

The Potential of Traditional Culinary as a Gastronomic Tourism Attraction in Pajambon Village, Kuningan Regency, Indonesia

Gery Dewanto*¹, Elena Kartika Sari²

Politeknik Pariwisata NHI Bandung, Indonesia^{1,2}

Email: gerydewanto@poltekpar-nhi.ac.id

Abstract

Traditional cuisine is an important part of the community's cultural identity and holds great potential in supporting the development of gastronomic tourism. This study aims to identify the potential of traditional cuisine and analyze its development opportunities as a gastronomic tourism attraction in Pajambon Village, Kuningan Regency. The study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that Pajambon Village has a variety of traditional cuisine based on local ingredients such as cassava, rice, coconut, and palm sugar. Several traditional foods such as Nasi Kasreng, Kue Cucur, and various traditional culinary products have high gastronomic value because they contain elements of history, tradition, and traditional cooking techniques. This potential can be developed into a tourist attraction through the development of culinary products, gastronomic tourism attractions, and empowerment of the local community. This study provides recommendations for strategies for developing community-based gastronomic tourism in Pajambon Village, which are expected to support the preservation of traditional cuisine while improving the village economy.

Keywords: gastronomy, traditional culinary, culinary tourism, tourist villages.

A. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomic tourism is a form of tourism development that places food as an important part of the tourism experience. Gastronomic tourism has become an important aspect in destination development, as local food and beverages reflect the cultural identity of a region (Mota et al., 2024). In the context of modern tourism, tourists seek not only natural beauty but also authentic cultural experiences, including through local cuisine. In recent years, traditional cuisine has been increasingly recognized as a representation of a region's cultural identity and holds significant potential for enhancing the attractiveness of tourist destinations. Through a gastronomic approach, food is understood not only as a consumption necessity but also as part of a cultural heritage containing historical value, traditions, and local wisdom.

Traditional cuisine holds high cultural value because it reflects the history, traditions, and identity of the local community. Through a gastronomic approach, food is understood not only as a consumer product but also as part of a cultural heritage with social and economic value.

Kuningan Regency, located in West Java Province, is known for its rich culture and diverse traditional culinary potential. Situated at the foot of Mount Ciremai, this region boasts fertile geographical conditions, producing a variety of local foods that support the development of traditional culinary traditions. One such area is Pajambon Village in Kuningan Regency.

The people of Pajambon Village still maintain culinary traditions passed down through generations. Various traditional foods based on local ingredients such as cassava, rice, and palm sugar are still produced on a household scale. However, this culinary potential has not been optimally utilized as a gastronomic tourist attraction and has not been optimally utilized as a tourist attraction integrated with village tourism development. Most traditional culinary products are still produced at home and lack packaging, promotion, and product innovation strategies capable of attracting tourists. However, if optimally

managed, traditional culinary arts can be a crucial element in the development of gastronomic tourism, which can boost the village economy.

Gaps in research, there has been no comprehensive research on the potential traditional food local ingredients as part of rural gastronomic tourism attractions, especially those that link them to agrotourism in the village environment. In Pajambon Village (Kuningan Regency, West Java), the potential for local raw materials such as guava (from guava plantation agrotourism) has not been optimally utilized in the form of a specialty culinary items. This is a unique feature of this village that has not been widely studied.

Novelty for this research is based on the identification and in-depth analysis of traditional food based on local ingredients in Pajambon Village as an asset, gastronomy village. This study fills the research gap on traditional culinary in tourist villages and provides a practical approach to developing rural gastronomy. As an illustration of this importance, Setyomantoro and Muin (2025) found that innovation in a traditional drink using local ingredients successfully created a unique tourist attraction and increased the competitiveness of tourist villages. This study adopts similar principles with local ingredients in Pajambon to assess its culinary value and tourism development potential.

