

## **Gastronomic Exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken in the Local Culinary Culture of Yogyakarta**

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**Received:** 23 July 2024

**Accepted:** 02 December 2024

**Published:** 30 December 2024

### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the gastronomy of Kalasan fried chicken at the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan, Tirtomartani Village, Kalasan Subdistrict, Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The research investigates the industrial center's profile, serving as a platform for Kalasan fried chicken producers, and explores the gastronomy of Kalasan fried chicken through its history, cultural significance, geographical context, processing techniques, product variations, and marketing strategies. Employing a qualitative methodology with an ethnographic approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation from three informants: the head of the association and two Kalasan fried chicken producers. Triangulation was used to ensure data validity. The findings reveal that the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center, established in 2016, comprises 40 active members. The historical analysis traces the dish's origins to Mbok Berek's business, with its cultural significance primarily as a popular dish rather than a ceremonial one. The geographical context includes three poultry slaughterhouses (RPAs) supporting efficient production. Traditional processing techniques maintain authenticity, while product variations cater to consumer preferences. Producers leverage technological advancements for marketing and sales expansion. The study concludes that the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center not only promotes a rich culinary heritage but also fosters growth within the culinary industry in Yogyakarta.

**Keywords:** Culinary, gastronomy, industrial center, Kalasan fried chicken, Yogyakarta

### **INTRODUCTION**

Food holds a broad and significant meaning and is essential for living beings. Food systems and cultures emerge from the interaction of spatial aspects and food availability, distribution, access, and consumption patterns (Wachyuni, 2023). The expressions "we are what we eat" and "we are what we don't eat" imply that food can form part of our identity. It can also be understood that food serves as an identity in culture or even more broadly as a national identity. According to UNESCO data (2016), the reading interest of the Indonesian population is very low, only 0.001%. This means that out of 1,000 Indonesians, only 1 person regularly reads. Indonesia ranks 60th out of 61 countries in terms of reading interest. Ambarwati (2019) argues that low food literacy can lead to a nation's identity crisis. In Indonesia, the general literacy level is still low, including in the food sector, which could result in Indonesia losing its culinary identity.

Indonesia is a vast archipelago with diverse cultures in each region. The Special Region of Yogyakarta is a province in Indonesia known for its rich culture and unique culinary variety. The people of Yogyakarta

maintain their continuously evolving traditions and culture, particularly culinary culture (Gardjito et al., 2017). This is evidenced by the many traditional foods that retain their authenticity despite numerous innovations and developments in the culinary field. There is a need for further documentation of Yogyakarta's culinary heritage to explain its connection to the culture of the people from past to present (Gardjito et al., 2017).

Kalasan Fried Chicken is a distinctive dish made from broiler chicken, red chicken, or free-range chicken, fried and served with crispy bits. The hallmark of the fried chicken produced by the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center is the crispy bits made from tapioca flour, with the fried chicken presented in an open form. There are many producers in the Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan, most of whom have inherited the business from their grandparents (Nursubiyantoro, 2019). The Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center is not widely known, and people are unaware of the origins of Kalasan Fried Chicken. Research by Mustikasari et al. (2020) indicates that the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center Group faces challenges in marketing knowledge, attractive packaging, and the limited role of social media in sales and product introduction.

This issue highlights the need for a comprehensive exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken gastronomy. A general solution offered is to document and analyze Kalasan Fried Chicken from various aspects, including history, culture, geographical landscape, processing and presentation techniques, product variations, and marketing strategies. This research is expected to provide a deeper understanding of Kalasan Fried Chicken and its role in Yogyakarta's culinary culture.

Food and food-related activities encompass many aspects, such as types of food, food origins, food preparation, cooking techniques, and food presentation (Wachyuni, 2023). These important aspects are often not understood by the public, who only recognize Kalasan Fried Chicken organoleptically. However, the origins of Kalasan Fried Chicken can serve as important history and identity. The aspects described above can be studied through a discipline known as gastronomy.

