Indonesian Food Culture Mapping: A Starter Contribution to Promote Indonesian Culinary Tourism

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Submission date: 19-Sep-2019 12:03PM (UTC+0700)
Submission ID: 1175634237
File name: Indonesian_Food_Culture_Manuscript.docx (85.61K)
Word count: 6318
Character count: 35403

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Abstract

The food culture of Indonesia is shaped by several factors such as nature, history, and culture. With its enormous geographic and cultural diversity across the archipelagos, it is evident that Indonesian cuisine is rich in variety and taste. As such, food can be utilised as a strategic means to boost the tourism industry of the country. In the past five years, the Indonesian government has given a great support for the development of culinary tourism as one special interest tourism sector that is promoted extensively to the international market. Promoting Indonesian culinary tourism should not merely exposing the ample varieties of the traditional food that Indonesia has, but more importantly, telling the market about the socio-cultural values behind the food itself. This study aimed to portray how Indonesian food culture has been shaped, developed, and held as the value embedded in the society and has been passed from one generation to the next. For the purpose of the study, a range of literature from journal articles, books, archives, magazines, articles, to Internet sources that are relevant to Indonesian culinary discussions were reviewed.

Keywords: food culture, Indonesian cuisine, culinary tourism

1. Introduction

Food plays a significant part in all aspects of humans life, including from fulfilling basic physiological needs to building social interactions and psychological expression (Conner & Armitage, 2002). Food has become recognised as an expression of identity and culture and has emerged as one of the popular aspects of cultural tourism (Bessiere, 1998). Discussions about food are inseparable from culture. As one of cultural tourism's products, the role of food or culinary tourism has become increasingly important. As stated by Henderson (2009), culinary tourism is a possible competitive advantage that could be central to destination development, which in turn, can contribute to overall economic performance. Moreover, local food can be utilised as a tool for differentiating one destination from others in the global marketplace since a country's cuisine exhibits elements of national culture and identity (Du Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003).

Considering the size and diversity of the country, Nuryanti (2010) in Yurnaldi (2010) has argued that Indonesia should be able to attract more international visitors. There are thousands of local foods which potentially offer a strong focal point to portray Indonesia as a tourism destination. Nevertheless, as stated by the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy of Indonesia, having very diverse traditional dishes at the same time also poses a challenge for the government to select which particular food to be promoted to the international market (Pertiwi, 2011). As pointed out by Von Holzen (1996), there has been an imbalance in cuisine exposure across regions in Indonesia, giving the largest focus still on the food of Java and Sumatra. As a consequence, many

non-Indonesians are unaware that other regions of Indonesia apart from those two have their own distinct cuisine. A review of literature has shown that most references about Indonesian cuisines are dominated with popular cooking articles or books containing the recipes as to how to prepare and serve the dishes. This paper therefore, can be seen as one of a few scholarly attempts to introduce the Indonesian food culture to the broader academic audiences. For the purpose of the study, the remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The following section presents food as part of the culture and different values associated with food. Next a detail review about Indonesian food culture is provided containing the history and the evolving stages of Indonesian food culture. The last section provides a comprehensive description about the characteristics of Indonesian cuisines followed by the typology of Indonesian food culture as presented both in both narrative and visual ways.

2. Food and Culture

The term culture is used in a variety of ways. Culture is a key concept in our knowledge of societies both past and present, and its definitions are constantly being developed and refined (Giles & Middleton, 1999). From the perspectives of sociology and anthropology, culture is be defined as all that is learned, shared, and transmitted among groups of human beings from generation to generation (Mennell, Murcott, & van Otterloo, 1992, p. 20). More specifically, Kittler and Sucher (2004) define culture as the values, beliefs, attitudes and practices accepted by members of a group or community. The culture of a particular society is manifested in various ways, in its art, language and literature, music, and in all forms of religious and secular ritual (Hegarty & O'Mahony,

2001). As has been stated by Sussmann and Rashcovsky (1997), culture includes observable elements, such as, the observable characteristics of behaviour, material arts, food, language, and social arrangements, and the non-observable elements, such as the beliefs, attitudes, and values held by most people in a society. Also included in the category of non-observable elements are role perceptions, stereotypes, categorizations, evaluations, expectations, memories, and opinions. Members of a similar culture: have similar values; conform to similar rules and norms; develop similar perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes; use common language; and participate in similar activities (Reisinger & Turner, 2002).

