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Exploring Tourists' Interest in Food Heritage Tourism around Yogyakarta Palace

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ABSTRACT

The development of gastronomic tourism shows a positive trend as a form of special interest tourism that combines food experiences with cultural and historical values. There is not many studies to analyze tourists' interest in visiting food heritage sites in Yogyakarta especially in Palace area, and identify their potential as gastronomic tourism attractions. The method used is descriptive qualitative through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. The study focused on the Yogyakarta palace area, Ngasem traditional market and Bale Raos Restaurant, involving domestic tourists, traditional food business operators, cultural manager, and stakeholders in food heritage preservation. The results indicate that the Yogyakarta Palace's food heritage holds historical and philosophical value, as well as unique flavors and presentation that attract tourists. However, challenges include insufficient digital promotion and competition with modern cuisine. Destination image, food uniqueness, authentic experiences, and emotional engagement are the primary driver of visitor interest. The application of the Nona Helix concept emphasizes the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders in the development of gastronomic tourism. The study recommends the preservation of food heritage through the strengthening of cultural narratives, digital marketing, and innovative presentation methods without compromising traditional values. These finding are expected to support the development of sustainable gastronomic tourism and reinforce Yogyakarta's cultural identify as a premier destination.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomic tourism is estimated to contribute approximately 30% to global tourism revenue, underscoring its significance not merely as a consumption-based activity but as an essential medium for cultural transfer and identity formation within destinations (Ellis et al., 2018; García-Pérez & Castillo-Ortiz, 2024). The integration of gastronomy into the tourism experience extends beyond the act of eating; it embodies the interplay of tradition, history, and local values that are reflected in culinary practices. Through participation in local foodways, tourists are provided with unique opportunities to engage with the symbolic and experiential dimensions of culture—an engagement that deepens their understanding of place and fosters meaningful connections with host communities (García-Pérez & Castillo-Ortiz, 2024).

The importance of gastronomy within the broader tourism sector lies in its capacity to enhance a destination's image, influence travellers' perceptions, and stimulate the exploration of local culture (Putri & Wijoyo, 2023). Gastronomic experiences frequently serve as key motivators for travel and can distinguish one destination from another in an increasingly competitive global tourism market. By positioning local gastronomy as a central component of the tourism offering, destinations not only reinforce their cultural distinctiveness but also stimulate economic growth and contribute to the preservation of culinary heritage (Recuero-Virto & Valilla Arróspide, 2024; Resmi et al., 2023; Saputra & Priyambodo, 2024). Hence, gastronomy emerges as a strategic resource for advancing sustainable tourism development that integrates both cultural valorisation and community well-being.

Yogyakarta, as the cultural center of Indonesia, boasts a rich food heritage that reflects the cultural legacy of the Keraton, including food treasures with high historical and philosophical value. Yogyakarta Keraton cuisine is not merely about taste but is also tied to cultural identity, rituals, and biodiversity conservation (Wardani et al., 2013; Sulistiyowati et al., 2022). However, traditional cuisine in the Keraton area faces significant challenges due to competition with modern and international cuisine, which is increasingly popular among tourists (Soetopo & Wulandari, 2023).

Data from the central statistics agency of Yogyakarta in 2024 shows that 550,000 domestic tourists and 130,140 international tourists visited the Yogyakarta Keraton. Culture, history, architecture, and cuisine are the main attractions. The Keraton area is a center of food traditions influenced by Dutch, Chinese, and Portuguese cultures (Nugroho & Putu, 2020). Efforts to preserve Keraton cuisine through gastronomic tourism can strengthen cultural heritage and create authentic experiences for tourists. Developing food tourism also opens economic opportunities, creates jobs, and supports local businesses (Mulyantari et al., 2023). Storytelling in food presentation adds value to the tourist experience and aids in cultural preservation (Wang et al., 2021). Museum and educational activities also play a crucial role in introducing food history to tourists (Aydin & Şahin, 2017).

Traditional palace cuisine offers tourist the opportunity to engage in food traditions, enhancing the quality of the tourist experience. The emotional value and quality of traditional cuisine positively influence tourist consumption behavior (Saad et al., 2021). However, a major challenge lies in the limited digital promotion and maintaining the authenticity of cuisine while adapting to global tourist preferences (Karaman & Girgin, 2021).

