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## Gulo Puan as a Culinary Gastronomy of Pampangan District, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency

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### ABSTRACT

Gulo puan is one of the culinary delights of South Sumatra that is almost forgotten by Generation Z. Despite its rich flavor and captivating history that could attract tourists, the limited information about gulo puan has caused it to fade further from public awareness. Therefore, further study is needed regarding its history, culture, ingredients and processing methods. The research was conducted using descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection through interviews with the village chief and residents of Bangsal village. Based on the interviews, it was found that the existence of gulo puan in South Sumatra originated from Pampangan Sub-district, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency. The availability of high-quality and abundant milk, inspired one of the migrants to process the milk into milk sugar. The principle of making gulo puan is to dry the milk sugar mixture over firewood for five hours until it thickens. This processed product was used as tribute to the Darussalam kings in exchange for tax exemptions. In addition to being used as tribute, during the Darussalam era gulo puan was presented at traditional events and other holidays, which has now developed gulo puan into a commercialized culinary product.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) is one of the districts in southern Sumatra, located 50 to 70 KM away from Palembang city. Administratively, the district borders Ogan ilir, Banyuasin and Palembang city from the north. It also borders Bangka Strait and Java Sea to the east, East OKU and Lampung Province to the south, and Ogan ilir and East OKU to the west. Approximately 75 percent of the Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) district is swampy and 25 percent is dry land. This causes this region to have income from farming and livestock raising (Pujiastuti, et al., 2023).

Ogan Komering Ilir (OKI) Regency has 18 sub-districts. One of them is Pampangan sub-district. Pampangan sub-district has 22 villages, one of which is bangsal village. Bangsal village has 375 hectares of peat swamp land and is used for buffalo farming (Yahdin, et al 2021). According to Sartika et al (2020), almost all residents in Bangsal Village practice engage in swamp buffalo farming. Besides producing milk that is consumed directly, buffaloes in Bangsal Village are also processed into various kinds of food. One of them is gulo puan a jelly-like delicacy made from buffalo milk (Tsuji, T., Et al 2022).

Gulo puan consists of two syllables, gulo and puan. Gulo means sugar and puan means milk. Gulo puan is made from a mixture of milk and sugar to caramelize (Yulianti, K et al, 2022). The presence of swamp buffalo milk in this sub-district makes gulo puan a culinary specialty of Pampangan Sub-district, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency (OKI). In addition to the availability of raw materials in Pampangan sub-district, gulo puan also has a unique story involving its history, culture, and art, known as gastronomy. According to Suwandojo et al (2023), gastronomy is a reflection of a history, tradition, culture and environment that influences the process of the dish's sourcing made and served until it becomes a tourist attraction and a cultural symbol. Mahonny (2024) added that gastronomy also explores the meaning, stories, stories, history, culture and nutrition of food and becomes the identity and attraction of a region and even a country. The appeal of food is very important for culinary tourism, because tourists visiting an area are no longer looking for food only to fulfill biological needs, but also experiences.

The problem is that based on research (Adam, 2022), there is a misconception about the existence of gulo puan in Palembang which disrupts the flow of information to younger generations This lack of information about gulo puan causes youth, especially generation Z, to be less aware of the existence of gulo puan, contributing to its gradual decline. Therefore, further studies are needed on the history, culture, availability of ingredients, including the making (gastronomy) of gulo puan. Through this paper, it is hoped that gulo puan can be maintained and further developed by generation Z without losing the authenticity or identity of gulo puan itself.

## 2. LITERATUR REVIEW

### 2.1. Culinary Gastronomy

Culinary gastronomy is an identity that greatly utilizes local wisdom because gastronomic wisdom is formed from culture with the traditions of various regions. Culinary gastronomy contains belief systems, norms, cultures that are passed down through ritual dishes, religion, philosophy, and national identity (Krisnadi, 2018).

Gastronomy has become a component of Indonesian cuisine and plays an important role in the development of culinary in Indonesia. The variety of spices that flavor Indonesian culinary flavors illustrates that it is not merely a collection of dishes (Risvi P, 2020). It also carries its own unique history and culture. According to Nasution et al. (2024), gastronomy is

a scientific term that refers to food and culture, which includes the art of cooking, food science, and food quality. Culinary gastronomy includes the art of cooking and serving food, knowledge of food ingredients and their origins, cooking and preparation techniques, history and evolution in a cultural context, social and cultural aspects of food consumption, appreciation of the quality of food and drink, the relationship between food and drink, and innovation in culinary.

According to [Risqienna et al. \(2023\)](#), culinary gastronomy emphasizes four components, namely history, culture, geography and cooking methods.

- a. History refers to the origins or background of the culinary tradition.
- b. Culture is about the factors of influence of local people in consuming a food.
- c. Geography is related to environmental factors
- d. Cooking methods describe the general process of preparing the food.

## 2.2. Pampangan Sub-district and its Commodities

Pampangan is one of the sub-districts in Ogan Komering Ilir Regency where the majority of the population earns a living in wetland rice and buffalo farming. These two commodities are the leading commodities in this area. The total production of swamp rice commodity is 600 tons per year, while buffalo is 3476 heads per year ([Rosana, Arbi, & Ridwan, 2021](#)).

