

Promoting Food Tourism through Leading Local Products in Padang, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Food tourism, or culinary tourism, has become an important driver in maintaining regional identity, affirming community values, and contributing significantly to regional development. Potato dodol is a traditional food product that has been an important part of the local culinary wealth in various regions of Indonesia. This research aims to identify and overcome the problems faced by the local potato dodol industry, as well as develop innovative strategies to make potato dool a typical souvenir that is sought after by tourists. With a focus on authentic experiences, innovation in culinary events, and the use of social media, culinary tourism can continue to grow and provide sustainable benefits for local communities. Through a holistic and sustainable approach, food tourism not only provides an immersive experience for tourists but also brings sustainable benefits to the community.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism sector can be a major driving force for regional development (Wati et al., 2022). Food tourism or culinary tourism has become a trend that is increasingly popular among domestic and international tourists. Tourists are now not only looking for visually attractive tourist destinations but also looking for authentic and distinctive culinary experiences from each region they visit. Food tourism or culinary tourism has become an important driver in maintaining regional identity, affirming community values, and contributing significantly to regional development. According to research (Everett & Aitchison, 2008), culinary tourism is not only a means to introduce the culinary diversity of a region but also a medium to strengthen a sense of togetherness and local identity.

As the tourism sector continues to develop, future research in this area should prioritize efforts to create unique and authentic local experiences. (Okumuş, 2020) emphasized the importance of developing new and innovative culinary events that not only attract tourist interest but also provide immersive and meaningful experiences. Apart from that, the impact of social media in promoting culinary tourism also needs to be explored further, considering the increasingly dominant role of digital platforms in determining people's choice of tourist destinations. To increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of tourism strategies, local food producers are expected to collaborate with fellow producers. (Bowen, 2021) suggests developing initiatives such as local tourism routes, which not only offer integrated tourism experiences but also strengthen local economic networks. This kind of collaboration can increase the competitiveness of local products in a wider and more diverse market.

Food tourism events, such as festivals, exhibitions and trade shows, play a crucial role in introducing visitors to local food culture. (Csapody, 2024) revealed that this kind of event provides an opportunity for visitors to explore the culinary uniqueness of a region, showcase regional specialities, and interact directly with the local community. Through this interaction, visitors can gain a deeper understanding of the traditions and values upheld by the local community. Overall, culinary tourism not only functions as a means of promoting local culture and products but also as a catalyst for economic and social development at the regional level. With a focus on authentic experiences, innovation in culinary events, and the use of social media, culinary tourism has great potential to continue to grow and provide sustainable benefits for local communities.

Local food products, including regional souvenirs, play an important role in enriching this culinary tourism experience. One local product that has great potential but still faces various challenges is potato dodo. Potato dodol is a traditional food product that has become an important part of the local culinary wealth in various regions in Indonesia. Made from the basic ingredients of potatoes, coconut milk and sugar, potato dodol has a distinctive sweet taste and chewy texture, making it a popular snack among local people. Despite its superior quality and taste, the potato dodol industry still faces various challenges that hinder its growth, especially in the context of wider marketing and distribution.

Regional souvenirs play an important role in tourism development for several reasons related to economics, culture and promotion of tourist destinations. Culinary tourism plays an important role in advancing economic regeneration and supporting local food systems, especially in rural areas. According to (Robinson, 2021), food tourism not only drives local economic growth but also helps in achieving food sovereignty. By promoting local products and encouraging the consumption of food produced in the area, culinary tourism supports the sustainability and resilience of local food systems.

Relational approaches in food tourism also deserve attention. (Jong & Waitt, 2022) suggests that culinary tourism can be seen as a continuous sensory engagement with the social and material world rather than simply a structured experience. This means that the interaction between tourists and the local culinary environment is dynamic and creates a deep connection between individuals and places. This experience not only enriches tourists but also provides added value to local communities.

In the context of culinary tourism promotion, emphasis on local food in communication campaigns has proven effective in increasing the attractiveness of tourist destinations. (Savelli et al., 2022) highlighting that campaigns that focus on the uniqueness and quality of local food can increase tourists' interest and enrich their overall travel experience. Authentic and locally based culinary experiences not only attract tourists but also improve the image of tourist destinations in the eyes of the world. Tourist interest in local and traditional food products is also an important factor in the development of food tourism. (Zarębski & Zwęglińska-Gałecka, 2020) States that this interest directly influences the success of culinary festivals and other food tourism events. Interest in local food drives more visits to the area, which in turn provides economic benefits to local food producers and the community as a whole.