International tourism market segmentation emphasizes the importance of understanding tourists' motivations and preferences to develop effective marketing strategies. Food is considered a manifestation of local culture that strengthens tourist' connection between to

a destination (Robinson, 2021; Timothy, 2015).

Numerous studies conducted across the globe have demonstrated a close association between gastronomic experiences and elements such as destination image, tourist loyalty, and intentions to revisit. These findings underscore the vital role that culinary offerings play in forming lasting impressions and strengthening emotional ties between travelers and destinations. However, research specifically examining the food heritage of the Yogyakarta Palace, along with its potential influence on tourists' visitation patterns and purchasing intentions, remains quite limited. The unique culinary traditions of the palace, deeply rooted in historical and cultural contexts, present an important but under-researched opportunity to understand how heritage gastronomy can shape traveler behavior and support the sustainability of cultural tourism in Yogyakarta. Further empirical studies in this area are essential for illuminating the ways in which palace cuisine may impact tourists' motivations, their choices to visit, and their willingness to purchase palace-related food products, thus offering strategic insights for destination managers and policymakers seeking to enhance the region's tourist appeal.

Therefore, this research is important to understand the potential of food heritage as a gastronomic tourist attraction and develop cultural preservation strategies through the Nona Helix approach, which involves various stakeholders. Specifically, this study seeks to analyze tourists' interest in visiting the Yogyakarta Keraton area, to explore the characteristics and significance of food heritage in the Keraton environment, to identify the tourism attractions within this area, and to examine the role of the Nona Helix in enhancing tourist interest in visiting, based on food heritage as a gastronomic tourism attraction.

2. LITERATUR REVIEW

2.1. Gastronomic Tourism

Gastronomic tourism is part of special interest tourism (Ningsih & Turgarini, 2020). Therefore, gastronomic tourism refers to trips undertaken with the aim of enjoying food and drink as the main factor in deciding to visit a tourist destination. Turgarini (2018) explain that gastronomy consists of nine elements, including: 1) Raw materials, 2) Cooking/food arts, 3) Serving, 4) Tasting, 5) seeking unique experiences, 6) Learning and researching food, 7) Nutritional knowledge 8) Philosophy, history, tradition, and social aspects, 9) Ethics and etiquette.

2.2. Visit Interest

Kotler & Susanto (2000) explain that interest is a motivation, namely a strongly felt impulse that arises from within and motivates a person to act, where this impulse is influenced by positive stimulus or feelings toward a particular object. According to (Ramadhan et al., 2015) interest is a strong and motivating force that influences a person's choice of action. The following are indicators that can be used in relation to interest in visiting: 1) Interest, Related to an individual's motivation toward interest in an object, person, or activity. 2) Preference, refers to interest that reflects consumer behavior toward a particular product, item, or service. 3) Information Seeking, refers to interest that reflects consumer behavior of consistently seeking information about products, items, or services of interest.

2.3. Food Heritage

Food heritage is a concept that encompasses various elements related to food, both

tangible and intangible. Bessi re (2013) explain that food heritage includes agricultural product, food ingredients, dishes, cooking history, and the symbolic dimensions of food, including food techniques, recipes, consumption practices, and beliefs related to food. This conceptualization has been adopted by several researchers, such as (Matta, 2013) and (Littaye, 2016). Matta (2013) states that food heritage not only includes agricultural products and food ingredients but also preparation techniques, food tradition, food etiquette, and material aspects such as cooking utensils and food preparation.

2.4. Gastronomic attraction

According to Cooper (1998), a tourist attraction must have four main components, namely: attraction, accessibility, amenity, and ancillary (Supporting institutions).

- a. Attractions, are key elements that can draw tourists to visit a destination. Each destination has its own unique appeal that sets it apart from others. These tourist attractions can include natural beauty, cultural heritage, or man-made attractions designed to enhance the tourist experience.
- b. Accessibility, in tourism encompasses all transportation infrastructure and facilities that facilitate travelers' journeys from their point of origin to their destination. Additionally, accessibility relates to the ease of travel between locations within a region. Tourist destinations must have adequate transportation access, such as airports, ports, and highways, to be easily accessible. Without good accessibility, the number of tourists visiting will decrease, and tourism development in the area may be hindered.
- c. Amenities, encompass various supporting facilities and infrastructure aimed at providing comfort and convenience for tourists during their journey. These facilities play a role in assisting tourists from the planning stage of their trip, during their stay at the tourist destination, until their return to their place of origin.
- d. Ancillary/Additional Services, is the presence of supporting institutions in the tourism sector contributes to increasing tourist interest in visiting a destination. These institutions can be government, private, or community organizations that play a role in the management, promotion, and improvement of service quality at tourist destinations.

