity, it is proven that Indonesian cuisine is rich in variety and taste. For example, in the use of fresh herbs and spices, each region in Indonesia develops its own combination and intensity to produce food flavors that are spicy, hot, strong, sweet, sour, or a mixture of these flavors. There are thousands of local culinary delights that have the potential to become a strong focal point for depicting Indonesia as a tourist destination (Alexandro, 2020; Boesen, 2017).

The culinary sector has a very large contribution to Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Culinary tourism is an integral part of tourism development which grows and develops based on history, culture, economy and society. This is an added value in enriching the tourist experience when interacting with the local community. Culinary is one of the most important and valuable things in the eyes of tourists. When traveling, tourists will usually ask about local cuisine, explore restaurants, taste typical products, and understand the traditions of local

communities in the tourist destinations they visit, so that tourists can get unique and special experiences (Purnomo, 2021).

As a cultural tourism product, the role of culinary tourism is becoming increasingly important. Culinary tourism is a competitive advantage that may be central to destination development, which, in turn, can contribute to overall economic performance. However, as stated by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, having very diverse traditional culinary delights is also a challenge for the government to choose certain foods that will be promoted to the international market (Wijaya, 2019). There is an inequality in culinary exposure between regions in Indonesia, as a result, many non-Indonesian people are not aware that other regions in Indonesia apart from Sumatra and Java have their own culinary specialties (Chairy, 2019).

As time goes by, culinary tourism has developed, starting from increasingly diverse culinary delights to increasingly sophisticated processing so that the variety of food has increased, therefore traditional food is now much sought after by tourists, especially local tourists. However, there are several culinary delights that still survive, but have also disappeared, so it is very necessary to re-recognise the types of culinary delights of the past because they are cultural assets that can have a positive impact on tourism development. Culinary in an area is very profitable, because tourists need food to eat, and this can have a positive impact on tourism development (Sopanah, 2020; Sari, 2018).

The development of culinary tourism is in line with the development of social media, economic development, and increased understanding of traditional cultural heritage. The culinary sector is a competitive advantage that needs to be continuously explored and developed by the country and society. By recognizing these competitive advantages, more and more destinations throughout the world want to position themselves as culinary tourism destinations. Local food can be used as a tool to differentiate a destination from other destinations in the global market because a country's cuisine shows elements of culture and national identity (Zahrulianingdyah, 2018).

Based on the explanation above, this research aims to determine (1) the potential of local specialty food as food tourism, and (2) the strategy of local specialty food as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia.

## **2. METHOD**

This research is a qualitative-descriptive research, as the aim of the research is to describe the potential of local specialty food as food tourism and the strategy of local specialty food as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia. Qualitative-descriptive research is a research method that aims to explore the meaning that comes from social problems which produces findings in the form of descriptions (Kusumastuti, 2019).

The data source for this research is a literature study which is related to the potential of local specialty food as food tourism and the strategy of local specialty food as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia. The data collection technique that researchers used in this research was a reading technique through reading library sources that were relevant to the results and discussions. The data analysis technique that researchers use in this research uses SWOT analysis related to local specialty food strategies as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Potential of Local Typical Foods as Food Tourism

Until now, culinary is still a tourist icon that can attract many domestic and foreign tourists. Indonesian culinary specialties are loved because they are varied, have authentic flavors and are delicious. The culinary industry in Indonesia has great potential to be developed into a tourist destination for foreign and local tourists because of the diversity of typical foods and drinks available in each region. Basically, Indonesian cuisine can be classified based on the six large islands in the country. Each has different food culture characteristics that are shaped by natural conditions, history and regional culture. A variety of regional specialty foods is a potential that needs to be developed and is of concern to the government.

Food on the island of Sumatra is heavily influenced by Indian and Chinese culture. It has its roots in the spice trade era and its strategic location on the India-China trade route. The most popular cuisine of this island is Padang food (West Sumatra) whose typical dish is rendang. In 2011, an online poll conducted by CNN of 35,000 readers worldwide selected rendang as the 50 most delicious food in the world. What's more, the Padang food restaurant chain can be found throughout Indonesia and neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, making Padang one of the favorite regional Indonesian cuisines among international tourists.

Javanese cuisine is heavily influenced by the island's traditional kingdoms such as Mataram in Central Java and Majapahit in East Java. Also referred to as royal cuisine, most Javanese cuisine is considered relatively mild compared to other regions in Indonesia. There are various cooking patterns in all regions of this island. Sundanese cuisine uses a lot of fresh vegetables in its cooking. Central Javanese cuisine is renowned for its sweet taste, while East Javanese cuisine tends to be less sweet and spicy than Central Javanese cuisine.

