

Exploring the Origin and Cultural Values of the Menu in *Ladhosan Dhahar* Ceremony at Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to reveal the origins and historical value of the food served at *Ladhosan Dhahar* ceremony, a tradition of eating together from the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace. This research also analyzes how these this tradition reflects the cultural values of Yogyakarta Palace and evaluates the role of Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel in supporting the promotion of cultural tourism by preserving and revitalizing these traditions. *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition, which is rich in spiritual and social symbolism, has been revived by Royal Ambarrukmo by serving dishes once enjoyed by kings. This research used a qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and literature studies related to palace culinary delights. The research results show that each menu served has historical and symbolic meaning that is closely related to the spiritual and social life of the Yogyakarta Palace. This culinary tradition reflects values such as togetherness, purity, and prosperity. In addition, this research found that the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel plays an important role in promoting Yogyakarta cultural tourism by bringing back *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition as an authentic cultural experience for tourists. This research concludes that the revitalization of culinary traditions such as *Ladhosan Dhahar* not only supports cultural preservation, but also contributes significantly to strengthen the image of Yogyakarta cultural tourism to domestic and international tourists.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the global tourism industry, as tourists' interest in authentic experiences that focus on cultural heritage and local traditions continues to increase (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Yogyakarta, as one of the cultural centers in Indonesia, offers various traditions that are rich in historical value, one of which is *Ladhosan Dhahar*. *Ladhosan Dhahar* is a communal eating ceremony originating from the Yogyakarta Sultanate Palace, which has deep meaning in the context of the relationship between the Sultan and his people and contains philosophical values related to prosperity and togetherness (Ricklefs, 2007).

Revitalizing traditions such as *Ladhosan Dhahar* is not only important to maintain the sustainability of cultural heritage, but also plays a role in strengthening the attractiveness of Yogyakarta's cultural tourism. As part of this preservation effort, Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel has taken an active role in reviving the *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition and introducing it to tourists. This effort is a concrete example of how the hotel industry can contribute to the preservation of local culture, while enriching the tourism experience for visitors (Becker, 1993).

Gastronomy as an element of cultural tourism functions as a means of introducing cultural identity through distinctive culinary flavors and experiences. According to Fischler (1988), food not only functions as a biological need, but also becomes a symbol of identity and cultural values. Hjalager and Richards (2002) add

that gastronomic experiences can create an emotional connection between tourists and the local culture, providing a more immersive and authentic experience.

In this context, Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel strives to bring back the culinary experience of *Ladhosan Dhahar* to hotel guests, both domestic and international tourists, by paying attention to the authenticity and traditional values contained in every dish served. Besides giving added value for tourists, this program also helps support the preservation of local culture which is threatened by current developments and globalization (Long, 2004).

This research focuses on three main aspects. This includes uncovering the origins and historical value of the food in *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition, analyzing how this culinary tradition reflects the cultural values of the Yogyakarta Palace, and evaluating the role of the Royal Ambarrukmo in supporting the promotion of cultural tourism through this tradition. By using a qualitative approach, it is expected that this research can contribute in understanding the importance of culinary traditions in cultural preservation and their potential in supporting the development of cultural tourism in Yogyakarta.

Gastronomy and Culture Concept

Gastronomy or culinary art is the art or science of good food (good eating). In short, gastronomy is referred to as everything related to the enjoyment of food and drink (Nurwitasari, 2015). Gastronomy is not just food consumption, but also a way for people to express their identity and culture (Fischler, 1988). This concept includes how food becomes a symbol of the social values and beliefs held by a community. Hjalager and Richards (2002) emphasize that gastronomy in tourism can strengthen the appeal of a destination by offering an in-depth cultural experience through culinary delights.

History and Culture of *Ladhosan Dhahar* at the Yogyakarta Palace

The Yogyakarta Palace, founded in 1755, plays an important role in preserving Javanese culture, including culinary traditions such as *Ladhosan Dhahar* (Ricklefs, 2007). This ceremony not only reflects the spiritual connection between the Sultan and his people, but also shows the culinary heritage passed down from generation to generation.

In the past, *Ladhosan Dhahar* was held on special occasions at the Yogyakarta Palace. Usually the food served to the Sultan was stored in a wooden box (*jodhang*) carried on a stretcher on the shoulders of four courtiers. The leader of the procession carrying *Ladhosan Dhahar* was called a *Bekel* or *Cucuk Lampah*, and was accompanied by a courtier who walked with a royal yellow umbrella or *Songsong*. In the last row, there are generally female waiters who would serve the dishes at the dining table (Royal Ambarrukmo, 2022).

The *Ladhosan Dhahar* menu was the favorite food of sultans in the era of Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono VII to IX. According to Wijanarko (2020), *Ladhosan Dhahar*'s menus are as follows:

1. beverage: *bir jawa*
2. snacks: *roti jok semur ayam*, *ledre pisang*, and cucumber salad
3. main course: *nasi pandan wangi*
4. side dishes: *dendeng age*, *sapitan lidah*, *zwaartzuur*, *lombok kethok sandung lamur*, and *setup pakis taji*
5. dessert: *rondo topo* with caramel sauce

In the history of the Palace, the ethics and procedures of *Ladhosan Dhahar* are not just eating manners, but are also a learning medium for becoming individuals who have good manners (Gardjito, 2022)

Gastronomy in Cultural Tourism

Gastronomic studies in tourism show that food can be a means of introducing tourists to the culture of a region. According to Long (2004), food has the power to build a connection between visitors and local culture, allowing them to experience the essence of the place visited through local flavors. This is very relevant in the context of Yogyakarta, where tourists can experience culinary traditions directly through *Ladhosan Dhahar* at Royal Ambarrukmo.

