

Gabus Pucung Culinary Tourism Typical Betawi Cuisine

Savitri Hendradewi, Pramudito, Faiza Rachim
Trisakti Institute of Tourism
savitri.dewi@iptrisakti.ac.id, pramudito@iptrisakti.ac.id, faiza@iptrisakti.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify food stalls in Jakarta that still serve Gabus Pucung with authentic flavors and use fresh ingredients, as well as guide culinary lovers in finding the best places that sell Gabus Pucung with the best quality. The research method includes the evaluation of several leading food stalls through interviews with stall owners and loyal visitors, as well as direct observation of the dish-making process. The research results show that only five food stalls in Jakarta still maintain the authenticity of Gabus Pucung. The existence of this food stall is a guardian of the authenticity and deliciousness of Betawi culinary delights amidst the modernization that threatens its existence. By maintaining the existence of Gabus Pucung dishes, they not only serve delicious dishes but also retain their culinary history and identity, making them an inseparable part of Betawi's culinary identity. Conservation and promotion efforts for Gabus Pucung are needed to maintain the existence of this Betawi culinary specialty in the future.

Keywords: Gabus Pucung, Betawi culinary delights, cultural heritage

DOI: 10.7176/JTHS/66-07

Publication date: June 30th 2024

INTRODUCTION

Gabus Pucung is a typical Betawi culinary dish that is famous in Indonesia. This food is made from snakehead fish cooked with typical Betawi spices, which are rich in spices. Gabus Pucung is usually served with a thick, flavorful sauce, which is aromatic and slightly spicy with fragrant spices. The savory and delicious sauce makes Gabus Pucung one of the favorite dishes among the Betawi people and visitors from outside the city (Dewantara, 2021).

The process of cooking Gabus Pucung itself is unique. The snakehead fish that has been cleaned is then cut into several pieces and boiled with spices such as galangal, ginger, and lime leaves. Additional spices such as candlenuts, coriander, and lemongrass are also essential to the presentation. Apart from snakehead fish, the Gabus Pucung dish is usually added with chopped tomatoes, shallots, and spring onions to give it a fresher and more delicious taste. Gabus Pucung is usually served with warm white rice, creating a perfect combination of fish, sauce, and rice (Rokom, 2024).

The combination of savory, spicy, and aromatic flavors from Gabus Pucung makes it a very appetizing dish and suitable to be enjoyed on various occasions. Apart from that, the richness of spices in the seasoning also provides health benefits for the body. Gabus Pucung is not just a delicious dish but is also part of the Betawi cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. Through its distinctive taste and traditional cooking process, Gabus Pucung represents Indonesia's culinary richness, which we should be proud of (Ibnu, 2024). Gabus Pucung has become a Betawi culinary specialty that is increasingly rare and difficult to find in food stalls, even in Jakarta itself. The main factor causing this is the scarcity of snakehead fish themselves (Firdaus et al., 2021). Changes in economic patterns and modern lifestyles have resulted in a decline in the number of snakehead fish in the waters around Jakarta (Untari et al., 2019). Apart from that, urbanization and infrastructure development have also affected the natural ecosystem of snakehead fish, reducing their habitat and disrupting their life cycle. Additionally, traditional fishermen who usually catch snakehead fish have also switched to other resources that are easier to find and have higher economic value (Listyanto & Andriyanto, 2009).

When the supply of snakehead fish decreases, the production of Gabus Pucung as a culinary dish is also affected (Asfar et al., 2014). Typical Betawi food stalls and other traditional food sellers are starting to need help providing this dish because the availability of raw materials is increasingly rare and expensive. This condition creates a dilemma where valuable culinary heritage such as Gabus Pucung is threatened with extinction due to local communities' ecological and economic threats. Efforts to conserve snakehead fish and promote its use in traditional dishes such as Gabus Pucung are needed to maintain the existence of this Betawi culinary specialty in the future.

