

## **EUNGKOET KEUMAMAH (WOOD FISH): ACEH'S PAST CULINARY LEGACY AND POTENTIAL IN THE PRESENT AND FUTURE WORLD OF TOURISM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This research article deals with Aceh's past culinary heritage which has its own charm for both Acehnese and for people from outside Aceh. One of Aceh's culinary delights that is already popular outside Aceh is Eungkoet Keumamah (wood fish) and is an Acehnese culinary heritage which has a history of fighting spirit during the colonial period and this culinary also has great potential to be preserved worldwide, especially in the world of Acehnese culinary tourism. Eungkoet Keumamah is a culinary that was previously only provided for warriors to fulfill their nutritional needs during the war against Dutch colonialism. The process of making Eungkoet Keumamah is also a learning experience, where Eungkoet Suree (Tongkol Fish) is boiled and then dried as a way to preserve the fish because at that time there were no refrigerators. This natural preservation can last for months. Behind the simplicity of the processing, it turns out that Eungkoet Keumamah, if cooked with a variety of spices that have been adjusted, produces a distinctive Acehnese taste and there are many food menus that can be prepared with the basic ingredients of Eungkoet Keumamah. Having a distinctive taste, Eungkoet Keumamah is not only a favorite food for the people of Aceh but is also able to attract the attention of people outside Aceh. Therefore, this culinary heritage deserves to be preserved. This article is a descriptive qualitative research where the existing data is processed qualitatively and the results of the analysis of the existing data are presented descriptively. The results of the study show that Eungkoet Keumamah is better known by the name of wood fish for people from outside Aceh. Meanwhile, in the midst of the people of Aceh, Eungkoet Keumamah is associated with local wisdom in the past, namely as a provision for life against Dutch colonialism, and in the present and in the future it is seen as having good potential in the world of tourism.*

**Keywords:** *Wood fish, Aceh culinary, and tourism potential.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

European nations or better known as colonial nations (Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch) began to enter Indonesia between the 15th or 16th centuries. The Portuguese were the first colonial nations to colonize Indonesia, then followed by Spain, but this colonialism did not last long because they were expelled by the Indonesian people who at that time were still in the form of a kingdom. However, several years later, the Europeans returned to Indonesia but those who came at that time were no longer the nations before but the Dutch. They were also expelled again, but not long after that the Dutch returned to Indonesia because they remembered the many advantages they had gained from the previous war. Since then the Dutch began to colonize Indonesia, and during the colonial period our warriors made various efforts and struggles against the Dutch. Various interesting stories continue to be engraved so that they become history that the children and grandchildren of the Indonesian people continue to remember.

One of the interesting histories is in the Aceh region, namely the history of Aceh which deals with a glimpse of the history of one of Aceh's culinary delights that attracts the attention of many parties, namely Eungkoet Keumamah. This food is made from the basic ingredients of tongkol which during the colonial period were used as provisions for warriors as a preparation for food stocks that could last a long time and were specially carried everywhere in wars to conquer colonialists in the past. Now Eungkoet Keumamah has become an Acehnese culinary heritage that adorns restaurant tables with a distinctive Acehnese taste, is processed with selected spices and has high protein, and will become a popular Acehnese culinary dish in the

future.

In other words, there is nothing wrong with our hope that one day Eungket Keumamah will be well-known throughout the world, as is the case with Padang rendang. There is even a saying that where there are signs of life, there will be a Padang restaurant. It is certain that rendang Padang will be the main menu for fans of Padang cuisine. Likewise, Eungkoet Keumamah, which is known by people as wood fish, is very attached as an Acehnese culinary product which is equally important in getting to know an ethnic group with various existing culinary products.

Eungkoet Keumamah (Wood fish) is Aceh's culinary heritage whose current condition is like a "submerged stem" and needs to be brought back to the surface so that its form is visible to the world community. In other words, wood fish is synonymous with Aceh's culinary heritage, and it still needs to be repackaged to have a selling price in the future. That is why this research article is entitled: Eungkoet Keumamah (Wood fish): Aceh's past culinary heritage and potential in the world of tourism today, and in the future.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method in which the various collected data are processed qualitatively and the results are presented descriptively. Sources of data were obtained through library research, the internet, desk observations, journals, interviews, etc. For this reason, it is necessary to further classify the data in order to facilitate data processing. Further more from the existing data processing, the results will be described into several points in the results and discussion chapter, and finally make conclusions about the overall research results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overview of the Eungkoet Keumamah (Wood Fish) in the Past**

During the colonial period of the Acehnese, many Acehnese people died from malnutrition or malnutrition as a result of being forced to work every day but their nutritional intake was not fulfilled. At that time many mothers made every effort to fulfill their family's nutritional needs, provide supplies for war and so on. So one day they thought about how to process food that could last a long time but still be nutritious because remembering that at that time there were no preservatives or electronic devices to preserve food like today. It was at this time that women, especially those living in coastal areas, tried to process tongkol fish into a side dish that would last for months to provide for their children and husbands in their struggle against the invaders. This cob fish is boiled then halved if it is small and quartered if it is large then set aside between the bones and the meat, after which it is dried in the sun for several days to dry so that the water content decreases so that the fish will last longer and be harder. During the colonial period, Eungkoet Kemamah was eaten directly with rice plus sunti acid as a connoisseur of taste and even though the texture was hard, the taste and nutritional content were maintained. Every time the husbands took the time to return home, the wives would also provide their husbands with Eungkoet Keumamah in banana leaves and sunti saboh reugam acid (a handful of sunti acid) as provisions to fight.