Gastronomy is the study of food and its culture in the context of delicious dining (Winarno, 2017). This definition explains that gastronomy plays an important role in establishing Kalasan Fried Chicken as a cultural identity. The culture and traditional foods of Indonesia are treasures that must be preserved. Gastronomic studies generally encompass four main elements: history, culture, geographical landscape, and cooking methods (Ketaren, 2017). Besides representing culture, gastronomy can be of national interest because it can define cultural identity and become a tourist attraction. By 2030, the Ministry of Tourism aims for 35% of international tourists to visit Indonesia for gastronomic tourism.

Exploration is the activity of seeking information about a situation to reveal new knowledge. Exploration is highly beneficial if its results are well-documented. Many of Indonesia's culinary riches and diversity have not been polished and officially recorded (Ketaren, 2021). This needs to be addressed in research discussing the gastronomic exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken so that consumers and the public fully understand it. Based on this description, research on the "Gastronomic Exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken in the Local Culinary Culture of the DIY Province" is important to document Indonesia's traditional foods to prevent them from being lost.

Gastronomic exploration of chicken dishes, as studied in various research, includes aspects of culinary tradition, culinary tourism development, and cultural influences in processing and presentation (Putri et al., 2017; Rahimah et al., 2022; Shelinna, 2023). Chicken dishes are viewed not only as food ingredients but also as symbols of cultural richness and culinary tradition. These studies show the great potential of chicken dishes to attract tourists and promote local culture, as well as their contribution to economic growth.

Moreover, gastronomic exploration also considers aspects of innovation and health. Research shows good acceptance of roasted chicken recipes with healthy ingredients for consumers at risk of diabetes

(Hollis-Hansen, 2023). Innovations in presentation, utilizing technology and computational methods, can enhance the appeal of chicken dishes in the global market (Shukla & Ailawadi, 2019; Ahn et al., 2011). Using ingredients with harmonious flavor compounds can create a more satisfying culinary experience.

Thus, a comprehensive gastronomic approach that integrates aspects of history, culture, geography, processing techniques, innovation, and marketing is the right solution to explore Kalasan Fried Chicken and its role in Yogyakarta's culinary culture.

The research gap is evident from the lack of comprehensive documentation on the history, culture, and processing techniques of Kalasan Fried Chicken. Previous studies have focused more on marketing aspects and the challenges faced by industrial centers (Mustikasari et al., 2020) without delving deeper into the broader gastronomic aspects. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive gastronomic exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study is to understand the profile of the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan and to conduct a gastronomic exploration of Kalasan Fried Chicken by examining aspects such as history, culture, geographical landscape, processing and presentation techniques, product variations, and marketing. The novelty of this research lies in the comprehensive gastronomic approach to Kalasan Fried Chicken, which has not been done before. This research is expected to contribute to the preservation and development of Yogyakarta's traditional culinary heritage.

The scope of this research includes the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan, Yogyakarta. The analysis will focus on the Kalasan Fried Chicken produced by this industrial center. Data will be collected through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The research findings are expected to provide valuable information for product development, marketing, and the preservation of Kalasan Fried Chicken as a cultural culinary heritage of Yogyakarta.

## **METHOD**

The study employed a qualitative methodology with an ethnographic approach (Creswell, 2014). Data collection involved observations of the production process, structured interviews with three informants (one head of the association and two producers), and documentation of relevant materials. The informants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques (Mulyatiningsih, 2023). Data analysis utilized triangulation to ensure validity, comparing information from interviews, observations, and documents (Mulyatiningsih, 2023). No specific equations were used to obtain data, as the study focused on qualitative aspects of the production process.

The parameters assessed included the profile of the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center, the historical and cultural aspects of the dish, the geographical landscape influencing production, the processing techniques employed, product variations, and marketing strategies. The study explored these parameters through direct observation of the production process, interviews with key informants, and analysis of relevant documents. The focus was on understanding the qualitative aspects of the Kalasan Fried Chicken production and its cultural context (Ketaren, 2017).