Due to the decline in popularity and limited availability of Gabus Pucung in food stalls, this research aims to find which food stalls still serve this dish with a delicious taste and using fresh ingredients. In conducting this research, several critical criteria were considered, including the reputation of the food stall in maintaining the quality of its dishes, the availability of the snakehead fish used, and the suitability of the spices and serving methods to Betawi traditions. Several prominent food stalls have become the main subjects of this research, where researchers will share the quality of the Gabus Pucung served. Through interviews with stall owners and

loyal visitors and direct observation of the dish-making process, it is hoped that food stalls can be identified and relied on to enjoy authentic and satisfying Gabus Pucung. The results of this research can guide culinary lovers to find the best place that still sells Gabus Pucung with the best taste and save this typical Betawi culinary heritage from extinction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culinary Tourism

Culinary tourism is a form of travel that pampers the taste buds and offers an unforgettable sensory experience. Every corner of the world has a variety of culinary treasures that reflect a place's culture, history, and natural diversity. From delicious street food on the lively streets of Bangkok to haute cuisine acts at top restaurants in Paris, each destination offers a unique culinary adventure. Travelers often wonder about authentic local food, from traditional dishes passed down through generations to culinary innovations inspired by global trends. Not only about taste, but culinary tourism also invites tourists to explore typical traditional markets, enjoy the aroma of spices in a busy spice market, or even experience cooking for themselves in an interactive cooking class (Resmi et al., 2023).

However, culinary tourism is about watching the food and understanding the story behind each dish. Behind every recipe is cultural heritage, local wisdom, and historical values told through ingredients and cooking techniques. Through culinary tourism experiences, tourists can understand more deeply the identity of a place and its people. Besides that, culinary tourism also builds strong social networks, where people from various backgrounds can meet and share experiences and stories around the dinner table. Thus, culinary tourism satisfies tastes, enriches knowledge, broadens horizons, and deepens human relationships (Sukenti, 2014).

Gabus Pucung, a typical Betawi dish

Gabus Pucung is a culinary heritage eliminated in Betawi culture, including snakehead fish, coconut milk, and traditional Betawi spices such as candlenuts, coriander, and galangal in the manufacturing process. Even though it originates from the Dutch colonial era, this dish continues to maintain the essence of its distinctive savory taste and abundance of spices. Pieces of snakehead fish fried until brown, served with thick coconut milk sauce, and additional slices of hot red chili symbolize togetherness and joy in preserving the culinary heritage of Betawi ancestors (Sukaesih et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method aims to find food stalls still serving Gabus Pucung with authentic flavors and using fresh ingredients. In this research, several critical criteria were considered, including the reputation of the food stall in maintaining the quality of the dishes, the availability of the snakehead fish used, and the suitability of the spices and serving methods to Betawi traditions. This research chose several prominent food stalls as the main subjects, where researchers will highlight the quality of Gabus Pucung presented through interviews with stall owners and loyal visitors and direct observation of the dish-making process. The results of this research can guide culinary lovers to find the best place to continue selling Gabus Pucung with the best taste and help save the Betawi culinary heritage from extinction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gabus pucung, a traditional dish that prepares snakehead fish using keluak or keluwek as the main ingredient, is often known as 'pucung' by the Betawi people. The distinctive dark blackish sauce is produced from keluak or keluwek. This dish is served with fresh vegetables and kencur chili sauce and is best enjoyed when it is still hot to reduce the fishy aroma of the fish. Gabus pucung is served with a variety of spices, including galangal, ginger, turmeric, lime, lime, roasted coriander, garlic, cayenne pepper, spring onions, bay leaves, lemongrass, lime leaves, tomatoes, and roasted candlenuts. This combination of spices gives the dish a unique and appetizing taste and aroma.

In Indonesia, especially in Bekasi, many restaurants pamper their taste buds with Pucung Snakehead Fish dishes. However, in Jakarta, these foods are becoming rare. The results of the research highlight the fact that there are only five food stalls in Jakarta that still maintain the authenticity of Ikan Gabus Pucung, a priceless Betawi specialty. Among them are Betawi Restaurant Warung Pucung, Pucung Gabus Ibu Nana, Betawi Restaurant Ibu Ani Timan, Pondok Gabus Lukman, and Betawi Food Stall Tamit Riman. Their existence is like a lighthouse in a dark ocean, stopping the preservation of traditional Betawi culinary delights amidst the current of modernization that threatens its existence. Even though metropolitan cities like Jakarta are often centers of innovation and change, the presence of food stalls still loyal to taste and tradition has become a focal point for culinary connoisseurs who want to feel nostalgia and authenticity in every bite. This restaurant is not just a place to eat but is a place for the continuation of valuable cultural heritage. By maintaining the existence of the Pucung

Snakehead Fish dish, they not only serve delicious dishes but also maintain their culinary history and identity, making them an inseparable part of Betawi's culinary identity.

