



## Synergy of SWOT Analysis and Tour Guide Optimization in Developing the Culinary Tourism Potential of Kulon Progo

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### ABSTRACT

The development of culinary tourism in Kulon Progo Regency, Special Region of Yogyakarta, is a strategic step to increase local tourism potential and strengthen the regional economy. This article aims to identify and develop the potential of culinary tourism in Kulon Progo through the synergy of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and tour guide optimization. The method used is qualitative descriptive, with a focus on gastronomy, the role of tour guides, and SWOT analysis to evaluate strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the culinary industry in this area. The research involves a literature review and data collection related to tour guides, culinary business actors, and tourists. The results of the SWOT analysis show that the strength of Kulon Progo lies in the rich local culinary and cultural diversity, while the weaknesses faced include a lack of promotion and infrastructure support. Great opportunities arise from the ever-growing trend of gastronomic tourism, while the threat comes from competition with other culinary destinations. Optimization of tour guides through training of communication skills and in-depth knowledge of local cuisine was identified as a strategic step to improve the traveler experience. In addition, improving the quality of tour guide services can increase tourist satisfaction and loyalty. This article recommends the development of a tour guide training program that is integrated with culinary business actors. This article also recommends collaboration and mutually beneficial contributions between all parties to the planning and development of sustainable tourism in the area. The synergy between SWOT analysis and tour guide optimization is expected to encourage the growth of the culinary tourism industry in Kulon Progo, attract more visitors, and improve the welfare of the local community.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is a strategic sector that plays a vital role in driving economic growth, both at the global, national, and regional levels [1][2]. The tourism paradigm in Indonesia has been influenced by changes at the global level and has undergone significant transformation [3]. In the past, tourism development was more focused on certain regions, whereas current global market trends tend to highlight the importance of local resources as tourist destination attractions. The tourism sector is now considered one of the most promising economic pillars in the world. With its rapid

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development, tourism has become a highly potential industry and is capable of making a significant contribution to the economic growth of a country and a region [3].

Kulon Progo Regency, located in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, has a variety of untapped tourism potential, one of which is culinary tourism. Culinary tourism development not only serves as a tourist attraction but also plays a crucial role in strengthening the local economy through community empowerment and cultural preservation. Unique local culinary delights, such as geblek and Menoreh coffee, serve as cultural identities that attract tourists from various regions.

Culinary tourism development in Kulon Progo faces several challenges, including a lack of supporting infrastructure and limited promotion [4]. To address these challenges, a structured and targeted development strategy is required. One approach is a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, which helps identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing culinary tourism development in the region. Furthermore, the role of culinary tour guides is crucial in creating a quality tourism experience.

Tour guides with strong communication skills, in-depth knowledge of local cuisine, and storytelling skills can add value to the tourist experience. By synergizing the SWOT analysis and optimizing the role of tour guides, it is hoped that the culinary tourism potential in Kulon Progo can be developed sustainably and positively impact local tourism development. Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential for culinary tourism development in Kulon Progo Regency through a SWOT analysis and optimizing the role of tour guides in enriching the tourist experience.

## **2. Method**

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method. Creswell explains that this method is used to investigate objects in their natural context [5]. This method was chosen to gain a deep understanding of the dynamics and factors influencing the development of culinary tourism in the area. The purpose of this study is to identify the potential for culinary and shopping tourism, as well as to formulate a strategy for developing the culinary tourism sector in Kulon Progo. The research will take place in Kulon Progo, with respondents consisting of stakeholders, including tourists, government officials, and culinary and shopping business actors. Indicators to be evaluated in this study include visitor potential, culinary products, location, and supporting resources. Qualitative research involves several important stages [6]. This process begins with formulating the research problem, followed by a literature review of previous studies. Next, the researcher determines the location that will be the object of research, then conducts preliminary research to collect initial data from the object of study. After that, the researcher must decide on a data collection method, which can be done through interviews, analysis of published media, and observation of discussions. The collected data is then analyzed, and the results of the analysis are interpreted in the form of a descriptive narrative, which can be supplemented with tables and figures. In this study, the researcher describes several stages, namely:

2.1. Preparation Stage, in which the researcher defines the research problem and objectives, develops interview questions, obtains permits from the research subjects, and conducts literature review.

2.2. Implementation Stage, in which interviews are conducted with gastronomy and culinary tourism experts, tourists, and local culinary business owners to collect primary data. Secondary data is collected from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the official website of the Kulon Progo Regency Tourism Office. This research involves a review of relevant literature, including literature

on tourism development, gastronomy, and previous studies related to tour guides and the culinary industry.

2.3. Data Processing Stage, which includes analyzing observation and interview results, compiling a SWOT matrix, drawing conclusions regarding development strategies, and presenting the analysis results in narrative form.

