



GASTRONOMIC ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL CHOI PAN AS A TOURISM ATTRACTION IN SINGKAWANG CITY – WEST BORNEO

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Abstract

Choi Pan is a traditional dish originating from Singkawang City, West Kalimantan. This study aimed to analyze the gastronomic components of traditional Choi Pan food as a gastronomic tourism attraction in Singkawang City, West Kalimantan. This research adopted a qualitative methodology using observation, interviews, and documentation to determine many aspects of gastronomy. The results of the study showed that Choi Pan has significant allure due to its rich heritage and the innovative used of ingredients like as jicama, chives, taro, bamboo shoots, and young papaya, which provided a tender, chewy texture and a savory-sweet flavor. The unique consuming experience was enhanced by an addition of chili sauce and garlic oil, which intensify the sensory experience and strengthen the connection between entrepreneurs and Choi Pan lovers. The nutritional benefits of Choi Pan contributed to the survival of this dish within a healthy local culture. The results indicated that the success of establishing Choi Pan as a culinary tourist destination depended not just on its flavor and texture, but also on its sustainability of its fundamental philosophy and culture. Consequently, enhancing gastronomy qualities was anticipated to augment the appealing factor of gastronomic tourism, facilitated cultural preservation and regional economic growth via the promotion of culture-centric gastronomic tourism.

Keywords: Choi Pan, Gastronomy, Tourism Attraction, Singkawang

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is gaining recognition as a prominent culinary destination globally, attributed to the diverse culinary offerings across its regions. Foods like Rendang, Sate, and Nasi Goreng remain prominent attractions for foreign tourists (Wachyuni, 2023). The Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy//Baparekraf RI (2023) identified the culinary sector as a key component of national tourism development, acknowledging its dual function in promoting culture and contributing to local economic sustainability. West Kalimantan Province derives its economic





prosperity from agriculture, trade, and processing industries, while gradually shifting its focus towards tourism development. West Kalimantan has ranked among the top 10 in the National Charisma Event (KEN), a significant occurrence that presents substantial opportunities for economic development in the region. Development of various supporting facilities, infrastructure, promotions, and events has commenced to enhance tourist visitation. The tourism sector in West Kalimantan possesses significant potential comparable to other regions in Indonesia. The region encompasses a vast area featuring a variety of natural, cultural, and artificial attractions (Ummarah, 2020).

Singkawang, located in West Kalimantan Province, exhibits significant potential in the tourism sector, encompassing a variety of natural, cultural, and artificial attractions. Singkawang City serves as a primary destination for both domestic and international tourists, particularly in the realms of cultural and gastronomic tourism within West Kalimantan. This can be seen from the achievement of the 2023 Tribun Pontianak Awards (Fantony & Nugroho, 2023). Singkawang City offers a diverse range of tourism products, including natural, cultural, religious, culinary, artificial, and historical tourism facilities. According to Ripparda Singkawang City (2019), there are 19 natural tourist attractions, 12 cultural tourist attractions, and 12 artificial tourist attractions. The Cap Go Meh agenda is a globally recognized cultural tour, celebrated annually by the Chinese community to express gratitude and mark the ending of the Chinese New Year. This celebration is vibrant, attracting numerous tourists from both domestic and international locations. Singkawang City is notable for its unique Cap Go Meh celebration, characterized by the presence of thousands of tatung and barongsai, a phenomenon not found elsewhere (Stevenson & Soeprapto, 2023).

The Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 defines tourism attractions as things characterized by uniqueness, beauty, convenience, and the value of cultural diversity, natural wealth, and human creations, serving as primary destinations for tourists. Normalasari et al, (2023) define tourism attractions as things that possess visual and experiential appeal, deemed suitable for marketing to tourists. A tourist attraction may have the potential to become an attraction, but this attraction will only be formed if supported by other factors such as ease of access and the availability of adequate supporting facilities.

In his book Gastronomi Upaboga Indonesia, Ketaren (2021) defined gastronomy as the knowledge related to food and culinary arts. Gastronomy tourism, or dynamic culinary tourism, refers to the activity in which tourists travel to a destination to enjoy local food and beverage products, thus improving their experiences and impressions during their visit (Sari, 2023).

Gastronomy serves as a tourism resource that involves the experience of enjoying special food and beverages, analogous to the attractions of museums, recreation, and shopping. The significance of gastronomy broadens besides personal interests; it also plays a role in rural development by enhancing income and generating employment opportunities for local communities (Turgarini et al., 2018).