Based on these conditions, this study aims to identify the potential of traditional culinary delights and analyze their development opportunities as gastronomic tourism attractions in Pajambon Village. This study aims to identify culinary delights with gastronomic value and their development opportunities as tourist attractions. This research is expected to contribute to efforts to preserve local culinary heritage while supporting the development of community-based tourism in Kuningan Regency.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at exploring and describing the potential of traditional culinary arts in Pajambon Village, Kuningan Regency in depth. This method allows researchers to understand the dynamics of social interactions that occur, as well as identify the potential of traditional culinary arts, the gastronomic value contained within them, and develop strategies for developing gastronomic tourism as a village tourist attraction in Kuningan Regency. The research location was Pajambon Village, located in Kuningan Regency. The location was chosen because of the guava plantation agrotourism and the culinary traditions of the local community. The population in this study were culinary MSME managers in Pajambon Village, Kuningan Regency, with a sample of culinary MSME managers in Pajambon Village, Kuningan Regency involves 10–15 key informants selected purposively (consideration) and snowball sampling. Informants included: village heads, guava agrotourism team, local culinary entrepreneurs, and tourists who had visited. The main criteria for informants were that they must know local culinary traditions and/or be directly involved in the village culinary tourism business or management. Data collection was carried out through several methods, namely observation by conducting direct observation of community activities in producing traditional foods, interviews with culinary business actors, local communities, and village officials to obtain information about the types of traditional culinary and the process of making them, and documentation was carried out by collecting photos, field notes, and archives related to traditional culinary in Pajambon Village. Data collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. This study used a guide that asked about the types of traditional culinary delights known in the village, the raw materials used, processing methods, related cultural values or traditions, and informants' views on the tourism potential of these culinary delights. Data credibility was maintained through several methods. First, source triangulation by comparing information from various informants. Second, method triangulation by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Third, member checking techniques cross-checked preliminary findings with several informants for validation. Fourth, systematic data presentation and literature triangulation to avoid researcher perception bias.

For data analysis, it is carried out in three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions through elaboration of data patterns and meaning. This process is interactive: initial analysis may reveal themes or categories that are then retested with new data. Simple conceptual modeling techniques are also used to link local resources, traditional cuisine, and tourism development. With this method, it is hoped that a valid picture of Pajambon's traditional drinks and their potential as a village cultural gastronomic asset will be obtained.

C. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Pajambon Village is located at the western end of Kramatmulya District, Kuningan Regency, West Java, right on the slopes of Mount Ciremai National Park. It is relatively close to the district government center (approximately 5 km) and the regency center (approximately 12 km). Due to its high altitude and hilly topography, the village offers natural tourism potential, including the Cilengkrang Valley Waterfall and the Pakuwon Agrotourism Site.

Demographically, the residents of Pajambon Village primarily earn their living as horticultural and plantation farmers, particularly red guava (covering an area of 30 hectares). The guava harvest is sold fresh and processed into processed products (syrup/dodol) to increase economic value. Other commodities include organic vegetables, coffee (Arabica-Robusta coffee clusters), and other secondary crops. Sheep farming groups are also developing as a side business. The village's condition plays a significant role in the potential of local culinary delights. The abundant availability of fresh raw materials, namely guava orchards, coffee plantations, and vegetable gardens, provides fruit, coffee beans, vegetables, and tubers. For example, the village's name itself comes from "Pajambuan," meaning an area abundant in guava trees, allowing the development of guava processing traditions (candied fruit and syrup). Sundanese food culture is deeply embedded in the community's daily patterns, with a diet of rice, vegetables, salted fish, and spicy spices being very common. A variety of traditional dishes are based on local ingredients. In addition, the active involvement of villages in the BRILiaN program and the formation of economic clusters in the form of horticultural crops, coffee, and agrotourism can strengthen the potential of the culinary business, because it combines agriculture and tourism.