The process of how culture is learned and passed through different generations via language acquisition and socialisation is called enculturation (Kittler & Sucher, 2004). One of the most significant examples of this learning process in societies relates to food. Food habits are a culturally standardised set of food-related behaviours that are expressed by individuals who have grown within a given cultural tradition (Counihan & Esterik, 2008). Kittler and Sucher (2004) define food habits as the ways and rules by which people use food from how the food is selected, obtained, and distributed, to who prepares, serves, and eats it. These ways and rules, as stated by Wahlqvist and Lee (2007), are shaped by multi factors, such as, natural resources (e.g. climate, land, and water), belief (religion and education), ethnicity (indigenous or immigrant), technological advance (e.g. hunting, agricultural, fishing), and colonisation.

Food culture can be viewed as a product of codes of conduct towards acceptable or unacceptable foods and within a particular social group (R. C. Y. Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2010). It also sets up the structure of social relationships between members of a

society (Reynolds, 1993) and is a daily reaffirmation of cultural identity through symbolic meanings of ritual, traditions, and special occasions within the social group (Kittler & Sucher, 2004). That is, food culture in one place will be different from the others.

Food is considered to be a cultural practice that distinguishes one culture from another (Boniface, 2003). When viewed in detail it is clear that there are observable cultural differences: in the basic ingredients from which food is prepared; the ways in which it is preserved, prepared and cooked; the amount and variety available at each meal; the tastes that are liked and disliked; the customs and traditions of serving food; the implements and utensils which are used; and certain beliefs about the properties of particular foods. Further, techniques used for the serving and consumption of food also vary cross-culturally (Hegarty & O'Mahony, 2001). For instance, in some cultures it is proper to eat using one's fingers, whilst convention in others requires the use of implements. Differences are also evident in eating patterns. Many people, for example, have only two meals a day, while others have one big meal, snacking at other times. Some like their food hot, others like it cold. Regardless of these distinctions, however, it is suggested that all such cross-cultural differences are learned.

As a component of culture, food has a significant role in shaping individual as well as a cultural group's foodways. At individual level, food can portray self-identity (Fischler, 1988) and self-expression (Kittler & Sucher, 2004), whereas in a broader context, food echoes the identity that distinguishes one culture from another (Edelstein, 2011). Even more, it is suggested that to understand a culture, an individual must experience its food (Bonicafe, 2003).

Values Associated with Food

As a manifestation of culture, food entails both technical and symbolic functions within a particular cultural group (Allen, Gupta, & Monnier, 2008). Technically, food functions as the fulfilment of basic human physiological needs (Mennell et al., 1992). From the consumer behaviour viewpoint relating to consumption values (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), this type of eating behaviour occurs for utilitarian or instrumental reasons, which are to satisfy hunger and moreover to meet the nutritional needs of the body.

Montanari (1994) has suggested that discussing food is not only about nutrition and that consuming food is also associated with hedonistic reasons such as seeking fun, pleasure, sensory stimulation (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Food can function as a symbol of social unity. For example, it can be used to strengthen family bonding, develop friendships and to provide hospitality when members and/or non-members of the group eat together (Tian, 2001). Furthermore, food represents ethnic, regional and national identities. Food habits have been used as an important, or even determining, criterion for anthropologists studying cultures (Kittler & Sucher, 2004). Those from a common culture share the same assemblage of food variables and vice versa (K. C. Chang, 1977; Reynolds, 1993). In the context of eating out, food functions as a symbol of lifestyles and is a distinctive aesthetic feature of modern societies (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997). As stated by Finkelsten (1989), people often value the sociability function of food and meals more than the quality of the food (S. Y. Chang, 2007).