2.5. Nona Helix

Turgarini (2021) introduced the concepts of Nona Helix as a model that emphasizes the importance of collaboration between various stakeholders in creating sustainable social and economic change. Adapted from triple helix theory, Nona Helix consist of nine elements or actors that interact and contribute to creating an ecosystem that supports the development of local food product based on entrepreneurial creativity, this concept emphasizes synergy between development, particularly in the gastronomy sector.

3. METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to understand tourists' interest in food heritage in the Yogyakarta Palace area, Ngasem traditional market, and Bale Raos Restaurant. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, with 27 informants representing nine elements of Nona Helix. Primary data for this study was sourced directly from fieldwork activities, ensuring a grounded understanding of respondents' views and behaviors. Meanwhile, secondary data was drawn from relevant literature, academic journals, technical reports, and theoretical references related to the field. The analytical process was conducted interactively, encompassing data

collection, reduction, presentation, and the drawing of conclusions, with each stage carefully designed to generate in-depth, contextually rich insights into the culinary tourism dynamics of the Yogyakarta Palace area. This systematic approach facilitated a comprehensive exploration of how food heritage influences the tourist experience and perceptions in these culturally significant locations.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. History of the Yogyakarta Palace

The city of Yogyakarta covers an area of 32.5 km. Of that total area, in 2022 the city of Yogyakarta consisted of 14 districts, 45 subdistricts, 616 neighborhood associations, and 2,532 neighborhood units. The city of Yogyakarta has eight popular icons (Setyaningrum, 2023). These eight landmarks include the Yogyakarta Palace, the White Monument, Malioboro Street, the Zero Kilometer Area, the Twin Banyan Trees, the Masangin Tradition, Wijilan Gudeg, and Bakpia Pathuk.

The Yogyakarta Palace is the official residence of the Ngayogyakarta Hadiningrat Sultanate, established after the signing of the Giyanti Agreement (Kumparan, 2024). Construction of the palace began on October 9, 1755, under the reign of Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I. The Sultan and his family officially occupied the palace complex on October 7, 1796 (Setyaningrum, 2023). Located in the center of Yogyakarta City, the palace not only functions as a royal palace but also as a symbol of culture and regional identity, making it one of the main icons of Yogyakarta City

4.2. The Role of the Yogyakarta Palace Area in Preserving Traditional Cuisine

Yogyakarta is well-known for its rich and varied food traditions, influenced by royal palace culture and divided according to social strata. Within the royal palace culture, Dutch cuisine has had a significant influence, and traditional snacks play an important role in cultural rituals. The royal palace serves as a center for preserving traditional cuisine, maintaining the authenticity of recipes passed down through generations, which are rich in philosophical meaning. Beyond the royal palace, centers for traditional cuisine have also developed in surrounding areas, such as Pasar Ngasem and Bale Raos, which introduce royal palace cuisine to the public while also serving as cultural education venues and supporting Yogyakarta's reputation as a gastronomic tourism destination. The process of making food and beverages that are in line with local cultural values needs to be developed into tourism products that can provide authentic experiences for tourists (Setiawati et al., 2021)

4.3. Tourist Interest in Visiting the Yogyakarta Palace Area

Tourists' interest in visiting the Keraton Yogyakarta area is influenced by their interests, preferences, and search for information. Their interest not only in the taste of traditional food, but also in the historical and cultural value it embodies. Tasting royal cuisine is considered a way to experience the history of aristocratic life firsthand. Tourists' preferences are greatly influenced by the cultural aspects, uniqueness, and historical value of the traditional dishes. Social media, influencer recommendations, and curiosity about culture are the triggers for them to choose destinations like Pasar Ngasem or Bale Raos. Information seeking also plays a significant role. Tourists now heavily rely on digital reviews, photos, and online content to learn more about palace cuisine before visiting. The types of royal food heritage in Yogyakarta include signature dishes that were once only enjoyed by the royal family. Bale Raos serves authentic dishes like Prawan Kenes and Beer Jawa, while Pasar Ngasem remains a hub for

traditional snacks like Apem, wedang, and Jenang Gempol, proving that royal food heritage coexists in the broader community.