Then there is the culinary delights of Bali and West Nusa Tenggara (Lombok). In contrast to the central and western regions of Indonesia, Nusa Tenggara, which has a drier climate, consumes more sago, corn, cassava and taro than rice as its staple food. Since most of the Balinese population is Hindu, this religious belief strongly reflects the way Balinese cuisine is prepared where pork is more commonly used. On the other hand, even though West Nusa Tenggara is close to Bali and this island was ruled by the Hindu dynasty from Bali, there was a rebellion in 1891–1894 which made the entire island under the Dutch East Indies colony. As a result, there is a mixture of cuisines, some are similar to Balinese (Hindu influence) and some have a touch of Dutch influence in their taste.

The cuisine of Kalimantan, the Indonesian island region of Kalimantan located in the maritime center of Southeast Asia, is also interesting. Its wide coastline and many large rivers provide an abundance of seafood and freshwater fish for local cuisine. Additionally, there are three major ethnic groups in Kalimantan including the Dayak (indigenous people of Kalimantan), Malays, and Chinese who account for around 90% of the total population. These different groups support the diversity of cuisines across the island. Most of the Chinese community living in western Kalimantan is dominated by ingredients of Chinese origin such as noodles, soy sauce and pork. On the other hand, in other regions, the cuisine is heavily influenced by native Dayak food which uses more native spices and fresh herbs.

Sulawesi Island is famous for the best marine products in Indonesia. Therefore, his culinary tastes revolve around seafood dishes. The cuisine in North Sulawesi has a very strong taste produced from chilies. Finally, dishes from the Maluku Islands and Papua, which are drier, also

have the same definition as seafood. However, the staple food of indigenous people in Maluku and Papua, apart from rice as in the other five regions, is papeda (sago porridge), usually eaten with yellow sauce made from fish such as tuna and mubara fish.

The findings of this research show that Indonesia has a long history with the influence of various different cultures. This diversity has a significant influence that supports the establishment of various unique and exotic culinary delights in the country. Special food culinary tourism is one of the new advantages in the tourism sector. As one of the advantages in the tourism sector, culinary tourism has enormous potential to be developed and utilized if it is managed professionally and in an orderly manner and may even become a special attraction that can increase the interest of tourists in coming to visit Indonesia and generate foreign exchange in the tourism sector.

### 3.2. Local Typical Food Strategy as Food Tourism in Increasing and Developing Tourism in Indonesia

**Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Local Typical Food Strategy as Food Tourism**

Source: 2023 data processing

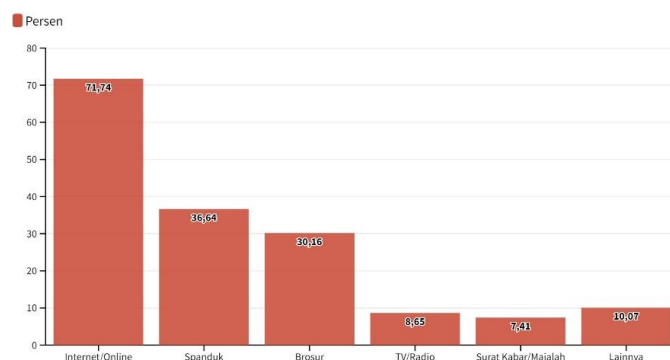
<b>OT</b>	<b>SW</b>	<b>Strengths (kekuatan)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Indonesia has a variety of local specialties that are popular with both local and foreign tourists</li> <li>2. The variety of culinary delights in Indonesia makes it attractive to tourists</li> <li>3. There is special food that has potential, if managed and developed in an integrated and professional manner, it will attract tourist interest</li> </ol>	<b>Weakness (kelemahan)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tourist activities do not give the impression of the culinary tourism concept</li> <li>2. Lack of awareness among culinary tourism actors in managing culinary tourism</li> <li>3. Conditions of facilities and infrastructure that need to be arranged professionally to provide a sense of security and comfort for tourists</li> <li>4. Culinary tourism actors lack capital to develop their production.</li> </ol>
	<b>Opportunity (peluang)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take advantage of the rapid development of communication and information technology</li> </ol>	<b>SO Strategy</b> <b>Promotion of food tourism by displaying local Indonesian specialties</b>	<b>WO Strategy</b> <b>Develop a food tourism concept to attract tourists</b>