According to Nugroho and Hardani (2020), tourists in fact not only enjoy the taste of food when they eat, but are also interested in understanding the philosophy of naming the food. Therefore, gastronomy is relevant as an aspect of strength in cultural tourism.

The Role of Royal Ambarrukmo in Cultural Preservation

As a hotel that has a close history with the Yogyakarta Palace, Royal Ambarrukmo strives to maintain cultural elements in its various programs, including the revitalization of *Ladhosan Dhahar*. This program is not only an attraction for tourists but also a medium for cultural preservation for the younger generation, who can learn about the historical values and life philosophy of Javanese people through culinary experiences (Royal Ambarukmo, 2022).

In its implementation, Royal Ambarrukmo provides story telling for *Ladhosan Dhahar* to increase tourists' interest. According to Hasnah and Nugroho (2021), storytelling can provide interesting new experiences, as well as knowledge and insight for tourists.

METHOD

Research Approach

This research used a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the historical and cultural meaning of the *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition at the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel.

Data Collection Technique

The data were collected through direct observation of the implementation of *Ladhosan Dhahar*, in-depth interviews with hotel management, cultural experts, hotel guests, and literature study. Observations were carried out during several events, while interviews were carried out using a semi-structured guide.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically to identify key themes related to the historical meaning, symbolism, and role of these traditions in cultural promotion. Thematic analysis helped understand patterns that emerge from the informants' narratives and the literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History and Origin of *Ladhosan Dhahar* Menu

Ladhosan Dhahar is part of the Yogyakarta Palace tradition that has been going on for centuries. The Yogyakarta Palace has a culinary tradition that is closely related to royal rituals and the symbolization of kingly power. *Ladhosan Dhahar*, as a communal eating ceremony, reflects the social structure and

relationship between the king and his people. This research found that every dish served in *Ladhosan Dhahar* has deep origins in the kingdom's history, with each food chosen for its symbolism.

The results of this research are in line with Dewanti (2020), who states that dishes in the royal tradition in Java are not only prepared for consumption, but also as a form of respect to ancestors and as a symbol of spiritual communication. Thus, the origin of the food in *Ladhosan Dhahar* cannot be separated from the historical context and spirituality of the palace. It shows that this culinary tradition has become an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Yogyakarta Palace, which continues to be preserved through official ceremonies and revived by outside parties such as the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel.

Historical and Cultural Value of Food

Every dish served at *Ladhosan Dhahar* has deep historical and cultural value. Food is an expression of cultural identity and in the context of *Ladhosan Dhahar*, it becomes a symbol that reflects Javanese values, such as togetherness, purity, and prosperity. The research found that these dishes are not only important for their taste, but also for their symbolism associated with survival, salvation, and spiritual balance. For example, the dishes served in *Ladhosan Dhahar* are not only a symbol of prayer for safety, but also symbolize the Sultan's protection of his people, as found in Wibisono's (2019) research. In this tradition, food also functions as a medium of communication between humans and the spiritual realm, reflecting palace values which prioritize harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality. Therefore, every dish served has an important role in maintaining social and spiritual balance in the palace. Through this tradition, these values are passed on to the next generation.

The Role of Royal Ambarrukmo in Revitalizing Traditions

Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel plays a significant role in the revitalization of the *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition. As one of the sites that is closely related to the history of the Yogyakarta Palace, this hotel uses this tradition as a way to reintroduce cultural heritage to the wider community, including domestic and foreign tourists. Gastronomy is an important element in the development of cultural tourism, as culinary experiences can strengthen the appeal of tourist destinations by presenting authentic cultural experiences.

This research found that Royal Ambarrukmo not only serves food as culinary products, but also offers an in-depth cultural experience. The hotel's efforts to maintain authenticity in serving *Ladhosan Dhahar* dishes, including the use of the same ingredients used in the past, reflects its commitment to cultural preservation. This is in line with Long's (2004) research, which emphasizes the importance of authenticity in gastronomic tourism to create an emotional connection between tourists and local culture. Therefore, Royal Ambarrukmo has succeeded in reviving this tradition in the context of modern tourism, while maintaining the traditional values.

Implication for the World of Gastronomy and Tourism

This research shows that the *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition not only has cultural significance, but can also make an important contribution to the world of gastronomy and tourism. This kind of revitalization of culinary traditions allows tourists to experience authentic cultural experiences, which is a major attraction in cultural tourism. Gastronomic tourism provides opportunities for tourist destinations to utilize local cultural riches as a tool to attract tourists, increase economic value, and strengthen the destination's cultural identity.

On the other hand, the revitalization of culinary traditions also has an impact on the world of gastronomy, as traditional foods can be elevated to commercially valuable culinary products without sacrificing their authenticity. Traditional food combined with a tourist experience can strengthen the destination's image while giving a memorable experience for tourists. Thus, the *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition at Royal Ambarrukmo

can be used as a model in the development of gastronomy-based cultural tourism in Indonesia, which can support cultural preservation while increasing tourism competitiveness.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition revived by Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel plays an important role in preserving the cultural and historical values of the Yogyakarta Palace. Each dish in this ceremony, such as *nasi gurih* and *ingkung*, not only serves as food, but also has deep symbolic meaning, related to well-being, abundance, and protection. This shows that this culinary tradition continues to act as a cultural heritage that reflects the identity of the people of Yogyakarta.

Moreover, the revitalization of this tradition by the Royal Ambarrukmo Hotel has made a significant contribution in elevating gastronomy-based cultural tourism. These efforts have succeeded in aligning cultural preservation with tourism promotion strategies, creating authentic tourism experiences for visitors, and helping to maintain the continuity of this tradition amidst changing times. *Ladhosan Dhahar* tradition shows that culinary delights can be a powerful tool to strengthen local cultural identity while supporting the tourism economy.

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