Long (2004) has indicated that opportunities to dine out together may increase during trips where dining plays a stronger social function amongst visitors, their family

members and/or friends, and destination residents (i.e. tourism service personnel and local community). For some visitors, food offers an entertainment function where it is one of the most enjoyable activities undertaken during travel. This allows visitors to pursue their motivations of relaxation seeking, excitement and escapism (Sparks, Bowen, & Klag, 2003). Hegarty and O'Mahony (2001) state that food is a gateway for visitors to really learn about another culture by experiencing new food in a destination that differs from what they have at home in terms of ways of cooking, presenting and eating. Local cuisine serves as a major means for visitors to appreciate the culture of a destination (R. C. Y. Chang et al., 2010). In this sense, food plays a role as a novel learning experience for visitors. Beyond this learning process, Bell and Valentine (1997) claim that eating is a symbolic act, that is, consuming local food means consuming another culture or geographical location in order to incorporate it into one's own identity.

3. Indonesian Food Culture

The food culture of Indonesia is shaped by several factors such as nature, history, and culture. Geographically, Indonesia is the largest archipelago country in the world with 17,508 islands. Its tropical climate and high humidity supports a rich and unique blend of diverse natural resources including beaches, volcanoes, tropical forests, and wildlife. The country is within the so-called Pacific 'ring of fire', the meeting point of two of the earth's tectonic plates which gives rise to frequent seismic activity which in turn produces fertile ash over the land (Koene, 1996). To a large extent, the western islands of Indonesia are lush and green: Borneo has rainforests and swampy coastlines; Java

and Sumatra, whose volcanos are many, abound with fertile gardens, coconut groves, paddy fields, fast-flowing rivers and beaches. On the other hand, the eastern islands of the archipelago, such as Nusa Tenggara (from Lombok East to Timor), is rocky and semi-arid, is characterised by dry seasons that are longer and harsher. Sulawesi (the Celebes) has a variety of climates and different parts receive their monsoon rains at different times of year. Further east, the 'Spice Islands of Maluku' (the Molucas) conform to the image of the lush tropics, while Papua (west part) has everything from swamps to rainforests (Von Holzen, 1996).

The seas and straits which surround the islands are at least as important as the country itself. This is reflected in the way Indonesians speak not only of 'our land' but also 'our land and water' *(*in Indonesian language: *tanah air kita)* (Prince, 2009). As its endless coastlines are strategically located between two oceans, Indonesia enjoys an abundance of salt-water fish and seafood. Its many lakes and rivers provide fresh-water fish. Not surprisingly, fish, which usually smoked, grilled, baked, or cooked, is a major source of protein for the people of Indonesia (Wongso, 2016).

Indonesia has a striving agriculture industry with sugar as the largest commercial crop. Improved agricultural techniques during the 1980s and the 1990s have made it possible for the country to grow enough rice to meet its local demands. The country is considered as the world's third largest producer of coffee (after Brazil and Colombia), and the second largest producer of palm oil after Malaysia (Taylor, 2003).

Insert Figure 1 here

Indonesia also holds cultural richness and diversity with more than 1,340 tribes, most with their own language and dialects (Fadiati, Mariani, & Sachriani, 2019). Each

ethnicity in Indonesia has its own local food leading to a diverse character and uniqueness. There are different ways to prepare the food (i.e. ingredients used, cooking methods, cooking utensils applied), to serve the food (i.e. types of cutleries used and food presentation), as well as the way to eat the food (Alamsyah, 2008).

3.1. Indonesian Culinary Development

Indonesia's food culture cannot be separated from the country's history. As mentioned earlier that most literature on Indonesian food is dominated by cookery books thus, the academic literature on the Indonesian culinary history is scarce. Alamsyah (2008) has identified that the culinary development in Indonesia can be categorised into at least three phases: original phase, multicultural phase, and contemporary phase. Within each phase, the food culture is shaped in terms of food preparation, food presentation, and food consumption. This food culture is learned, shared, and passed from one generation to another and whilst some foodways have been refined and adapted, the` majority are still applied until today.