4.4. Types of Traditional Food in the Yogyakarta Palace Area

The menu offered usually consists of various dishes favored by sultans, including appetizers and desserts (Nugroho Prasiyono & HD, 2020).

a. Beer Jawa



Figure 1. Beer Jawa

Source : Processed by Researcher (2025)

Beer Jawa is a traditional drink of the Yogyakarta Palace made from spices such as ginger, sappan, and cardamom. Despite the name “beer,” it is non-alcoholic, warming and rich in cultural significance. Served warm or cold in a typical manner, Beer Jawa offers a sweet, warm flavor and complex aroma of spices. The drink has been recognized as an Indonesian Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2022, becoming a gastronomic tourism attraction. Besides being delicious, Beer Jawa is also healthy because it is rich in antioxidants. The presentation and way of enjoying it is full of Javanese manners and philosophy.

Table 1. Beer Jawa Recipe

Ingredients	How to Make
Lemongrass 1 stem	• Bring water to a boil in a pot with ginger, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, lemongrass, • Cook for about 15 to 20 minutes until the spices smell fragrant. • Add sugar, stir to dissolve. • Reduce heat, continue to boil for about 10 minutes so that the spices are more absorbed. • Turn off the heat, then strain. • Serve warm or cold
Cloves 6 grains	
Ginger 1 segment	
Nutmeg 1 whole crushed	
Pepper ¼ tsp	
Mesoyi to taste	
Lime 1 lime	
Granulated sugar 500 g	
Water 1500 ml	

Source: Gardjito (2010)

The process of making Beer Jawa begins by boiling water with a mixture of spices such as ginger, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, lemongrass, and several other additional ingredients for

approximately 15 to 20 minutes until the aroma of the spices begins to be detected. After that, granulated sugar is added and stirred until completely dissolved. The mixture is then simmered over low heat for about 10 minutes to allow the spice essence to infuse fully. Once cooked, the solution is strained to separate the sediment and can be served warm or cold, according to preference.

b. Apem Beras

Apem Beras is a traditional snack of the Yogyakarta Palace made from rice flour, yeast, sugar, cassava tape, and coconut milk, with a soft texture and sweet and savory taste. Besides being delicious, apem symbolizes apology and cleansing, and is often present in traditional ceremonies. Served on a banana leaf-based tampah or takir and neatly arranged, apem reflects Javanese aesthetics and manners. Today, apem is in high demand among the younger generation and has become an attraction of Yogyakarta's gastronomic tourism.



Figure 2. Apem Beras Bu Wanti

Sources: Processed by Researcher (2025)

Table 2. Apem Beras Recipe

Ingredients	How to Make
2 eggs 250 gr sugar 1/2 tsp vanilla paste 350 rice flour 150 wheat flour 100 gr cassava tape Pinch of salt 550 coconut milk 1/2 tbsp instant yeast 50 gr melted margarine 1/2 grated young coconut (steam first 10 minutes)	• First, mix a little coconut milk with yeast and let it sit for about 10 minutes until bubbly. • Combine dry ingredients: in a container, mix rice flour, wheat flour, sugar, yeast, and salt. Mix well. • Gradually add the warm coconut milk while stirring until the dough is smooth and not lumpy. • Let the dough rest for 1-2 hours in a warm place until it rises (a sign of successful fermentation). • Prepare a small mold or non-stick flat pan. Brush with a little oil. • Pour enough batter into the mold (you can use a vegetable spoon). • Cook over low heat until the surface is hollow and the bottom is browned. Cover if you want the top to cook evenly. • Remove and serve, topped with steamed grated coconut and a pinch of salt.

Source: Processed by Researcher (2025)

The process of making this cake begins by mixing warm coconut milk and yeast until foamy. The dry ingredients are mixed, then the coconut milk is poured in little by little while stirring until smooth. The batter is left to rest for 1–2 hours until it rises. After that, the batter is cooked in a mold or flat pan greased with oil over low heat until it becomes porous and golden brown. The cake is served with a sprinkling of steamed grated young coconut that has been seasoned with a little salt.

c. Manuk Enom

Manuk Enom is a traditional snack from the Yogyakarta Palace made from green sticky rice tapai, shaped like a small bird as a symbol of purity. Served at formal banquets on young banana leaves, this snack offers a mild sweet and sour taste with the aroma of banana leaves. Enjoying it is a gastronomic experience that reflects the refinement of the palace's culture and philosophy.