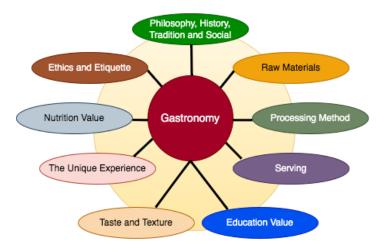


Choi Pan is an unique regional dish that symbolizes the acculturation of Chinese-Malay culture, serving as a potential gastronomy tourism attraction in West Kalimantan, particularly in Singkawang City. Choi Pan exceeds simply food, representing the historical inheritance, culture, and local identity of the people. Choi Pan is a traditional food from Singkawang City, influenced by Chinese culinary heritage (Rosanto & Kallista, 2023).

Traditional Choi Pan food has great potential to become a major attraction, but so far the development of this food is still simple. Based on that reason, this research was conducted. This research aimed to identify the culinary components of traditional Choi Pan cuisine based on the perspectives of informants on Choi Pan gastronomy. The uniqueness of Choi Pan is expected to enhance the connection between culture and cuisine, hence attracting tourists. This allows tourists to directly experience the cultural acculturation embodied in each meal. Utilizing the potential of existing resources and the unique cultural assets of Singkawang City, it is expected that the idea of gastronomy tourism would positively impact the regional economy.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative methodology to investigate the culinary tourist allure of Choi Pan cuisine in detail. Turgarini et al. (2018) identify nine vital elements for evaluating the gastronomic value of a dish: (1) philosophy or history (philosophy, history, tradition, and social context), (2) ethics and etiquette (ethical considerations and social norms), (3) processing method (culinary procedures), (4) raw materials (ingredients), (5) taste and texture, (6) serving, (7) educational value (academic research and literature on food), (8) uniqueness (pursuit of a distinctive dining experience), and (9) nutritional value (understanding of nutrition). Figure 1 illustrates many components of Gastronomy. Nine stakeholders are associated with Turgarini's gastronomy (2021). This research aimed to explore the nine gastronomy elements intrinsic to Choi Pan as a traditional dish of Singkawang City, based on findings from comprehensive interviews with every stakeholder in the gastronomy industry.







Gambar 1 Gastronomy Elements Source: Turgarini, 2018

The techniques used methods consist of observation, interviews, and documentation to gather important information.

1. Data collecting methodologies were executed via:

a. Observation

The author performed firsthand observation of the study subject, namely the three most renowned Choi Pan sales locations in Singkawang City. The three sales locations were Choi Pan Tho Ce, Choi Pan Sakkok, and Choi Pan Saudara.

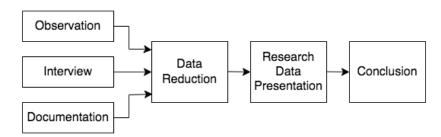
b. Interview

The author performed comprehensive interviews with various gastronomic stakeholders (Nona Helix), including culinary entrepreneur Choi Pan, employees at three stalls, three connoisseurs, representatives from three government agencies (Disperindag, Disporapar, and Dinkes of Singkawang City), three suppliers, two gastronomy experts (academics),

c. Documentation

The author combines data from many sources, including photographs, videos, and audio, to enhance the acquired information. This study's population comprises three owner of shopping centers situated in Singkawang City, West Kalimantan. Due of the many Choi Pan sales outlets in the region, this research sampled from the biggest and most frequented Choi Pan production site in Singkawang City.

2. Data Analysis



Gambar 2. Data Analysis Technique Sumber: Miles & Huberman, 2014





3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

An iconic dish from West Kalimantan is Choi Pan. Choi Pan has a unique flavor profile. Choi Pan is a traditional Chinese cuisine that is esteemed in Singkawang, West Kalimantan. The food consists of rice flour dough packed with ingredients such shaved jicama or chives or taro, resulting in a soft and chewy texture. The filling, seasoned with garlic, shrimp, and fried garlic oil, adds a delicious and refreshing flavor. Choi Pan is shaped into a semicircle, steamed until fully cooked, and accompanied by a unique sweet and spicy chili sauce (Rosanto & Kallista, 2023).

The dish reflects Chinese cultural identity while demonstrating adaptability to the preferences and requirements of local populations. Choi Pan's success in preserving its traditions while innovating indicates that Chinese food can be appreciated by all ethnicities without compromising its cultural heritage. This acculturation yields a meal that combines the tastes, textures, and ingredients of two complimentary cultures, resulting in a harmonious culinary experience (Rudiansyah & Sijabat, 2022). As stated by Nur in (Turgarini et al., 2024), acculturation is a social phenomenon that happens when a cultural group encounters foreign cultural elements, leading to the gradual acceptance of the foreign culture while still preserving their own cultural identity. Nevertheless, cultural groups can only integrate external elements within certain limitations, namely those that can be merged and aligned with their own cultural framework. For a culture to incorporate elements from a foreign culture, modifications or adaptations are required to align with the local society. The unadapted incorporation of foreign cultural components might damage the recipient's culture.