Pajambon Village, Kuningan, boasts a diverse array of traditional culinary potential, serving as a gastronomic tourism attraction. Gastronomic tourism relies on the uniqueness of local cuisine as its primary attraction. Pajambon's culinary offerings offer authentic, traditional Sundanese flavors distinct from those found in the city center, attracting tourists seeking authentic experiences. The availability of fresh ingredients, including organic vegetables, secondary crops, guava, and coffee, and an agrarian lifestyle, particularly guava agrotourism, significantly support the provision of traditional culinary delights. Furthermore, the surrounding natural attractions, such as the Cilengkrang Valley Waterfall and Pakuwon Agrotourism, allow for a combination of nature and gastronomy tourism packages. Findings indicate that Pajambon Village possesses strong assets in the form of authentic traditional cuisine and a pristine natural environment.

Identifying traditional culinary potential in Pajambon Village.

In terms of traditional culinary inventory, attached are the results of field surveys and literature that identify local specialty dishes which are informed as follows:

Kasreng Rice

Nasi Kasreng at figure 1 below is a culinary specialty of Kuningan, served with rice wrapped in banana/teak leaves, sprinkled with rebon shrimp, raw bean sprouts, and other side dishes such as various fried foods, various stir-fries, various pepesan (Indonesian traditional dishes), and chili sauce to stimulate your appetite.

Figure 1. of Kasreng Rice



Source: Researcher Documentation, 2026

Bubur Sop Ayam Kampung (Kampung Chicken Soup Porridge)

Bubur Sop Ayam Kampung is a culinary specialty from Kuningan at figure 2 below, consisting of soft rice porridge topped with a clear, fresh, savory chicken broth made from free-range chicken and rich in spices. This dish differs from typical chicken porridge in that it uses a clear, fresh, and generous amount of broth, similar to Cirebon's signature porridge soup. The dish is garnished with fried soybeans, fried shallots, a dash of sweet soy sauce, and chopped fresh spring onions.

Figure 2. Bubur Sop Ayam Kampung



Source: Researcher Documentation, 2026

Sorabi

Sorabi at figure 3 below is a traditional snack from Kuningan Regency, West Java. It consists of rice flour pancakes cooked in a clay oven and firewood, giving it a distinctive aroma and a crispy texture on the outside and soft on the inside. This snack is typically enjoyed for breakfast with fried side dishes such as bakwan (fried vegetables), combro (fried vegetables), and fried tofu.

Figure 3. Sorabi



Source: Researcher Documentation, 2026

Kupat tahu – hucap

Kupat tahu or Hucap at figure 4 below is a typical Kuningan culinary dish consisting of fried tofu and ketupat pieces drizzled with a thick, creamy peanut sauce, topped with soy sauce, and sprinkled with

fried shallots, creating a salty, sweet, and savory flavor. This dish is perfect for breakfast, lunch, and dinner throughout the day. The difference between hucap and other kupat tahu is the thick, creamy peanut sauce with a sweet and savory flavor. Furthermore, ketupat, the carbohydrate used, has a brownish color due to the boiling process using rice straw water, which also makes the texture chewier. The protein used is Kuningan tofu, which has a more savory and dense flavor. The delicious and tasty flavors make this simple culinary favorite among Kuningan residents and, of course, tourists.

Figure 4. Kupat tahu – hucap



Source : Researcher Documentation, 2026

Kue Cucur

A traditional snack at figure 4 below is a typical of Kuningan Regency, West Java, made from rice flour and brown sugar with a unique manufacturing process, round in shape with a cone-shaped top that has a distinctive sweet taste of brown sugar. This snack has a golden brown color and a taste with a distinctive and strong aroma and texture of brown sugar making it an authentic Sundanese culinary heritage that is currently found from traditional markets to souvenir shops typical of Kuningan. In Pajambon Village itself, this Cucur Cake is produced by the Lembah Ciremai Women Farmers Group (KWT) Pajambon Village which empowers women from the housewife segment in the village to be able to process typical culinary.

Figure 4. Kue Cucur



Source : Researcher Documentation, 2026

Processed Red Guava

As an agrotourism destination specializing in red guava at figure 5 below, Pajambon Village naturally boasts a signature dish made from this ingredient, which is made into a Kuningan specialty: red guava dodol (sweet treat). This red guava dodol snack has become a popular product in Pajambon Village,

produced as a home industry by the Pajambon Village Women's Farmers Group (KWT) and distributed to several souvenir centers in Kuningan.