Located in Bilangan Pekayon, Bekasi, Betawi Restaurant Warung Pucung is a paradise for fans of authentic and delicious gabus pucung dishes. With its simple place but always busy every day, this stall is proof that the deliciousness of a dish depends not only on its splendor but also on the quality of fresh raw materials and a complex processing process. Every bite of the sauce provides an alluring savory sensation, combined with the soft and thick pieces of snakehead fish meat, adding to the deliciousness of the meal. Apart from that, the experience of eating gibus pricing here is even more complete, with fresh vegetables lined up in front of the display case. Everything is the perfect accompaniment to the main dish, from the fresh lettuce and savory petai to the fragrant aroma of basil. However, it is not only Gabus Pucung that is the mainstay; this eating place also pampers the taste buds with other typical Betawi culinary delights. From delicious chipped vegetables and unique eel vegetables to fresh tamarind vegetables, everything is served with authentic flavors and always fresh raw materials. Therefore, Warung Pucung Betawi Restaurant is a place to eat delicious dishes and a destination for those who value authenticity and passion in managing food.

Pucung Gabus Ibu Nana, a food stall in the Kayuringin area, is located far from the city center, but the delicious gabus pucung served here is a magnet for culinary lovers, luring them to come from its charm. This place is not just an ordinary food stall but has been a legend in Bekasi since 1980. The legacy of recipes passed down from generation to generation is the key to the consistency of its deliciousness. The snakehead fish used is enormous, giving it a unique sensation when eaten, especially when combined with a savory black sauce with an appetizing aroma. To complete the deliciousness, the addition of fried onions and green onions provides a touch of aroma that is even more attractive. Apart from the main dish in the form of gibus pricing, this stall also serves a variety of other typical Betawi culinary delights, all prepared with fresh quality raw materials and adapted to the Betawi culinary tradition, which is rich in spices and distinctive flavors. Therefore, Pucung Gabus Ibu Nana is not just an ordinary food stall but is a guardian of the authenticity and priceless deliciousness of Betawi culinary delights, offering an unforgettable culinary experience for anyone who believes in it.

The Jatiasih area has a tempting Gabus Pucung eating place, none other than Ibu Eni Timan's typical Betawi Gabus Pucung Restaurant, which is always busy with loyal customers. The specialty of this place cannot be denied, mainly because of the quality of the raw materials, which are always fresh, and the skilled processing process. The bus pricing served here is not only tempting for its jumbo size but also for the texture of the fish meat, which is thick, soft, and tasty because it is soaked in a sauce rich in spices. The experience of eating here is complete with the right combination of gibus pricing and spicy balado eggplant that tempts the tongue. Also, remember the pecak gurami, which is no less tempting in jumbo size. The gourami served has been mixed with selected spices, producing a fragrant aroma and attractive taste, especially the distinctive touch of ginger. All the dishes served at Ibu Eni Timan's typical Betawi Gabus Pucung Restaurant are prepared following Betawi traditions, both in the selection of fresh raw materials and in the presentation, which maintains the authentic taste and distinctive culinary impression. Thus, this place is not just a dining destination but also a place for culinary connoisseurs to experience the deliciousness and authenticity of the irreplaceable Betawi flavors.

Pondok Gabus Lukman, a favorite Gabus Pucung eating place in the Medan Satria area, Bekasi, has been a legend since 1980, appetizing with its deliciousness and authentic Betawi flavors. One of the main attractions is using fresh raw materials in preparing the dishes, making each dish unique. The bus pricing served here not only relies on recipes passed down from generation to generation from his family but also presents a large size of fish for each portion, adding to the enjoyment for the diners. Processed with selected spices, each dish produces an appetizing aroma and rich taste. The soft texture of the fish meat further enriches the eating experience, especially when eaten with the famous spicy green chili sauce here, giving an unforgettable sensation. Not only that, the presentation's richness also balances the Betawi tradition, which is rich in variations of spices and serving methods. Gabus pricing at Pondok Gabus Lukman is not only served with green chili sauce but can also be combined with tempeh, tofu, and shrimp, providing an exciting variety of flavors for its visitors. Therefore, Pondok Gabus Lukman is a dining destination and a representative of the priceless Betawi culinary heritage, providing a satisfying and appetizing culinary experience.