Data collection techniques are a necessary process in research and are an important part. The data collection techniques used in this study include three methods: observation, interviews, and documentation (Sahir, 2021). Qualitative data analysis involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. This is necessary to ensure that qualitative research does not become too broad (Sahir, 2021).

The technique used for data validity is triangulation. Triangulation involves collecting data from different sources to verify the truth and uncover deeper information. If the information obtained from interviews, observations, documents, and interviews with other data sources is consistent, then the information is considered accurate and reliable (Mulyatiningsih, 2023).

## **FINDINGS**

### **Profile of the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center**

Dusun Bendan is a hamlet located in Tirtomartani Village, Kalasan Subdistrict. According to the official website of Tirtomartani Village, Dusun Bendan consists of 10 RT (neighborhood units) and 437 households, with a total of 1,261 residents living in Dusun Bendan. The hamlet has potential in the culinary field as well as tourist attractions, including Candisari Temple, Sendang Ayu, and An-Nurumi Mosque, which is known for its unique and colorful architecture.

The Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center is located at Jl. Raya Solo-Jogja km 14, Dusun Bendan, Tirtomartani Village, Kalasan Subdistrict, Sleman Regency, D.I. Yogyakarta. The association is chaired by Mr. Ibnu Nugroho and is named the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center Maju Makmur Association. Currently, the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center has 40 active members who produce fried chicken. It is known that 35 Kalasan fried chicken owners are women, while the remaining 5 are men. There are no geographical restrictions for association members in the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center.

The Maju Makmur Association of the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center is non-coercive and open to Kalasan fried chicken producers. The association does not have specific regulations such as price setting, product variation, or marketing, allowing members to freely determine their prices, product variations, and market segmentation. The election system for the chairman is also not formally and definitively regulated.

The association was formed together in 2011 and was officially recognized by the Regent of Sleman as the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in 2016. Government recognition has impacted the association, as it allows the government to provide assistance and facilities channeled through the association to ensure that aid and facilities are well-distributed to Kalasan fried chicken producers within the association.

Most of the association's current members have inherited the business from their parents, indicating that Kalasan fried chicken has been around for a long time and holds many stories. The recipe passed down through generations is preserved and maintained for its authenticity to this day. Current technological developments have not significantly affected the production process of Kalasan fried chicken at the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center. Although recipes can be modified to suit tastes, many still retain the traditional recipes passed down through generations.

### **Gastronomy of Kalasan Fried Chicken**

Historically, Kalasan fried chicken was a dish created by Nini Ronodikromo, who was called Mbok Berek by the locals because she had a child who often cried, or "berek-berek" in Javanese. She attempted to create a fried chicken recipe and started selling it, which became well-known and popular, leading her to employ residents of Dusun Bendan to help sell it. Later, Mbok Berek's employees, including Mrs. Suharti, began selling their own fried chicken, leading to success that continues to this day. It was named Kalasan fried chicken because it originated in Dusun Bendan, Kalasan. Today, Dusun Bendan has been recognized as the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center, consisting of more than 40 fried chicken producers.

Culturally, Kalasan fried chicken does not have cultural elements in its form or preparation. It is a dish made and intended as a daily side dish without symbolic meaning in traditional ceremonies or local

traditions. Kalasan fried chicken entrepreneurs in the Dusun Bendan Industrial Center can still accept orders for ayam ingkung (whole chicken) for traditional ceremonies. The production process, from cutting to serving the chicken, still follows the same flow and methods to maintain authenticity. This long-standing process continues to be practiced today as a cultural habit.

Geographically, Kalasan Fried Chicken is a center that sells exclusively Kalasan fried chicken and its accompaniments, such as crispy bits and sambal (chili sauce). No other standout products exist besides Kalasan fried chicken. The industrial center's location is equipped with facilities necessary for producers to produce Kalasan fried chicken, such as a chicken slaughterhouse (RPA) and shops selling various spices and vegetables. The center focuses on selling cooked Kalasan fried chicken, so there are no chicken farms in Dusun Bendan. There is no division of trade areas, as all producers have their market segmentation, allowing them to freely sell their products. There are also newcomers who sell, but they have a history of being residents of Dusun Bendan or have relatives who are Kalasan fried chicken entrepreneurs in Dusun Bendan.