Eungkoet Kemamah or what we call wood fish, which, even though it is prepared without any seasoning, always accompanies the fighters in defending the nation. In other words, Eungkoet Keumamah is one of the weapons in the form of food supplies for the fighters to survive during the war. Eungkoet Kemamah is a typical Aceh food menu which has an important role in the journey of the Acehnese people's struggle against the colonial nation. And this is actually a form of local wisdom that functions as a problem-free solution during the colonial

period.

But unfortunately, without realizing it, it seems that Aceh's culinary heritage has not been recorded in history books. This will be important in the future, not only to be known by the nation's younger generation but also for the development of sharia (halal) culinary tourism in Aceh. Eungkoet Keumamah is important, because its existence contains historical elements of the struggle of the Acehnese people against the colonial peoples which must not be repeated on this earth of the Verandas of Mecca. In addition, Eungkoet Keumamah is food that is one hundred percent halal according to Islamic law. Because of that, there is no need to doubt for Moeslim and non-Moeslim people from all over the world to taste it further.

In other words, Eungkoet Keumamah is synonymous with the typical food of the Acehnese, which in the past was packaged only modestly as food supplies in an emergency situation during the war against Dutch colonialism. However, in the course of time, it seems that there has also been a change where Eungkoet Keumamah is not only enjoyed by the Acehnese but also by the wider community outside Aceh. This means that in Eungkoet Keumamah itself there are not only unique Acehnese values, but also universal values that can be enjoyed by everyone.

### **The Popularity of Eungkoet Keumamah (Wood Fish) After Independence to the Present**

Eungkoet Keumamah, can be found in many coastal areas, and if someone is on vacation to the beach, usually along the road to the beach there are lots of vendors selling Eungkoet Keumamah, ranging from small to large sizes. But not all coastal areas sell Eungkoet Keumamah, only in a few places, even if the fishermen of that area produce Eungkoet Keumamah. This is what is meant in the title of the article above as the potential for developing local tourism and Eungkoet Keumamah as a product that has its own selling price. It means that Eungkoet Keumamah here is also seen between Aceh's culinary heritage and present and future tourism opportunities.

Eungkoet Keumamah is known as wood fish to the people from outside of Aceh because of its hard texture like wood. If people outside Aceh saw raw Eungkoet Keumamah, they might think that it was pieces of wood that would be processed into food because it was that hard and the color was similar to wood after being dried in the sun for days. But who would have thought that wood fish after being processed had a taste that could captivate the attention of Acehnese visitors. Now this Eungkoet keumamah (wood fish) is not only in Acehnese restaurants but has also been served in restaurants outside the Aceh region. This is because many Acehnese people who migrate outside the area to work or some are married to outsiders from Aceh, so typical Acehnese restaurants also exist in areas outside Aceh. Even now it has begun to be introduced to some neighboring countries.

### **Utilizing Electronic Media to Make Eungket Keumamah a Worldwide Culinary Heritage of Aceh in the Future**

Eungkoet Keumamah if it is packaged in a contemporary form such as being made into canned fish or packaged in an attractive cup then given an attractive brand and slogan will certainly add to the attractiveness of buyers, especially if the producer has good marketing skills, this will also have an effect on including Eungkoet Keumamah packaging in international markets. If the packaging is good, it can also enter online shops which are currently booming among people, this also requires advertisements and attractive pictures because advertisements and pictures are one of the first things people pay attention to when someone buys something.

The existence of young Acehnese is also an important factor in preserving Aceh's culinary

heritage. They must have a productive and creative spirit coupled with their various educational experiences especially those they have taken outside the region or abroad. A sense of love for our homeland must be carried wherever we go, introducing friends and people around us to the advantages we have, such as introducing our culinary delights. Because they will believe it more if they hear it directly from the people (the Acehnese), and if it's not the people of Aceh who are preserving it, then who else. It's okay to be preserved by outsiders, but it's good that our culture must also be preserved so that it is known by the world's population. Another positive impact from the use of electronic media is that it helps open jobs and the people's economy because the more interested people, the more labor is needed and of course the income is also higher. As the Aceh saying goes "Si pat tak dua pat lhuet" (One action but has many benefits). Hopefully this article is also useful for all of us.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion conveyed in this paper is that as the successor of our nation we must preserve the legacy of our elders (our parents in their time), and one of them is Eungkoet Keumamah. Eungkoet Keumamah is Aceh's culinary heritage from the colonial period which still exists today and we must preserve it so that it enters the world market and international restaurants. Apart from having an interesting history, Eungkoet Keumamah also has a distinctive taste and high nutritional or protein content. Furthermore, the use of electronic media is also very important as a promotional medium to influence popularity and high selling prices as well as the preservation of this culinary heritage. Therefore, good packaging, advertising and photography will certainly help to introduce our culinary delights to the outside world.

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