Original Culinary Phase

The first phase, called the original culinary phase, occured during the periods of the great Indonesian kingdoms from the Hindu Kutai kingdom in Kalimantan (400 AC) to the Islamic Banten kingdom in West Java (1156-1580 AC). The word original indicates the food culture in this phase is a reflection of how indigenous people undertook food-related activities ranging from food acquisition, preparation, to food consumption without the influence of other nations. The ingredients used to prepare the dishes were taken from the surrounding natural resources whilst the cooking technique employed was relatively simple and the majority used hand-made wooden or stone cooking

utensils. During this period, the most popular dishes were being steamed, wrapped in banana leaves, with the main ingredients as rice and cassava (Alamsyah, 2008).

Multicultural Culinary Phase

The second multicultural culinary phase was characterised by the influence of cooking art brought by successive waves of traders from Europe, India, Middle East and China (Alamsyah, 2008). Due to the archipelago's strategic location, trade with other nations was established and eventually became one of the most important factors in the country's history. European traders came to Indonesia in the sixteenth century seeking to control the area's precious spices, including nutmeg, cloves, cubed pepper, and others. The Portuguese arrived first in 1512, but were soon followed by the Spanish, the British and finally the ones who became the dominant players: the Dutch (Von Holzen, 1996). The arrivals of these traders had a significant influence on the food culture of Indonesia. Given the fact that the Dutch colonized the archipelago for more than three hundred years, this brought in Dutch culture, influencing the Indonesian's life in many ways including the food culture, including the way the local cuisines are prepared and named. For instance, the *rijsttafel* ('rice table' — many dishes served on the table with a rice centrepiece) has long been popular as a prominent symbol of colonial eating in Indonesia (Prince, 2009) .

Insert Figure 2 here

As stated by Mennell et al. (1992), cultural assimilation as an impact of colonialism and migration in terms of different ways of preparing, cooking, presenting, and consuming the food between the local people and the immigrants was something inevitably taking place. In Indonesian culinary history, this is also the case, for example, the Indian

influences can be seen mostly in Sumatran cuisine featuring curried meat and vegetables in which herbs such as cloves and nutmeg are used following the Indian traditions. In addition, the satay – the method of preparing pieces of meat (lamb or goat) on skewers – is considered as the most noticeable example of Arabic influence on Indonesian food culture, however, the marinades and peanut sauce with which satay is served originates from Java (Prince, 2009). The European colonists contributed in bringing and introducing chillies to Indonesia, which became one of the key signature characteristics of Indonesian food. They had, in turn, originally been brought by the Spanish and Portuguese from other colonies in South America (Prince, 2009). Other vegetables such as potatoes, tomatoes, pumpkins, cabbage, cauliflower and carrots came from Europe too (Koene, 1996). The influence of Chinese cuisine can be seen in hundreds of Indonesian dishes with Chinese origin, such as, noodles, which have been adapted to the local taste, customs, and the available ingredients (Von Holzen, 1996).

Moreover, during trading periods, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and eventually Islam were brought to Indonesia, and as a consequence, the introduction of these religions to the local people had its own influence on the development of food culture. For example, *nasi tumpeng kuning* – a large cone-shaped of steamed rice coloured yellow with turmeric and rich garnished – is traced back to ancient Hindu beliefs. The shape symbolises that of the mythical Hindu mountain, Meru, whilst yellow, one of the four sacred colours for Hindus, is the colour of royalty as well as of worship (Von Holzen, 1996). Therefore, for most Indonesian people, rice is not only the most important basic food but it is also regarded as sacred and therefore has great symbolism in various rituals. It is the manifestation symbol of Dewi Sri, the Hindus' goddess of prosperity and fertility (Ho, 1995). Rice growing in turn often decides the rhythm of

daily life: for example, weddings are often held after the harvest period. Until today, *nasi tumpeng kuning* is often served at special occasions and at opening ceremonies as a symbol of good fortune, wealth and dignity. The most important person cuts the tip of the cone and serves it to an older person who is held in high regard (Prince, 2009).