Figure 5, Dodol Jambu Merah



Source : Researcher Documentation, 2026

Another culinary creation that the people of Pajambon Village have innovated is Red Guava Chicken Noodles. However, this dish isn't produced daily, but rather made to order.

This culinary diversity demonstrates a balance between traditional cuisine and innovations made from guava from agrotourism. This aligns with the findings of Setyomantoro & Muin (2025) that innovative use of local ingredients creates distinctive flavors and a culturally valuable tourism experience.

Gastronomic value analysis

Each of the traditional culinary above contains cultural values. Certain dishes are closely tied to local customs and reflect the values of farmer simplicity (using natural ingredients). The process of making traditional culinary dishes is often carried out in groups in home kitchens, strengthening social bonds. The culinary process also involves local knowledge because these traditional skills are passed down through generations. However, there has been a tendency for the younger generation to be reluctant to continue these traditions, citing complaints. lack of young generations interest in authentic village recipes. In fact, maintaining old recipes and traditional techniques is part of culinary heritage, which according to Mota et al. is the distinguishing factor that tourists look for.

Thus, Pajambon's traditional culinary delights serve a dual role: balancing the village's modern lifestyle (health and social values) and serving as a cultural heritage with the potential to be promoted to tourists. This research emphasizes that these values can be turned into a cultural gastronomic asset if properly managed within a tourism context. Gastronomic value was carried out using a SWOT analysis to reveal the strategic culinary potential in Pajambon Village as a gastronomic tourism destination, which is described in the following table:

Table 1. SWOT Analysis Table of Culinary Potential in Pajambon Village

Strength	Weaknesses
▪ Have abundant local commodities which produce authentic flavors. Knowledge of traditional culinary processing is still held by some communities. ▪ The development of innovative culinary creations has begun, adding variety. This aligns with the principle of sustainable gastronomy, which	▪ limited supporting facilities ▪ limited promotional and branding facilities ▪ Culinary human resources who need to improve their capabilities ▪ On the processing side, many products are still on a simple household scale without quality standardization.

emphasizes the quality of local ingredients as a key selling point.

- Has a variety of typical culinary delights that can become an identity and gastronomic tourist attraction.
- BRILiaN village branding and the support of village/regional policies for the development of tourist villages (Sustainable Tourism Village program, BRILiaN).
- The village economy is based on agriculture; culinary tourism can increase local income with the attraction of distinctive flavors and the uniqueness of traditional culinary delights.
- social capital of the community with Sundanese culture, namely mutual cooperation and customary norms that support community involvement.

Opportunity

- Authentic experience-based tourism trends towards Indonesian cuisine increased
- Tourist interest in Indonesian cuisine is increasing
- Government program support
- Potential for collaboration with cultural/nature tourism.
- Demographic changes (millennial generation “foodies”) and the trend of sharing culinary experiences on social media are driving market potential.
- Internet access and social media make culinary promotion easier. The implementation of e-commerce and reservationonlinecan reach a wider range of tourists.

Threat

- The competition from other culinary destinations
- The dominance of modern culinary and changes in consumption styles (fast food) which can be a threat to the sustainability of traditional culinary arts
- External risks such as natural disasters or Climate and economic challenges (commodity production decreases during extreme weather) can also be obstacles

Source: Researchers analysis, 2026

This SWOT at table 1 above analysis is supported by field findings that, despite the high quality of the ingredients, the lack of promotion has kept the village's culinary specialties unknown to tourists. This is reflected in the lack of agrotourism visitors trying the village's culinary specialties. Based on these potentials and obstacles, recommended strategies include holding a village culinary festival, culinary product training for souvenirs, And digital marketing by highlighting traditional culinary culture stories (as suggested by Mota et al, 2024)