Overall, culinary tourism not only functions as a means of promoting local culture and products but also as a catalyst for economic and social development at the regional level. With a focus on authentic experiences, innovation in culinary events, and the use of social media, culinary tourism has great potential to continue to grow and provide sustainable benefits for local communities. Economic regeneration, food sovereignty, and enhanced tourist experiences are some of the many benefits that can be achieved through effective and sustainable culinary tourism strategies.

The important role of regional souvenirs in tourism development also opens up great opportunities for the development of local food products such as potato dodo. As a unique local product with an innovative taste, potato dodol is able to meet the needs of the tourist market who are looking for a different culinary experience in tourist destinations. Introducing potato dodol as a local product can also be an effective strategy in marketing products through e-commerce platforms, which allows these products to be reached by tourists of various ages and backgrounds.

Apart from that, the development of local food products also has the potential to have a positive economic impact on local communities. By promoting products such as potato dodol to tourists, a sustainable economic cycle can be created where income from product sales can improve the economic and social welfare of local communities. The process of making potato dodol, which involves the use of traditional equipment, can also be an additional attraction for tourists who are looking for an authentic and memorable tourist experience.

By combining aspects of developing unique and innovative local food products with marketing strategies through e-commerce platforms, a strong synergy can be created between food tourism, local product development and local economic potential in tourist destinations. This also supports the vision of international community service, which aims to develop tourism and economic potential in the area through product innovation and targeted marketing strategies.

Food tourism, especially in the context of developing unique and innovative local food products as part of the tourism experience. Here are some ways to relate them:

- 1. Identifying Traveler Market Needs:** reflects awareness of market needs in a tourism context. The development of potato dodol with a variety of innovative flavours could be an attraction for tourists looking for a unique culinary experience in the area.
- 2. Introducing Local Products:** Potato dodol, as a typical regional souvenir, is a means of introducing local products to tourists. This can be an additional attraction for those who want to bring home unique memories from the tourist destinations they visit.
- 3. Exploring Local Economic Potential:** The development of local food products such as potato dodol can also have a positive economic impact on local communities. By promoting this product to tourists, it can increase the income and welfare of local communities.
- 4. Creating Memorable Travel Experiences:** The process of making potato dodol, explained in the essay, can be part of a culinary tour. Tourists can be invited to see firsthand the process of processing potato dodol, thereby creating a memorable and educational tourist experience.
- 5. Marketing and Promotion:** Product packaging and promotional strategies, such as the use of transparent white oil paper and plastic wrap, can also be part of an attractive tourism experience for consumers. This also supports the promotion of tourist destinations as a whole.

Combining these elements in developing potato dodol is not only an effort to develop local products but also an integral part of developing tourism and economic potential in the area.

Problem

Potato dodol is a locally processed product that has great potential to be used as a regional souvenir. Even though it has a unique taste and good quality, potato dodol still faces various challenges that hinder its growth and spread. Some of the main challenges faced include marketing limitations, high production costs, difficulties in packaging and distribution, and competition with similar products.

1. **Limitations of Local Marketing:** Locally processed products such as potato dodol often have limitations in marketing, especially at the local level, making it difficult to reach a wider market, including domestic and international tourists.
2. **High Production Costs:** The process of making potato dodol involves many stages and expensive raw materials, such as the use of traditional equipment and fresh ingredients.
3. **Packaging and Distribution Difficulties:** Even though it has been packaged well, there are still problems in shipping and distributing products to various tourist locations, especially for products that are easily damaged.
4. **Competition with Similar Products:** The food and beverage industry is full of similar or alternative products, so it demands higher innovation to differentiate potato dodol from other products.

This research brings several innovations and new approaches that have yet to be widely discussed in previous research regarding potato dodol as a typical souvenir for tourists.

1. Digital Marketing Strategy Focused on Travelers:

Innovation: This research proposes the use of digital marketing strategies that are more focused on reaching domestic and international tourists. This includes the use of social media, e-commerce, and collaboration with travel agents and hotels to promote potato dodo.

Uniqueness: This approach capitalizes on rising digital and tourism trends, differing from traditional marketing approaches more commonly used in local products.

2. Application of Modern Technology in Production:

Innovation: This research proposes the use of automated machines and modern technology in the production process to reduce costs and increase efficiency without sacrificing quality.

Uniqueness: This approach has yet to be widely discussed in the context of potato dodol production, which usually still uses traditional methods.

3. Innovation in Packaging and Distribution:

Innovation: Use of cooling technology and vacuum packaging to extend shelf life and maintain product quality during delivery.