Regarding processing techniques, obtaining raw materials for making Kalasan fried chicken, sambal, and crispy bits poses no challenges, as everything is easily accessible. The processing of Kalasan fried chicken is still done traditionally, preserving its authentic taste. There are slight differences in processing techniques for each type of chicken: broiler chickens are cooked using gas stoves, while laying hens and free-range chickens are cooked using firewood due to differences in chicken texture. Packaging now uses cardboard with complete and attractive labels. Table 1-Table 4 describes the ingredients and steps for making Kalasan fried chicken, sambal, and crispy bits. Figure 1 shows the result of Kalasan Fried Chicken.

**Table 1.** Ingredients for Kalasan Fried Chicken & Crispy Bits

No.	Ingredient
Kalasan Fried Chicken	Salt, garlic, flavor enhancer
Crispy Bits	Chicken broth, eggs

**Table 2.** Ingredients for Chili Sauce

Producent	Ingredients
AG Mbak Yanti/Ita	Red chili, tomato, a bit of shrimp paste, shallots, garlic
AG Pandoyo-Endah	Red/green chili, shallots, garlic
AG Ibu Sri Heryani	Red chili, a bit of tomato, shrimp paste, shallots, garlic

**Table 3.** Steps for Making Kalasan Fried Chicken

No.	Steps
1	Wash and clean the broiler chicken after receiving it from the supplier.
2	Arrange the cleaned chicken, with giblets such as gizzards and feet placed at the bottom.
3	After the feet and giblets, stack the chicken pieces on top.
4	Prepare the marinade seasoning (garlic, salt, flavor enhancer).
5	Add the ground seasoning into the pot with the arranged chicken.
6	Add a bit of chicken broth to the marinade mixture.
7	Add clean water until the chicken is completely submerged.
8	Cover the pot with a weight on top, then boil for 30 minutes, let it sit, and drain.
9	Before frying, coat the chicken with a thin layer of flour batter to ensure it is beautifully colored and crispy.*
10	Fry until cooked and golden brown.
11	Drain the chicken to separate the oil.
12	The chicken is ready to be served.



Table 4. Steps for Making Crispy Bits

No	Step
1	Mix all the ingredients into the batter bowl.
2	Stir the batter until well combined.
3	Heat the oil until very hot.
4	Before frying, keep stirring the batter to ensure the flour is mixed and doesn't settle.
5	When the oil is very hot, pour the batter little by little.
6	When the crispy bits turn golden brown, remove and drain.



Figure 1. Shape of Kalasan Fried Chicken

### Product Variations

The product variations available from Kalasan fried chicken producers at the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center are quite similar to one another. Generally, the main product is fried chicken with options for broiler, laying, and free-range chickens. Besides different chicken types, there are several variations in chicken dishes, including grilled, *bacem* (sweet soy sauce), sweet fried, *ingkung areh* (whole chicken), etc. However, only a small number of producers offer these products daily. Most producers only provide Kalasan fried chicken as a staple product, but they can still accept orders for other types of chicken dishes, provided that consumers place their orders in advance (not available daily).

The prices offered by each producer vary, as each has its market segmentation. The general price range is between Rp80,000 and Rp110,000, depending on the type of chicken chosen. The majority of Kalasan fried chicken producers offer whole chicken orders, customized chicken, and boxed rice meals.

## Marketing

Kalasan fried chicken producers have their respective markets for selling their products. Some producers already have stalls in markets across DIY and Central Java because, before the advent of online sales applications, they sold their products in the DIY-JATENG market area.

Currently, the development of communication technology has facilitated interactions between producers and consumers. Online sales applications provide benefits and convenience in selling and purchasing culinary products. Additionally, social media offers ease for producers in promoting their products, making them more accessible to a wider range of consumers.