From the SWOT table of culinary potential of Pajambon Village, the potential of Pejambon's traditional cuisine as a gastronomic tourist attraction is quite high. Its main strengths lie in its unique flavors and local ingredients. For example, local ingredients like red guava and the typical Kuningan

kasreng rice have a distinct culinary identity and are not easily found elsewhere. Field findings indicate that without active promotion (such as culinary festivals or trade shows), the uniqueness of village cuisine is not fully socialized. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need to integrate cultural aspects and marketing strategies, in line with international gastronomy research that recommends culinary events, digital marketing, and local stakeholder engagement as keys to success. Furthermore, Pajambon Village boasts an abundant supply of ingredients (such as organic vegetables and local coffee), ensuring a consistent supply of culinary products. These culinary delights can be promoted alongside nature experiences such as camping at Pakuwon Agrotourism, creating traditional cooking tourism activities, or having a picnic at Cilengkrang Valley Waterfall. This is supported by market segmentation and tourist profiles, with the primary target group being domestic tourists (aged 20–45) from major cities (Jakarta, Bandung, Cirebon, Kuningan) with a culinary adventure spirit, as well as family tourists who combine nature and cultural recreation. The foodie segment (traditional culinary enthusiasts) and nature tourism enthusiasts are targeted specifically for promotion. The typical profile is millennials to early adults with middle to upper incomes, who tend to be tech-savvy and value authentic experiences. International tourists (interested in culture and adventure) are also a potential target, albeit in smaller portions. Optimizing the gastronomic value of this culinary potential can provide an estimated economic impact for the village and its residents. The village's reputation as a tourist destination fosters a conducive business climate for residents through multiple spending (transportation and accommodation). The economic impact extends beyond food sales to value creation in the agricultural sector (raw material providers), culinary MSMEs, and new job creation.

Gastronomic tourism development strategy as a tourist attraction in Pajambon Village in Kuningan Regency

The strategy for developing gastronomic tourism as a tourist attraction in Pajambon Village in Kuningan Regency focuses on main pillars:

Capacity Building

Traditional cooking skills, culinary business management, and tourism services are provided to local chefs and food and beverage vendors or entrepreneurs through workshops or training on food packaging, tourism service standards, and food stall management. Furthermore, building partnerships with successful culinary MSMEs serves as a benchmark in an effort to provide a realistic picture and training programs for residents on traditional cooking skills, food stall management, and tourism services. Additional training includes food hygiene (simple HACCP), creative packaging (local branding).

Product Development

Establishing quality standards (cleanliness, taste) and serving innovations to attract the younger generation. Integrating food into tour packages, for example, through trekking and culinary packages that include scheduled culinary events/culinary festivals.

Marketing and Branding

The marketing strategy involves utilizing social media (Instagram hashtags, culinary videos) as an active promotional effort through social media, the official tourism website, and collaborations with influencers. Branding initiatives such as "Pajambon Culinary Tourism" and halal certification are expected to increase appeal.

Institutions and Partnerships

Establishment of culinary business groups or village clusters with Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDes) as co-managers. The village economic cluster approach (agribusiness, livestock, tourism) is in accordance with the Village Government's initiative as a synergistic development effort involving various

stakeholders. Furthermore, local governments and tourism offices are encouraged to actively facilitate promotional events and tourism infrastructure, such as culinary markets, road access, and signage.

Cultural Preservation & Sustainability

In cultural preservation and sustainability, strategic steps that can be implemented include culinary development that respects local wisdom, from the selection of raw materials to the use of standardized traditional recipes passed down through generations, and culinary cultural norms (village banquets) that do not lead to excessive exploitation. Furthermore, hygiene training emphasizes food hygiene. Organic waste disposal systems in culinary markets and the reduction of plastic are encouraged. Tourists are encouraged to preserve nature, for example, by prohibiting littering in waterfalls and agrotourism areas.