Uniqueness: It provides a practical solution to the problem of distribution of perishable products, which is a major obstacle in the distribution of potato dodol to tourist destinations.

4. Product Diversification and Cultural Stories:

Innovation: This research proposes product diversification through developing unique flavour variants, shapes and packaging, as well as prioritizing cultural stories and product locality as added value.

Uniqueness: The use of cultural stories as part of marketing and product strategies has yet to be widely implemented in the context of potato dodol, which can increase the attractiveness and value of the product in the eyes of tourists.

Research purposes

This research aims to identify and overcome the problems faced by the local potato dodol industry, as well as develop innovative strategies to make potato dodol a typical souvenir that is sought after by tourists. By implementing the proposed solutions, potato dodol can reach a wider market, reduce production costs, improve the distribution system, and increase product competitiveness in a competitive market.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The processing process for potato dodol consists of processing methods and raw materials. The process of making potato dodol uses various equipment such as iron skillets, iron spoons, stoves, knives, moulds, sieves, basins and cutting boards, as well as drying racks. The raw materials are 10 kg of fresh potatoes, ten grated coconuts, 2 kg of white sticky rice flour, 8 kg of granulated sugar, vanilla and flavouring/salt. The process of making potato dodol is quite time-consuming, from boiling to grinding it into dodol. Initially, fresh potatoes are washed thoroughly, then boiled for about an hour, and then peeled clean. After peeling, the potatoes are then finely ground to maintain the authenticity of the potato taste. Potatoes and grated coconut,

After everything is mixed well, add sticky rice flour as adhesive, flavouring and salt to taste. Once all the ingredients are ready, they are cooked on a wood stove for 2-3 hours over medium heat or not too high, stirring constantly, then cooled on a large tray and then cut into pieces according to the specified size.

Because it is free from preservatives, this potato dodol must be dried in the sun all day to make it last longer. The final stage of the process of making potato dodol is packaging. The packaging is used in transparent white oil paper so that it lasts for around two months. Then, the small packages are arranged and arranged again in plastic packages and then marketed.



Figure 1. Processing

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After conducting a study of the local potato dodol industry, several main problems were found that could have been improved in the growth and sustainability of this business. However, we also saw great potential for potato dodol as souvenirs for visiting tourists. Here are the main results of the research:

1. **Limitations of Local Marketing:** Locally processed products such as potato dodol are often only known at the local level and are unable to reach a wider market, including domestic and international tourists.
2. **High Production Costs:** The process of making potato dodol using traditional methods and fresh ingredients requires high production costs, which ultimately affect the selling price of the product.
3. **Packaging and Distribution Difficulties:** Packaging and shipping products to various locations, especially tourist destinations, is still a major obstacle. The product is easily damaged so it requires special handling.
4. **Competition with Similar Products:** The large number of similar products in the food and beverage industry demands higher innovation to differentiate potato dodol from other products.

In the context of potato dodol as souvenirs for tourists, it is important to examine how each of these problems can be overcome to strengthen the attractiveness of potato dodol in the tourist market. The following is an in-depth discussion of each problem and potential solutions that can be implemented:

1. **Limitations of Local Marketing:**
 - a. **Analysis:** With an effective marketing strategy, potato dodol is easier for tourists to recognize. In fact, tourists tend to look for unique and authentic souvenirs from the areas they visit.
 - b. **Solution:** Develop a strong digital marketing strategy by utilizing social media, websites and e-commerce platforms to reach tourists. Collaboration with travel agents, hotels and local souvenir centres can introduce potato dodol as a regional souvenir to tourists.

2. **High Production Costs:**

- a. **Analysis:** High production costs can make the price of potato dodol less competitive in the souvenir market. Tourists tend to look for affordable but quality souvenirs.
- b. **Solution:** Applying modern technology in the production process to reduce costs without reducing quality. Alternative raw materials that are more affordable but still high quality also need to be considered. With lower production costs, product selling prices can be adjusted to make them more affordable for tourists.

3. **Packaging and Distribution Difficulties:**

- a. **Analysis:** Constraints in packaging and distribution can reduce the quality of products received by tourists. Products that are damaged or not durable will disappoint consumers.
- b. **Solution:** Using more durable packaging and refrigeration technology in transportation to extend product shelf life. Collaborate with experienced logistics companies to ensure products reach tourists in good condition. Attractive and practical packaging can also increase the appeal of potato dodol as a souvenir.