Figure 3. Manuk Enom
Source: Processed by Researcher (2025)

Table 3 Manuk Enom Recipe

Ingredients	How to Make
250 grams of green sticky rice	• Beat the eggs and sugar until fluffy, then add the milk, salt, and vanilla. Mix well. • Place the sticky rice in a baking pan. Pour the milk and egg mixture over the sticky rice, spreading it evenly to cover the entire surface. • Place the pandan leaves on top. Steam until cooked. Serve with fried emping.
5 chicken eggs	
100 grams of granulated sugar	
500 ml of full cream milk	
Salt to taste	
Vanilla to taste	
2 pandan leaves	
Fried melinjo crackers to taste	

Source: (Gardjito, 2010)

The process of making manuk enom begins by beating eggs and sugar until fluffy, then adding milk, salt, and vanilla, and mixing well. Green sticky rice is placed in a baking pan, then poured over with the milk and egg mixture until evenly coated. Pandan leaves are placed on top, then the dish is steamed until cooked. The dish is completed with a side of fried emping.

d. Sendang Ayu

Sendang Ayu is made from beneficial spices such as ginger, lemongrass, and lime, with a sweet, warm taste and a fragrant aroma. Made traditionally, this drink has cultural value and is often served at important events to bring warmth and togetherness.



Figures 4. Wedang Sendang Ayu
Source: Processed by Researcher (2025)

Table 4. Sendang Ayu Recipe

Ingredients	How to make
Kolang-kaling (palm fruit)	• Prepare the sliced orange and ginger, and squeeze the orange. • Put them in a glass and pour hot water over them. • Wedang sendang Ayu is ready to enjoy.
2 slices of ginger, sliced	
2 stalks of lemongrass	
200 ml hot water	
1-2 tablespoons granulated sugar	
½ cup brown sugar	
3 cloves	
3 cardamom pods	
1 lime	
2 squeezed limes	

Source: (Agnes, 2022)

The process of making Wedang Sendang Ayu begins with preparing slices of palm fruit, ginger, and lemongrass. These ingredients are placed in a glass and then brewed with hot water. Add granulated sugar, brown sugar, cloves, cardamom, and lime juice to enrich the flavor. This drink is ready to be served and enjoyed while warm.

4.5. The Role of Nona Helix in Increasing the Interest of Gastronomic Tourists in Visiting the Keraton Yogyakarta Area

Tourist interest in visiting the Yogyakarta Palace area is not only influenced by cultural attractions, but also the collaboration of various parties within the Nona Helix framework, which involves nine stakeholders.