Insert Figure 3 here

Another evidence of the religious influence on Indonesian food culture can be seen from different meats used across the country. The majority of the Indonesian population is Moslem and as part of their religious beliefs, they are not allowed to eat pork. Consequently, chicken and beef are amongst the most common meats cooked in Indonesian cuisine. By contrast, on the island of Bali where 90 per cent of the population are Hindu, people there do not eat beef. Instead, pork is often found in many Balinese traditional dishes (Von Holzen, 1996).

Contemporary Culinary Phase

The final phase is the contemporary culinary phase where the food habits of Indonesian people have been pretty much influenced by the rapid development of global food service chains (Alamsyah, 2008), starting with Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) which opened its first outlet in the mid-1980s, to the subsequent expansion of McDonald's from 1991. Since then, hundreds of global food service brands have proliferated and in many ways have shaped local eating-out lifestyles. In this phase, traditional food appeared to be put aside since more people prefer to consume what they call 'modern' food. However, in the past few years, there is a trend to re-appreciate the traditional foods of the country. Indonesian cuisine has regained its popularity amongst Indonesian people: traditional food is not just sold at local food street hawkers (called *warung*), but

there are growing numbers of medium-large scale restaurants which specialise in traditional Indonesian food (Setyanti, 2011).

3.2. Characteristics of Indonesian Cuisine

Pre- Food Consumption: Ingredients, Cooking Methods and Utensils

As above mentioned, Indonesian cuisine characteristics are heavily influenced by natural and cultural conditions. Basic ingredients of Indonesian cuisine consist of a variety of herbs, seasoning, and spices. Most Indonesian dishes use fresh herbs such as onion and garlic, spring onion, ginger roots, turmeric, galangal, candlenuts, lemon basil, lemon grass, not to mention chilli (Von Holzen, 1996). In addition to these fresh herbs, the inclusion of spices is at the heart of almost every Indonesian dish. Known as islands of spices, the spices available range from seed, fruit, root, bark or vegetative substance, and the most common include coriander seeds, pepper, nutmeg, cumin and cloves. Either grated, chopped, or dried, these spices, together with other fresh ingredients, play a part as a seasoning for the purpose of flavouring the food (in Indonesian language it is called *bumbu*) (Prince, 2009). Besides for cooking, the spices are extensively used for other purposes such as to preserve the food, as a medicine, part of the rituals, ingredients of cosmetics and perfumery (Tourism, 2010).

Insert Figure 4 here

In regards to cooking method, Indonesian food is prepared according to a variety of ways, being shallow or deep fried, grilled over hot coals, simmered, steamed and baked, and relatively speaking, does not require complex kitchen utensils (Prince, 2009). Its basic cooking utensils include mortar and pestle, chopping board, cleaver, wok (*wajan*), spatula, ladle, and steamers, with wok and mortal-pestle considered as the most

characteristic. While the wok is used to fry the food, a flat saucer-shaped granite grinding stone together with a granite pestle is frequently used to grind or crush the fresh herbs and spices and make them into spice paste (*bumbu*). Unlike neighbouring Malaysia and Thailand where the ingredients are pounded with a pestle inside a deep mortar, the Indonesian people rub or grind ingredients with a backwards and forwards motions across the granite (Von Holzen, 1996). Also widely used in Indonesian cooking is the banana leaf, either for wrapping food for grilling, steaming, or placing directly onto hot coals. Banana leaf can be found abundantly in Indonesia's tropical islands and the use of the leaf as a wrapper contributes authentic flavour and aroma on the food. There are different ways of wrapping the food in banana leaf, depending on the contents and particular style of preparation (Von Holzen, 1996).