2. One of the important aspects supporting tourism development if managed well and professionally 3. There is government involvement in bringing in tourists 4. Adequate potential and natural resources to be developed		
<b>Treat (Ancaman)</b> 1. The large number of modern culinary products has displaced the existence of traditional culinary specialties 2. Low knowledge on the part of the management to create culinary tourism activities	<b>Strategi ST</b> Collaborating with tourism stakeholders to support food tourism	<b>Strategi WT</b> Educate food tourism managers, especially tourism actors

### SO Strategy: Promotion of food tourism by displaying local Indonesian specialties

Indonesia has made various efforts to promote local Indonesian specialties both directly and virtually. However, in the current era of globalization and increasingly sophisticated times, people do not need to visit tourist attractions or carry out tourism promotions by meeting them directly and for real. Everything can be done virtually via social media. One of the tourism promotions that is currently being carried out by the Indonesian government, the private sector and local communities is food tourism. We can interact and visit food tourism destinations virtually via social media, namely by installing various applications on Android and iOS and can also visit websites provided by the government, private sector and the public.

**Figure 1. Promotional Facilities for Tourism Actors in the Culinary Sector**



Source: BPS (2020)

Promotion is an important thing that needs to be done to increase the development of local specialty foods for food tourism in Indonesia. The government has carried out various promotional efforts through various media such as websites, leaflets, booklets and culinary tourism events. The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Tourism, is trying to promote typical Indonesian food to the international world. One way is by collaborating with restaurants belonging to the diaspora or authentic Indonesian restaurants abroad. The Ministry of Tourism can synergize steps and support the development of Indonesian restaurants abroad, as well as globalize Indonesian culinary delights. Indonesian restaurants belonging to the diaspora are very strategic partners, because they play an important role in promoting Indonesian culinary delights. The Ministry of Tourism is collaborating with a number of typical Asian restaurants abroad to be able to serve typical Indonesian menus as an effort to attract foreign tourists to Indonesia. This effort is a way to carry out culinary diplomacy abroad without having to increase the number of restaurants, but only by increasing the spread of typical Indonesian menus.

**WO Strategy: Develop a food tourism concept to attract tourists**

The role of local specialties as food tourism must be better in processing everything, both products and services, for example food variety, food quality, food presentation, service, prices offered, appearance at the place of sale, facilities and infrastructure and accessibility in reaching culinary tourist attractions. this, so that the Government of the Tourism Department can achieve the target of tourist visits in the future. The government also continues to arrange various culinary tourist attractions to increase the attraction of tourists to visit. With this arrangement, it is hoped that tourist visits from year to year will experience a significant increase.

**ST Strategy: Collaborating with tourism stakeholders to support food tourism**

The government together with other stakeholders hold activities that introduce local specialties from various regions in Indonesia to local and foreign tourists. One example of the activities carried out by the government in introducing typical Indonesian culinary tourism is holding a Food Festival program. This festival will be an attraction for traditional food lovers. Apart from that, it is hoped that holding this event will increase the prestige of traditional food owned by regions in Indonesia and support a people-based economy. This activity is also a form of campaign to return to traditional food. The Government Tourism Department, in collaboration with other stakeholders, helps in developing tourism, such as increasing the quality or rejuvenating facilities and infrastructure for accessibility to tourist attractions.

**WT Strategy: Educate food tourism managers, especially tourism actors**

The government really supports and plays a role in the development of local specialties for food tourism in Indonesia. Regional governments need to provide training, also known as a Professional Training Center, aimed at actors involved in tourism. By providing education to culinary tourism actors. The aim is to be able to keep up with the times and to improve services, production results and increase tourist interest.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussions presented by the researcher, the conclusions of this research show that the culinary industry in Indonesia has great potential to be developed into a tourist destination for local and foreign tourists. The diversity of typical foods that exist in each region needs to be developed and become the government's attention to be managed professionally so as to increase the interest of tourists to come to visit Indonesia and generate

foreign exchange in the tourism sector. The local specialty food strategy as food tourism in increasing and developing tourism in Indonesia based on SWOT analysis consists of the SO strategy through the promotion of food tourism by displaying local Indonesian specialties, the WO strategy by developing a food tourism concept to attract tourists, the ST strategy through collaboration with Tourism stakeholders support food tourism, and WT strategies through educating food tourism managers, especially tourism actors.

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