Risk & Mitigation

The following analysis of risks and mitigation measures demonstrates that the risk of loss of authenticity from culinary commercialization can be addressed through village regulations and cultural advocacy. Destination competition is anticipated by differentiating between packages (nature and culinary). Health risks, such as food safety, are minimized through hygiene certification. The potential for extreme weather (heavy rain) during the rainy season is anticipated with enclosed facilities. Furthermore, regular market research is necessary to adjust strategies as tourism trends change.

D. CONCLUSION

This study identified several culinary/traditional local ingredients which has the potential to be an identity and a gastronomic tourist attraction, in Pejambon Village and guava-based innovations include Nasi Kasreng, Kupat Tahu - hucap, Sorabi, Red Guava Processing Culinary Products, Kue Cucur, and Bubur Sop Ayam Kampung (chicken soup porridge). This culinary potential has cultural and values which reflects Sundanese gastronomy and the relationship between the community and its environment. The existence of the Pejambon guava agrotourism area provides a unique opportunity to develop a unique, previously untouched culinary product.

From the aspect scientific, this research contributes new understanding of the role of culinary traditional village in cultural culinary tourism. Its main contribution is filling the literature gap: linking local gastronomy studies with agro-empowerment (guava potential) and providing concrete examples of qualitative research methods in that context. The results confirm that in addition to food, traditional culinary products need to be considered in rural gastronomic tourism diversification strategies (in line with Mota et al. 2024). With the right development strategy, particularly in increasing the capacity of culinary actors, promotion, and infrastructure, it is hoped that this potential can be realized as a profitable culinary tourism destination.

In a way practical implications, findings underscore the importance of developing traditional culinary products in Pejambon Village as part of a tourism package. Recommended practices include: the establishment of homestay or village stalls serving local culinary specialties, traditional beverage workshops for tourists, and product management training for local MSMEs. Village governments and tourism offices should facilitate these activities. traditional culinary festival or special gastronomic events (in line with the suggestions of Mota et al. (2024) to increase exposure. It is hoped that these steps will strengthen the village's culinary identity, increase community income, and ensure the sustainability of the local culinary heritage.

Gradual implementation with a clear timeframe and regular monitoring is necessary to achieve optimal results. Overall, the economic potential of Pajambon gastronomic tourism is significant and worthy of development. Based on the analysis and review conducted in this study, the authors provide the following recommendations:

Capacity building by holding regular training on traditional recipes, food hygiene, and business management for local chefs and culinary entrepreneurs.

Product development through standardization of culinary recipes and presentation, as well as being able to create collaborative tour packages such as “Valley Trekking and Traditional Food”.

Integrated promotion by creating digital content (photos/videos of recipes/reviews) for tourism social media, holding an annual village culinary festival, and marketing through partners (travel agents, influencers).

Providing supporting infrastructure, for example improving road access to culinary tourism, providing public facilities such as clean toilets and trash cans, and building culinary areas (village food courts) at strategic points.

Collaborate with stakeholders by involving local governments, tourism groups (Pokdarwis), and village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) in financing and managing activities. Facilitate partnerships with culinary MSMEs from other regions for knowledge transfer.

Implementing environmental policies as an effort for conservation and sustainability by banning the use of single-use plastics and composting food waste, as well as conducting outreach on the importance of preserving traditional recipes so that they are not eroded by modernization.

Conduct periodic evaluations by monitoring the impact of the program (tourist satisfaction surveys, SME income) for continuous improvement.

Strategic recommendations include training for culinary entrepreneurs, infrastructure improvements (stalls, road access), digital promotions and exhibitions, and active involvement of village governments/village-owned enterprises (BUMDes) in developing business partnerships. The implementation plan is being developed in stages (with a planned timeline), emphasizing the preservation of Sundanese culture and the principles of sustainable tourism. The results of this study are expected to encourage the realization of competitive and sustainable gastronomic tourism in Pajambon. By implementing the above recommendations, Pajambon Village can develop its traditional culinary delights into sustainable gastronomic tourism attractions that improve the welfare of local communities and enrich the diversity of Kuningan's tourism.

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