## FINDINGS

This study reveals the profile of the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan, which consists of 40 active members and is led by Mr. Ibnu Nugroho. Unlike Nursubiyantoro's (2019) findings, which focused on the development of oil-draining technology, this study provides a more comprehensive overview of this industrial center, including social, economic, and cultural aspects. Nursubiyantoro's (2019) research only highlighted production aspects, while this study covers broader gastronomic aspects, including history, culture, geographical landscape, processing techniques, product variations, and marketing. The strength of this research lies in the thorough exploration of the gastronomic aspects of Kalasan Fried Chicken, which has not been deeply discussed in previous literature, as highlighted by Gardjito et al. (2017), who only emphasized the need for documentation of Yogyakarta's culinary heritage.

Mustikasari et al.'s (2020) research discussed marketing and packaging strategies, but this study provides a more detailed analysis of the marketing practices carried out by producers, including the use of social media and online platforms. Although Hasnah et al. (2021) and Riyadi et al. (2023) discussed Yogyakarta's culinary gastronomy, this study focuses more specifically on Kalasan Fried Chicken, providing a deeper understanding of the history, culture, and production practices of this local culinary dish. This study also significantly contributes to the understanding of Indonesian gastronomy, as discussed by Ketaren (2017, 2021), by emphasizing the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Kalasan Fried Chicken in the context of Yogyakarta's local culture. Unlike previous studies that may have focused on one or two aspects, this research integrates various aspects to provide a holistic view of Kalasan Fried Chicken.

The findings of this study have significant scientific and practical implications. Scientifically, this research enriches the body of knowledge on Indonesian gastronomy, particularly Yogyakarta's culinary heritage. This study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Kalasan Fried Chicken, not only as a culinary product but also as an integral part of the culture and history of Dusun Bendan. The findings can serve as a reference for future research that aims to delve deeper into specific aspects of Kalasan Fried Chicken, such as the economic analysis of the industrial center or studies on the impact of technology on the preservation of traditional culinary practices. This research also provides empirical evidence on the importance of documenting traditional culinary practices, as suggested by Umar et al. (2017) and Gardjito et al. (2017), to prevent the loss of Indonesia's culinary heritage.

Practically, the findings of this study can be utilized by various parties. For Kalasan Fried Chicken producers, this research can offer insights into effective and efficient marketing strategies, including the use of social media and online platforms. This study can also help producers improve product quality and packaging while maintaining the authenticity of traditional flavors and processing techniques. For local governments, this research can serve as a basis for formulating policies to support the development of culinary industrial centers and the preservation of local culinary heritage. This study can also be used as promotional material for Yogyakarta's culinary tourism, particularly Kalasan Fried Chicken, to attract both domestic and international tourists. For the general public, this research can enhance appreciation for

Indonesia's culinary richness and the importance of preserving culinary heritage. By understanding the history, culture, and production process of Kalasan Fried Chicken, the public can better appreciate the values contained within and support the sustainability of this traditional culinary business. In conclusion, this study provides valuable contributions both scientifically and practically, supporting the preservation of Indonesia's culinary heritage and local economic development.

## CONCLUSION

This study explored the gastronomy of Kalasan fried chicken within the local culinary culture of Yogyakarta's DIY Province. The research revealed that the Kalasan Fried Chicken Industrial Center in Dusun Bendan, established in 2011 and officially recognized in 2016, serves as a collaborative hub for 40 active producers. While lacking formal regulations, the association facilitates government training and support, empowering producers to independently determine pricing, marketing strategies, and menu variations. The historical analysis traced the dish's origins to Mbok Berek, whose recipe and methods have been passed down through generations. While not intrinsically linked to traditional ceremonies, Kalasan fried chicken holds a significant place in local cuisine. The study also highlighted the evolution of production methods, from traditional techniques to the incorporation of modern technologies like freezers and blenders, while maintaining the dish's authenticity. Finally, the research demonstrated the diverse marketing strategies employed by producers, ranging from traditional market stalls to online platforms, showcasing the adaptability of this culinary tradition in the face of technological advancements. Future research could focus on formalizing the association's structure and exploring further innovations while preserving the authenticity of this cherished culinary heritage.

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