Like at grandma's house, a warm atmosphere can be found at Warung Makan Betawi Tamit Riman in Jatiasih, Bekasi. This simple stall is dominated by woven bamboo from the walls to the chairs, giving visitors a comfortable and intimate impression. The specialty of this place lies not only in the atmosphere but also in the quality of the dishes. The bus pricing served here displays its enormous size and abundant tenderness of the meat. The abundant savory sauce gives a touch of luxury to every dish. To add to the enjoyment, visitors can add jumbo-sized corn fritters as a complement. Unsurprisingly, these corn bakwan always run out quickly, and they are bought by customers who need help resisting the deliciousness. Apart from that, every dish served at Warung Makan Betawi Tamit Riman is also based on Betawi traditions regarding the use of spices and how they are served, maintaining the distinctive taste and authenticity of Betawi culinary delights. Therefore, this food stall is

not only a place to eat delicious dishes but also a place for visitors to feel nostalgic and enjoy the warm atmosphere of grandma's house while enjoying authentic Betawi culinary delights.

CONCLUSION

The traditional dish gibus pricing is highly appreciated in Indonesia, especially in Bekasi. However, in Jakarta, this dish is rarely heard of. Research shows that only five food stalls in Jakarta still maintain the authenticity of gibus pricing, a priceless Betawi specialty. Among them are Betawi Restaurant Warung Pucung, Pucung Gabus Ibu Nana, Betawi Restaurant Ibu Eni Timan, Pondok Gabus Lukman, and Betawi Food Stall Tamit Riman. Their existence is like a lighthouse in a dark ocean, stopping the preservation of traditional Betawi culinary delights amidst the current of modernization that threatens its existence. Even though metropolitan cities like Jakarta are often centers of innovation and change, the presence of food stalls still loyal to taste and tradition has become a focal point for culinary connoisseurs who want to feel nostalgia and authenticity in every bite. This restaurant is not just a place to eat but is a place for the continuation of valuable cultural heritage. By maintaining the existence of the gaps in pricing dishes, they not only serve delicious dishes but also maintain their culinary history and identity, making them an inseparable part of Betawi's culinary identity.

REFERENCE

- Asfar, M., Tawal, A. B., & Mahendradatta, M. (2014). (SNTI-B13) Potensi Ikan Gabus (*Channa Striata*) Sebagai Sumber Makanan Kesehatan-Review. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Teknologi Industri II*, 150-154.
- Dewantara, Y. F. (2021). Analisa Potensi Wisata Kuliner Khas Betawi Dalam Pengembangan Pariwisata di Kota DKI Jakarta. *Jurnal Sains Terapan Pariwisata*, 6(1), 20-28.
- Firdaus, R. N., Mulyanti, S., & Alawiyah, N. (2021). Pembelajaran Kimia Kuliner Khas Betawi Bagi Pelajar Secara Mandiri Sebagai Usaha Pelestarian Kearifan Lokal. *Chempublish Journal*, 6(2), 103-117.
- Ibnu, F. (2024). Gabus Pucung, Makanan Khas Betawi yang Mulai Terpinggirkan. Retrieved February 6, 2024, from <https://www.rri.co.id/kuliner/542669/gabus-pucung-makanan-khas-betawi-yang-mulai-terpinggirkan>
- Listyanto, N., & Andriyanto, S. (2009). Ikan Gabus (*Channa Striata*) Manfaat Pengembangan dan Alternatif Teknik Budidayanya. *Media Akuakultur*, 4(1), 18-25.
- Resmi, I. C., Dhewanto, W., & Dellyana, D. (2023). Gastronomy Tourism: Local Food and Tourism Experience in Bandung. *The Journal Gastronomy Tourism*, 10(2), 195-202.
- Rokom. (2024). Gabus Pucung, Kuliner Khas Betawi yang Menyegarkan. Retrieved February 6, 2024, from <https://sehatnegeriku.kemkes.go.id/baca/blog/20240506/1945405/gabus-pucung-kuliner-khas-betawi-yang-menyegarkan/>
- Sukaesih., Nurislamingsih, R., & Winoto, Y. (2022). Mapping of Betawi indigenous knowledge in collections at the Setu Babakan Museum. *Linguistics and Culture. Review*, 6(S2), 368-382. <https://doi.org/10.21744/lingcure.v6nS2.2127>
- Sukenti, K. (2014). Gastronomy Tourism in Several Neighbor Countries of Indonesia: a Brief Review. *Journal of Indonesian Tourism and Development Studies*, 2(2), 55-63. DOI:10.21776/ub.jitode.2014.002.02.03
- Untari, D. T., Avenzora, R., Darusman, D., Arief, H., & Prihatno, J. (2019). Strategi Pengembangan Kuliner Tradisional Betawi di DKI Jakarta. *EKUITAS (Jurnal Ekonomi dan Keuangan)*, 2(3), 313-340. DOI:10.24034/j25485024.y2018.v2.i3.4011