Choi Pan, also known as chai kue, has two components: "choi," "chai," or "cai," meaning vegetable, and "pan," "kue," "guo," or "ban," meaning cake. The combination of the two terms signifies veggie cake. Choi Pan, sometimes referred to as Chai Kue (Hakka) or Choi Pan (Tio Chiu), symbolizes the blending of Chinese and Malay cultures, particularly evident in its culinary expression, as seen by the Choi Pan dish. During the 3rd century, Chinese mariners journeyed to Indonesia for trade. Sailors embarked on an expedition to explore the East Asian coast, subsequently returning via West Kalimantan and the Philippines. During their passage through West Kalimantan, sailors arrived at Singkawang City for leisure. By the 7th century, interactions between China and West Kalimantan, particularly Singkawang City, intensified, leading to an immigration of Chinese immigrants living in the region (Murtadlo, 2013). This cuisine originates from Chinese heritage but has been modified to use locally available ingredients, such as jicama, chives, and taro. The incorporation of sweet and spicy chili sauce and fried onion oil enhances the flavor of Choi Pan, making it a favored dish across many groups (Davina, 2021). Choi Pan picture can be seen in Figure 3.







Figure 3. The Choi Pan Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

The following is an analysis of the gastronomic components of the traditional Choi Pan dish:

A. Philosophy, History, Tradition and Social

Ketaren (2021) stated that each traditional dish has historical significance, philosophical basis, symbolism, and customs that represent local knowledge and cultural heritage. Choi Pan is an unique gastronomi delicacy with a rich and extensive history in Singkawang City, West Kalimantan. According to the findings from interviews with informants, Choi Pan is an unique Singkawang culinary specialty that was first presented by the Tio Ciu tribe as a version of Ziao Tje, also known as Xiao Long Bao, a dimsum variety loaded with pork. Consequently, due to the predominance of the Muslim Malay community in Singkawang, the pork and lard using in Choi Pan was substituted with shrimp and vegetable based oil. Historically, Choi Pan was only served during the 15th Chinese New Year celebration; however, it is now available daily. This cuisine represents unity, gratitude, and simplicity. The temple, a site of worship for ethnic Chinese, illustrates the significant impact of Chinese culture in Singkawang, as seen in Figure 4.

Mrs. Lim: "Choi Pan is a culinary dish from China; historically, it originated in Singkawang during trade expeditions."

Mr. Bong; "Choi Pan was first brought by the Tio Ciu tribe and is consumed on the 15th day of the Chinese New Year celebration. Choi translates to vegetables, and Pan translates to cake; hence, Choi Pan refers to a vegetable cake that symbolizes simplicity.







Figure 4. Tri Dharma Temple in Singkawang Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

B. Raw Materials

Nugroho & Hardani (2020) asserted that raw materials were components used in dish preparation, often exhibiting specific characteristics reflecting of the region they come from. The ingredients for Choi Pan are readily accessible and demonstrate a strong connection to the local environment and natural resources in Singkawang. The selection and use of raw materials is significantly influenced by local agricultural goods, including jicama, taro, chives, young papaya, and bamboo shoots, which promote the sustainability and well-being of the local community. One of the raw materials for Choi Pan (jicama) can be seen in Figure 5.

Mrs. Lim: "There were no special ingredients, in making Choi Pan, only jicama, taro, bamboo shoots, and chives".

Mr. Makiah: "All ingredients utilized were locally sourced agricultural products from Singkawang City. All the components remain readily available in conventional marketplaces."

Mr. Julio: "All components used were authentic agricultural items sourced from Singkawang City, from the Panglimang region in South Singkawang. This region was certainly populated with agricultural plantations in Singkawang City.



Figure 5. The main material of Choi Pan (Jicama) Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

C. Processing Method





This process entails the transformation of raw resources into completed foods via learned culinary skills and the use of certain equipment (Andriana & Widyaningsih, 2023). The preparation of Choi Pan involves four stages: producing the skin, preparing the filling, wrapping, and cooking. The procedure for preparing Choi Pan skin involves combining rice flour, tapioca flour, water, vegetable oil, and salt, then cooking the mixture over low heat while stirring until it no longer adheres to the pan, after which it is placed aside. To prepare Choi Pan filling: sauté minced garlic, then added choped dried shrimp and simmer until slightly dehydrated. Incorporate diced veggies (jicama/chives/bamboo shoots/taro or young papaya) and simmer until tender. Reserve in a container.