Insert Figure 5 here

During Food Consumption: Meals and Ways of Eating

The traditional Indonesian meal does not involve courses that are served individually such as entrée, main, and dessert. Instead, each dish is handed out collectively (Sovyanhadi, 2011). All food is served on the table, given the influence of Dutch culture - the r*ijsttafel* or rice table. Rice *(nasi)* is central to the lives of Indonesians (Von Holzen, 1996). It is considered as the most popular staple food for the majority of the population although in some regions there are variations, for example sago palm in Maluku islands and corn in Madura island and some eastern islands (Tourism, 2010).The rice is eaten accompanied by one or two main savoury dishes consisting of meat such as chicken or beef, fish, and vegetables (Prince, 2009). Besides the rice and side dishes, it is common to have condiments which include chilli-hot sambal as well as something to provide a crunchy contrast such as deep-fried tiny anchovies *(ikan teri)*,

tapioca crackers *(krupuk)*, or deep-fried *tempeh (Von Holzen, 1996)*. *Tempeh* is an adaptation of tofu to the tropical climate of Indonesia. It is originally developed in Java since the 1700s and made through a controlled fermentation process that binds soybean into a cake form. The fermented soybean holds more protein, dietary fibre, and vitamins than regular tofu, and it is widely consumed either as snack or part of meal across the country (Astuti, Meliala, Dalais, & Wahlqvist, 2000).

Having rice as the base of most Indonesian meals, the typical Indonesian menu is high in fibre, complex carbohydrates, and monounsaturated fatty acids. Breakfasts consist of rice, noodles, or meat and vegetable soup, accompanied by Java coffee or tea to start the day. Lunch is the main meal of the day. The meal is prepared all in the morning and is served all at once. Dinner is often eaten after the workday has ended. Lunch and dinner normally contain staples, meat or fish, vegetables, and condiments (Sovyanhadi, 2011).

Indonesian meals are commonly eaten with the combination of a spoon in the right hand and fork in the left hand, although in many parts of the country, such as in Java, it is common to eat with one's hands. The use the right hand is an acceptable custom since the left hand is considered unclean in Moslem religion beliefs. Eating with chopsticks is generally only found in food stalls or restaurants serving Indonesian adaptations of Chinese cuisine. *Selamat makan* is the polite Indonesian invitation before the meal consumption (Von Holzen, 1996).

3.3. Classification of Indonesian Cuisine

With its enormous geographic and cultural diversity, it is evident that Indonesian cuisine is rich in variety and taste. For example, in using fresh herbs and spices, each part of Indonesia develop its own combinations and intensities to produce a food taste

that is either spicy, hot, strong, sweet, sour or a mixture of these flavours (Koene, 1996). Basically, Indonesian cuisine can be classified based on six major islands across the country. Each has different food culture characteristics that are shaped by the natural conditions, history, and culture of the region.

Food in Sumatra Island is much influenced by Indian and Chinese culture. Through its roots in the spice trade era and strategic location in the India-China trade routes, most Northern Sumatra cities exhibit the influence of Chinese and Indian immigrants' ways of life (Tourism, 2010). As the western anchor of the archipelago, Sumatra was the first port of call for Indian and Arab traders, and the coastal Sumatrans heavily adopted their spices as well as stews, curries and kebabs from these merchants (Koene, 1996). The most popular cuisine from the island is Padang (West Sumatra) food whose signature dish is *rendang* – a spicy stewed beef in coconut milk (Lipoeto et al., 2001). In 2011, an online polling undertaken by CNN to 35,000 'love-food' readers across the globe voted *rendang* as the top 50 world's most delicious foods (Cheung, 2011). Moreover, the Padang food restaurant chains can be found throughout Indonesia and neighbouring countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, thus making Padang as one of the most favourite Indonesian regional cuisines amongst international travellers (Klopfer, 1993).

According to Wongso (2016), Javanese cuisine is strongly influenced by the island's traditional kingdoms such as Mataram in Central Java and Majapahit in East Java. Also named as a royal cuisine, most of Javanese cuisine is considered relatively mild compared to other regions of Indonesia. In Java Island, the major ethnic groups are: Javanese (70%) who live in Central Java and East Java provinces; Sundanese in the western of the island (20%); and Madurese (10%), who inhabitant the island of Madura

372 in the eastern part of Java. There are diverse patterns of cuisine across the regions in the
373 island. Sundanese cuisine uses a lot of fresh vegetables in its dishes (Koene, 1996).
374 Further, food in Central Java is distinguished for its sweetness whereas East Javanese
375 cuisine tends to be less sweet and spicier compared to Central Java's. In addition,
376 seafood products are widely used in this region to make shrimp paste condiment, an
377 ingredient found in many East Javanese dishes (Tourism, 2010).