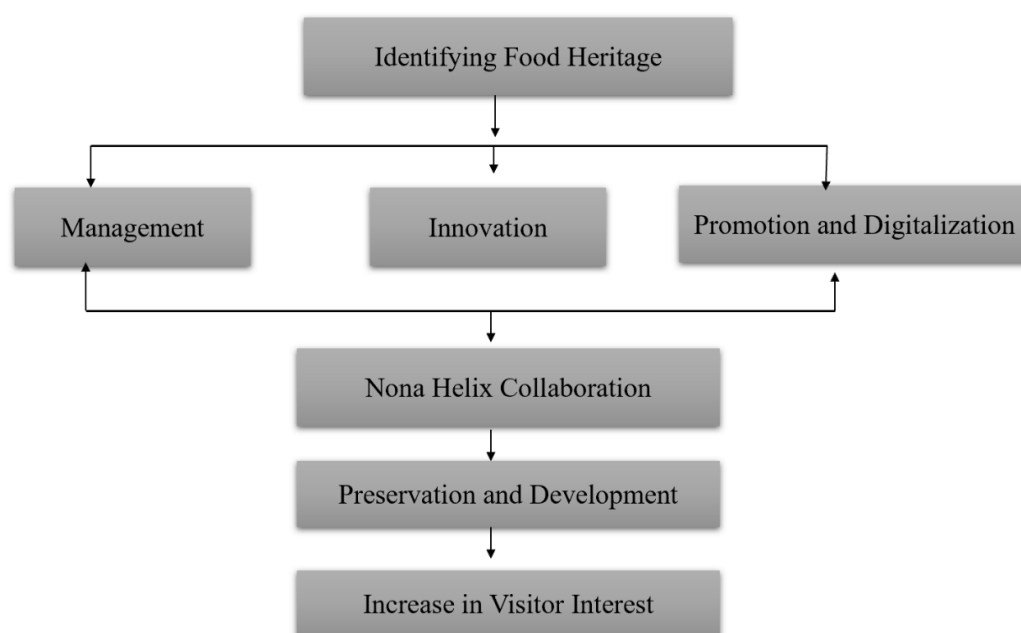


Figure 5. Patterns of preservation and development of Keraton food heritage

Source: Researcher (2025)

There are various roles of nine stakeholders to developing the potential for gastronomic cultural heritage in the Keraton area;

- a. Government, has important role to preserved food heritage through the recording of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Also fostering traditional food traders in terms of packaging, hygiene and marketing. Government must organizing food events to introduce Keraton food.
- b. Entrepreneurs, play a key role in preserving heirloom food traditions while appealing to modern tourists. They protect original recipes to maintain authentic flavors, yet adapt dish presentations to suit contemporary tastes. They also create comfortable, culturally inspired restaurant spaces that offer both authenticity and modern comfort.
- c. Tourists serve as both consumers and influential promoters, sharing their experiences through social media, online reviews, and word of mouth. Their interest goes beyond taste; they are equally captivated by the historical stories and food philosophy behind the Palace's heirloom dishes, seeking a deeper cultural connection in their gastronomic journeys.
- d. Media/Influencers Digital platforms are actively used to promote heritage food, though current content mostly highlights public eateries. A coordinated strategy is needed to ensure the Palace's heirloom cuisine gains broader visibility in digital media, preserving its cultural significance while reaching a wider audience.
- e. Experts/Academics, play a vital role in preserving Keraton food heritage through research, publications, and education focused on its history, philosophy, and cultural values. They also contribute by offering policy recommendations and developing educational materials to ensure that gastronomic tourism grows in a way that remains rooted in cultural authenticity.
- f. Observer actively educate the public about the Palace's food history and philosophy through writing and social media. They also serve as guides, introducing traditional cuisine as a unique tourist attraction and helping visitors connect more deeply with cultural heritage.
- g. NGO play an important role in preserving traditional cuisine by organizing training,

education, and advocacy efforts. They also help reintroduce traditional dishes, ensuring their sustainability and enhancing their economic value for local communities.

- h. Workers play a vital role in preserving the authenticity of palace cuisine by upholding the integrity of traditional recipes, ensuring consistent taste quality, maintaining hygiene standards, and adhering to traditional serving methods. Furthermore, they serve as direct sources of information for tourists, conveying the cultural and historical significance embedded in each dish.
- i. Suppliers play a crucial role in sustaining traditional palace cuisine by providing high-quality traditional ingredients, including various spices, to preserve authentic flavors. They also share knowledge about ingredient usage, ensuring that the cuisine remains true to its heritage while supporting gastronomic tourism.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on research findings, tourist interest in visiting the Yogyakarta Palace area is high due to the desire to experience authentic food delights rich in historical, cultural, and philosophical value. Traditional foods such as Beer Jawa, apem, and sendang ayu are highly appealing due to their unique flavors and symbolic meanings.

The gastronomy tourism appeal of this area is supported by heritage gastronomy attractions, accessibility, amenities such as Bale Raos and Pasar Ngasem, and educational services like tour guides. All these elements reinforce the Keraton area as a cultural-based gastronomy tourism destination.

The Nona Helix approach demonstrates that multi-stakeholder collaboration—including government, businesses, academics, and digital technology—plays a crucial role in the preservation and development of traditional cuisine. Challenges such as digital promotion and tourist education still need to be addressed strategically. Thus, the food heritage of the Yogyakarta Palace has great potential as a sustainable gastronomic tourist attraction and as part of the preservation of the nation's cultural heritage.

The preservation and development of the food heritage of the Yogyakarta Palace began with the identification of food types and their cultural values, followed by management and innovation that maintained the authenticity of the recipes while packaging them in a more appealing way. Digital promotion was used to expand the reach, with the support of Nona Helix. All of these efforts aimed to increase tourist interest in authentic gastronomy experiences in the Palace area.

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