Choi Pan wrapping process: took a little skin dough then flatten it, filled it with Choi Pan filling then close it. The process of making skin and wrapping Choi Pan required special skills, so that the Choi Pan skin can be thin, elastic and chewy. The completed Choi Pan was then put on a plate lined with banana leaves that have been coated with oil. Choi Pan was steamed for roughly 15 minutes until fully cooked, then served. Choi Pan processing method can be seen on Figure 6.

Mrs. Lim: "The process of making Choi Pan was first to make the skin, then the filling, then wrapped the filling with the skin, arrange it on a steamer rack and then cook it until done for 15 minutes".

Mr. Galang: "Choi Pan is a food that is processed by steaming".

Mr. Rizki: "The method of processing Choi Pan was not complicated, making the dough for the skin, the filling and after that it can be cooked".



Figure 6. Choi Pan Processing Method Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

D. Serving

Serving related to the way the dish was arranged and presented to consumers. This included appealing meal presentations, choice of utensils, and temperature regulation to ensure the dish maintains optimal condition (Ningsih & Turgarini, 2020). There were no specific regulations regarding the serving of Choi Pan. The Choi Pas was presented on a platter or tray, lined with banana leaves coated with oil. Top the Choi Pan with sprinkled fried garlic or garlic





oil. Choi pan was accompanied by a customary chili sauce provided by each Choi Pan seller. Choi Pan presentation can be seen in Figure 7.

Mrs. Lim: "Choi Pan was served on a plate, or in Choi Pan Sakkok, it was served in a baking tray lined with banana leaves."

Mrs. Loliha: "It usually comes complemented by the unique chili sauce from each stall and garnished with fried garlic."



Figure 7. Choi Pan presentation Source: Personal documentation, 2025

E. Taste and Texture

Traditional Choi Pan food has a savory and sweet taste from the filling of jicama, young papaya, bamboo shoots. For the chive flavor variant, there is a slightly bitter taste and the taro filling feels dense. The texture of Choi Pan is soft, chewy for the skin and crunchy from the filling.

Taste and texture refer to how someone feels the taste and sensation of a dish. Taste includes elements of sweet, sour, savory, or spicy, while texture relates to the smoothness, chewiness, or fragility of food. These two factors complement each other and play an important role in providing a satisfying eating experience, creating a harmonious balance in every bite (Ningsih & Turgarini, 2020).

Mrs. Candra "The taste was savory and spicy from the chili sauce, besides that there was also a sweet taste for the jicama filling".

Mr. Fakhri "Regarding the texture, Choi Pan was chewy and soft, it is delicious, everyone can enjoy this food".

F. Nutritional Value

Understanding the nutritional value of food can help healthier choices, adjust our diet to body's needs, and achieve the right nutritional balance. Knowledge of nutrition is also important to raise awareness of the importance of nutritious food in supporting a healthy lifestyle (Pokhrel, 2024). The proximate analysis of Choi Pan revealed a water content of 7.38%, ash content of 3.79%, protein content of 6.23%, and fat content of 10.09%, as seen in Figure 8.

The fiber from veggies and carbs from rice flour and tapioca flour make Choi Pan a wholesome and nutritious option within a balanced diet. Utilizing fresh and natural ingredients,





Choi Pan is not only tasty but also offers significant health advantages, including enhanced daily nutritional intake and an optimal balance of flavor, texture, and nutritional value.

No	Kode Sampel Code of Sample	Jenis Sampel Type Of Sample	Air (Moisture) AOAC 2019 Methode 930,15		Abu (Ash) AOAC 2019 Methode 942.05		Protein Kasar (Crude Protein) AOAC 2019 Methode 2001.11		Lemak Kasar (Crude Fat) AOAC 2019 Methode 2003.06	
			(%)	SNI (Max)	(%)	SNI (Max)	(%)	SNI (Min)	(%)	SNI (Max)
1	025-008-017	Choi Pan	7,38		3,79	-	6,23		10,09	-

Figure 8. Proximate value of Choi Pan

Source: Pontianak City Animal Feed Laboratory test results, 2025

G. Education Value

The educational value in culinary arts include knowledge of ingredients and preparation methods, as well as the history, traditions and preservation of cultural heritage. This method explains the techniques, ingredients, and cultural values inherent in a dish, while also transferring new skills and traditions or innovations in culinary practices (Turgarini et al., 2018).