4. **Competition with Similar Products:**

- a. **Analysis:** The souvenir market is full of similar products, so innovation and uniqueness are the keys to attracting tourists.
- b. **Solution:** Product diversification by developing unique flavours, shapes and packaging variants. Prioritizing local stories and product authenticity can be an attractive added value for tourists. For example, highlights potato dodol as a regional souvenir with an authentic taste and cultural story behind it.

By overcoming the problem through the proposed marketing mix solution, which includes strategies regarding product (including quality, brand and packaging), price, distribution and promotion, it is hoped that potato dodol can become a popular souvenir and be in demand by tourists visiting the area (Kotler & Keller, 2013). This not only increases sales and profits for producers but also helps promote local culture and cuisine to a wider market.

Food Tourism is recognized as an ethical microtrend that addresses issues of sustainability and climate change, offering a new, more ethical paradigm in tourism. (Fusté-Forné & Jamal, 2020) States that Slow Food Tourism not only promotes sustainable food consumption but also encourages tourists to be more aware of the environmental impact of their choices. This approach combines culinary delights with social and environmental responsibility, making it an integral part of ethical tourism and halal tourism. (Yuliviona et al., 2019)

Factors such as halal food, social environment, and emotional attachment significantly influence tourists' intentions to return to halal tourism destinations. (Hasan, 2023) emphasizes the importance of paying attention to specific dietary and cultural preferences in food tourism. In the context of halal tourism, food that is in accordance with religious regulations and an environment that is friendly to halal culture is the main key to attracting and retaining tourists. (Irda et al., 2019) This shows that the success of culinary tourism is highly dependent on the ability to understand and meet the specific needs of various groups of tourists.

Additionally, the relationship between the tourism industry and local entrepreneurs plays an important role in meeting tourists' needs, including food services, accommodation, transportation, and entertainment. Widiانا and Prakoso (2022) highlight that collaboration between various local actors can improve the quality and variety of services offered to tourists. Local entrepreneurs not only provide authentic products and services but also help maintain and promote local culture.

Culinary tourism plays a multifaceted role in maintaining regional identity, supporting local economies, enhancing cultural experiences, and promoting sustainable practices. By focusing on unique experiences, local collaboration and ethical considerations, food tourism can continue to grow as an important component of the tourism industry. Food Tourism, with its emphasis on sustainability and ethics, as well as attention to cultural preferences and special diets, shows how culinary tourism can contribute positively to the environment, economy and society. Through a holistic and sustainable approach, culinary tourism not only provides an immersive experience for tourists but also brings sustainable benefits to the community.

Potato Dodol Packaging and Labeling



Figure.2 Potato Dodol Packaging and Labeling

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research on the local potato dodol industry shows several main problems that hinder the growth and sustainability of this business. These problems include local marketing limitations, high production costs, packaging and distribution difficulties, and competition with similar products. Marketing limitations make it difficult for products to reach a wider market, especially tourists. High production costs result in less competitive selling prices. Difficulties in packaging and distribution make products vulnerable to damage during shipping. Intense competition requires manufacturers to continue to innovate in order to attract consumer interest.

Potato dodol has great potential as a typical souvenir for tourists visiting production areas. The uniqueness and authentic taste of potato dodol can be a special attraction for domestic and international tourists. However, to make potato dodol a popular souvenir, a special strategy is needed that can overcome the existing problems.

1. Digital Marketing Strategy and Collaboration:

Using social media, websites and e-commerce platforms to expand market reach. Collaborate with travel agents, hotels and souvenir centres to promote potato dodol to tourists. This can increase product visibility and reach a wider range of consumers, including tourists visiting the area. This will strengthen the image of potato dodol as a typical regional souvenir.

2. Application of Modern Technology:

Using automatic machines in the production process and looking for alternative raw materials that are more affordable but still high quality. Reducing production costs and increasing efficiency, so that product selling prices can be more competitive in the market. With a more affordable price, potato dodol will be more attractive as a souvenir for tourists.

3. Investment in Packaging and Logistics Systems:

Using more durable packaging and cooling technology in transportation. Collaborate with experienced logistics companies. Extend product shelf life and ensure products reach consumers in good condition. Attractive and durable packaging also increases the attractiveness of potato dodol as a souvenir.

4. Product Diversification and Innovation:

Developing unique flavours, shapes and packaging variants. Prioritizing local stories and product authenticity as selling points. Adding cultural or historical story elements to packaging can add sentimental value for tourists. Make products more attractive and different from competitors, and increase consumer appeal through the uniqueness and story behind the product. Product diversification also gives travellers more choices, which can increase sales.

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