[Sartika et al \(2020\)](#) added that Pampangan District, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency (OKI) is a producer of swamp buffalo milk because the people of Pampangan are swamp buffalo farmers. Every morning the buffaloes are milked before being released into the swamp to find food. The milk is sold for Rp 20,000 per cup. Generally, milk purchased from farmers is consumed by the community by drinking it directly or using it as a basic ingredient to make food. Bangsal Village processes milk into three types of food, including gulo puan, sagon puan, and tapel puan. Of the three types of food, the most commonly processed food is gulo puan. Gulo puan is characterized by a soft, sandy texture, brown color, and sweet and savory taste. Pampangan Sub-district and its Commodities.

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## 3. METHODS

The method used is descriptive qualitative. This research combines descriptive and qualitative approaches. This research collects information that has a relationship with the literature review, and presents data without manipulation ([Ridwan et al, 2021](#)). This research was carried out by analyzing history, culture, availability of materials and processing methods in a qualitative (non-quantitative) manner.

The data used are primary and secondary data. Primary data was taken by conducting in-depth observations and interviews with the head of Bangsal Village and three residents of Bangsal Village. Interviews were conducted in an unstructured manner where the interview

guidelines used had been arranged systematically, and were only outlines of the problem (Sugiyono, 2020). Secondary data was collected through journals, e-books and others.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sonjaya et al. (2021) stated that gastronomy generally includes history, culture, geographical landscape and processing methods.

##### 4.1. History of Gulo Puan

Gulo puan became the favorite food of the kings, so this food became the snacks of the kings of Palembang. Gulo puan originated from one of the community members named Usman. Usman was a migrant who settled in Kuro Village. Kuro village is currently known as bangsal village, which is the oldest village in Pampangan sub-district. During the Darussalam sultanate, Mato Gawe visited the sultan to hand over tribute or sebah from Margapuro. The submission was made to the Sultanate of Palembang, because it had been exempted from taxes. Margapuro is now known as Pampangan sub-district.

This is in line with the research of Julianti et al. (2021), which indicates gulo puan has existed in bangsal village since the Palembang Sultanate of Raden Wiratoko approximately 130 years ago. Gulo puan was first created by Usman, a migrant who lived and settled in Bangsal Village. He had the idea to process swamp buffalo milk into gulo puan. Gulo puan is a culinary specialty of Bangsal Village. Gulo puan is one of the tributes, as a specialty when visiting the Palembang sultanate. In 1990, gulo puan was sold by several village traders in Palembang. However, this culinary item is now only available at pop-up market every Friday in front of the Great Mosque of Palembang, Cinde Flea Market, and Kambang Iwak.

##### 4.2. Gulo Puan Culture

Gulo puan is also known as guwan (Tinarbuko, Pangestu, & Nuriarta, 2023). The term gulo puan comes from the Palembang language, with gulo meaning 'sugar' and puan meaning 'milk'. Therefore, the meaning of gulo puan is milk sugar. During the Darussalam sultanate, the nobles used gulo puan as a substitute for granulated sugar or daily snacks. In the past, gulo puan was served at official events such as weddings, traditional events, alms, religious events, and commemorating important days. Over time, in the 1980s, the people of Bangsal Village produced gulo puan and sold it. Now, gulo puan is only found at certain times, such as every Friday at the Grand Mosque, and is sold online. In making gulo puan, you must use an aluminum pot and it must not be mixed with water.

##### 4.3. Geographical Landscape

The availability of buffalo milk in Pampangan sub-district began with the introduction of Indian buffalo to Pampangan sub-district. In the 19th century, Indian buffaloes entered Indonesia and were crossed with local buffaloes in Indonesia. Pampangan buffaloes gestate for one year or about 323-335 days. Pampangan buffaloes live independently and consume food naturally, resulting in healthy buffaloes. The healthy living behavior of pampangan sub-district buffaloes produces a lot of thick milk. Due to the excessive production of quality milk in Pampangan Sub-district, the community processes the milk into caramel. Desiani et al (2020) added that bangsal village has a lowland landscape with a special and unique character, where the landscape encourages the birth of a traditional livestock culture. The type of livestock cultivated is buffalo, so this area is a typical buffalo milk producer.

#### 4.4. Processing Method

The principle of making gulo puan is to caramelize milk and sugar. Making gulo puan takes a long time, heating buffalo milk over medium heat. Stirring is done continuously until it thickens and sugar is added. Generally, gulo puan is heated over a wood fire from morning to evening.

Steps:

- a. Making gulo puan begins with mixing swamp buffalo milk with brown sugar.
- b. The mixture is cooked over low heat for five hours
- c. During heating, the mixture is continuously stirred until it thickens, dries and browns forming a sand-like solid, with a sweet legit taste..

#### 5. CONCLUSION

The history of gulo puan stems from the tribute of people who have been exempted from taxes, in ancient times. Gulo puan was the favorite snack of the kings because of its sweet and savory taste. Gulo puan is made from a mixture of sugar and swamp buffalo milk. The principle of processing gulo puan is by caramelizing the mixture of milk and sugar until it dries. In the past, gulo puan was a food served at traditional ceremonies and other holidays. However, gulo puan is now sold commercially due to the availability of raw materials in the form of swamp buffalo, which is the main commodity in Pampangan sub-district.

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