Choi Pan shares lessons on the preservation of culinary traditions throughout generations. The educational value is evident in the history, traditions and methods preserved by the community and local enterprises. Choi Pan represents an adaptation of the Chinese community as immigrants in a foreign land, demonstrating tolerance by creating cuisine that is relevant to culture, using fillings that are acceptable to the local Malay Muslim population of Singkawang. Consequently, the Chinese population may acculturate and be well accepted in Singkawang City. Despite the abundance of information accessible online, the history of Choi Pan continues to be transmitted orally from one generation to the next. The local government is trying to record the history and recipe of Choi Pan to enhance its recognition both nationally and globally.

Mrs. Nanda: "Regarding the educational value of Choi Pan, it can be found on the internet, starting from its history to its recipe."

Mr. Helmi: "The government also lists Choi Pan food on the Singkawang city government website."

H. The Unique Experience

Ningrum et al. (2021) defined a unique experience as the feeling experienced by visitors while tasting a specific dish, including the ambiance, presentation, and engagement with local culture.

The uniqueness of Choi Pan is in its flavor, texture, and the simple use of natural ingredients that create a traditional flavor. This cuisine not only delights the palate but also builds harmony, earning appreciation from both the local community and tourists. Consumers may have a unique engagement by seeing the actual process of Choi Pan preparation, as shown in Figure 10, which enhances its significance and value. Visitors are increasingly persuaded that the Choi Pan they taste, although being prepared by Chinese, only contains halal components and complies to a hygienic technique, making Choi Pan nutritious and healthful for consumption.





Mr. Galang "A unique experience, a taste that is hard to find anywhere else, this food is indeed very unique, not everyone can make a texture like this."

Mrs. Nanda "If you come directly to a Choi Pan stall like in Sakkok, you can see how Choi Pan is made directly."



Figure 10. Watching the Choi Pan Making Process Source: Personal Documentation, 2025

I. Ethics and Etiquette

Ethics and etiquette refer to the standards that should be kept to when consuming food, including polite eating and respectful conversation. Keeping to the traditions and practices of a certain culture or occasion demonstrates respect for the cuisine and the people around (Turgarini et al., 2018).

Choi Pan is a traditional dish from Singkawang that is both appetizing and symbolizes the value of unity and gratitude for food. Choi Pan is served hot, eaten with chopsticks, and accompanied by a side of chili sauce, as seen in Figure 11. While eating Choi Pan, it is prohibited to engage in harsh speech and rush. And when enjoying Choi Pan, it is advisable not to eat directly from the tray together but to take it one by one as a form of respect and to maintain harmony in sharing food.

Mr. Bong: "There is no specific etiquette; however, it is preferable to savor Choi Pan while it is warm and with chopsticks." Considering the peculiarity of Chinese dining equipment, which use chopsticks. Mrs. Nova: "It is preferable to refrain from excessive conversation and to savor the experience at a leisurely pace."







Figure 11. Using chopsticks to enjoy Choi Pan Source: Personal Dokumentation, 2025

Based on the explanation of the nine components above, it can be concluded that Choi Pan as a traditional food has met all the major gastronomic criteria that are expected to be a gastronomic tourist attraction in Singkawang City. The establishment of the Choi Pan tourism attraction is expected to elevate tourist visitation in Singkawang and therefore enhance the economy and regional revenue.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and interviews conducted, it can be concluded that Choi Pan is a traditional food typical of Singkawang City which has quite deep cultural and historical meaning. This cuisine derives from the acculturation of Chinese and Indonesian cultures, especially with Malay Moslem community illustrating how a dish could develop over time while preserving its original qualities. The preparation of Choi Pan incorporates ingredients sourced from local natural resources, including jicama, taro, chives, bamboo shoots, and young papaya, which are precisely chosen for their connection to the ecosystem around Singkawang City. The processing techniques, including skin preparation, filling, and steaming, demonstrate generational skills maintained by the local community.

Choi Pan provides delicious taste and an attractively soft texture, while also reflecting educational elements on the preservation of history and the significance of local ingredients in cuisine. The historical significance and symbolism associated with Choi Pan, representing the simplicity and togetherness of the Chinese population in Singkawang, make it a prospective gastronomic tourist destination.

Through effective marketing, including historical documentation, recipe promotion, and the creation of genuine gastronomic experiences, Choi Pan has the potential to establish itself as a gastronomy icon that attracts both national and international tourists. Beyond mere food, Choi Pan's presence has the potential to enhance cultural ties and strengthen the local





economy via cultural and gastronomy tourism, while enhancing the city's character as a center of cultural variety and traditional gastronomic excellence.

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