378 Then there are Bali and West Nusa Tenggara (Lombok) cuisines. Unlike central and
379 western regions of Indonesia, Nusa Tenggara whose climate is drier, it is more common
380 to have sago, corn, cassava, and taro rather than rice, as staple food (Wikipedia, 2010).
381 Since the vast majority of the population in Bali is Hindu, this religious belief has
382 reflected greatly the way Balinese cuisine is prepared, for instance, beef is very rarely
383 used whilst pork is more common. On the other hand, although West Nusa Tenggara is
384 in close proximity with Bali and the island was ruled by a Hindu Dynasty from Bali,
385 however, a revolt in 1891-1894 left the entire island to the Netherland East Indies
386 colony. As a result, there is a mixture of cuisines wherein some are close to those in
387 Bali (Hindu's influence) and the others have a touch of Dutch influence in taste
388 (Tourism, 2010).

389 Cuisine from Kalimantan, the Indonesian region of Borneo island that is located at the
390 centre of maritime South East Asia, is appealing too. Its sweeping coastlines and many
391 large rivers provide an abundance of seafood and freshwater fish used in the local dishes
392 (Asia, 2012). In addition to this, there are three major ethnic groups including the Dayak
393 (indigenous inhabitants of Borneo), Malay, and Chinese which make up about 90% of
394 the total population (Tourism, 2010). These distinct groups support the diversity of the

cuisines across the island. A big percentage of Chinese community live in the western of Kalimantan and it is unsurprisingly that cuisine in this place is dominated by Chinese-related ingredients such as noodles, soy sauce, and pork. On the other hand, at the rest of the island, the cuisines have strongly influenced by indigenous Dayak food that uses more indigenous spices and fresh herbs (TravelSmart, 2012).

Sulawesi Island, is known for the best sea produce in Indonesia, hence its culinary taste has revolved around seafood cuisines. Fish roasted over charcoal (*ikan bakar)* served with a variety of dipping sauce or condiment is a firm regional favourite. Likewise West Sumatra, most of the dishes in North Sulawesi have a very strong flavour that generated from chilli. In addition to this, some dishes in this region serve animals, such as, dogs, bat, and forest rats as the main ingredients of the food (Wikipedia, 2010). Calling the use of these unusual food as scary food, Gyimóthy and Mykletun (2009) in their study contend that the phenomenon of offering scary foods as part of adventure tourism for international visitors not only elicit emotional reactions like fear or disgust but also thrill and enjoyment, dependent upon visitor's personality and motivation for travel.

Lastly, the cuisines from Maluku Islands and Papua, which are drier, are similarly defined by seafood. However, the staple food of native people in Maluku and Papua, instead of rice like the other five regions, is *papeda* (sago congee), usually consumed with yellow soup made from fish such as tuna and *mubara* fish spiced with turmeric and lime (Wikipedia, 2010).

Table 1 summarises the characteristics and the classifications of Indonesian cuisine mapping which vary across the regions in the country. The map divides the country into three major regions: western, central, and eastern part of Indonesia.

Insert Table 1 here

4. Conclusion

The preceding review and discussions have shown that Indonesia boasts a long history with diverse influence from different cultures. This diversity has brought significant influences that have supported the establishment of various unique exotic cuisines in the country. This study is anticipated to function as a starter contribution to increase the market awareness of Indonesian cuisine and its richness particularly through the exploration of socio-cultural aspect.

Declaration

Availability of Data and Materials

All datasets have been presented in this paper.

Competing Interests

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Funding

This study was funded by the Directorate General of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Republic of Indonesia.

Author's contributions

Other authors' contributions are not applicable.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank the reviewers for their valuable inputs to the manuscript to meet the standard of publication of this journal.

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