Data collection from tour guides was conducted to understand their role in promoting local culinary delights and the challenges they face. Culinary entrepreneurs provided data to identify strengths and weaknesses in culinary business management. Tourists provided data on their experiences and expectations related to culinary tourism. Based on the SWOT analysis, researchers formulated recommendations for a tour guide training program in communication skills and knowledge of local culinary delights. This program is designed to enhance the tourist experience and build mutually beneficial collaborations between guides and culinary entrepreneurs.

The tourism sector is a key pillar for a country because it can drive economic growth both directly and indirectly [7]. Directly, this sector contributes to state revenue through foreign exchange earnings. Meanwhile, indirectly, tourism has a positive ripple effect on the economy by influencing other sectors. Furthermore, the tourism sector plays a role in creating jobs, providing business opportunities, increasing state revenue, and encouraging equitable development. According to Law Number 10 of 2009, tourism is defined as a variety of tourism activities supported by facilities and services provided by the community, entrepreneurs, and the government and local governments.

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), tourism is a collection of activities and journeys undertaken by individuals at their own will, with various motivations and objectives. WTTC, in conjunction with its Insights report, compiled a report on the economic and employment impact of the Travel & Tourism sector in 185 countries and 28 territories worldwide [8]. These reports, produced in collaboration with Oxford Economics, serve as a crucial tool for providing government agencies and the private sector with factual information about the significant contribution Travel & Tourism makes to the economy. This information is expected to support policy-making and investment decisions that favor this sector. In 2019, before the pandemic, the Travel & Tourism sector accounted for 10.5% of global employment, equivalent to 334 million jobs, and contributed 10.4% to global gross domestic product (GDP), reaching US\$10.3 trillion. Spending by international visitors that year reached US\$1.91 trillion.

According to WTTC's latest annual research, in 2023, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 9.1% to global GDP, a 23.2% increase compared to the previous year, and only 4.1% below the 2019 figure. There were 27 million new jobs created in 2023, representing a 9.1% increase compared to 2022, although still 1.4% below the number of jobs created in 2019. Furthermore, spending by domestic visitors increased 18.1% in 2023, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, while spending by international visitors rose 33.1%, although remaining 14.4% below the total spending in 2019. World data from WTTC provides a similar global picture for Indonesia, including its various districts within each province.

In August 2024, 10,136 international tourists visited the Special Region of Yogyakarta [9]. From January to August 2024, the number of domestic tourist trips to this area reached 25,435,787. The room occupancy rate (TPK) for star-rated hotels in August 2024 reached 51.94 percent, while for non-star-rated hotels it was 23.63 percent. The average length of stay for guests in star-rated hotels during that month was 1.54 nights, while the average length of stay for non-star-rated hotels was 1.18 nights.

As a tourist destination, Kulon Progo Regency has diverse potential, both in terms of natural and man-made attractions. Kulon Progo is a regency in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, known as a city of students, gudeg (traditional Indonesian food), and tourism. The presence of Yogyakarta

International Airport (YIA) in this region makes the tourism sector even more vital and requires government attention. Given this potential, it is crucial for the government to develop the tourism sector to increase regional revenue through foreign exchange, empower the local economy through tourist consumption, and create jobs through the development of tourist attractions and supporting facilities.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### **3.1. Culinary Tourism Potential in Kulon Progo Regency**

Kulon Progo Regency is located in the western part of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province. To the northwest are the Menoreh Hills, while to the south are lowlands that stretch down to the coast, bordering the Indian Ocean. The presence of these mountains and beaches creates a beautiful and pristine natural environment, making it a unique attraction for visitors and opening up opportunities for tourism development. Support from Yogyakarta International Airport (YIA) further enhances the region's tourism potential. Kulon Progo Regency boasts a variety of tourist attractions (ODTW), including beaches, caves, pilgrimage sites, and museums.

According to Law Number 10 of 2009, a tourist attraction (ODTW) is anything with uniqueness, beauty, and value, including the diversity of natural resources, culture, and human works of art that attract tourists. Kulon Progo offers a variety of ODTWs. According to data from the Tourism Office, there were 66 ODTWs in 2019, up from 65 in 2018, representing a 1.54 percent increase. The existence of these tourist attractions not only contributes to regional income, but also encourages the economic growth of the local community, especially in the accommodation and culinary services sectors [7]. Accommodation services play an important role in providing accommodation for tourists, which in turn contributes to the progress of the local economy.

Visitors to tourist attractions are often referred to as tourists. There are two categories of tourists: domestic and international. Domestic tourists refer to those from within the country, while international tourists refer to visitors from abroad. Based on data from the Statistics Indonesia (BPS) and the Tourism Office, the number of tourists in Kulon Progo Regency in 2019 reached 2,097,972 people [10][7]. The majority of these tourists were domestic, with only a small portion coming from abroad. Approximately 98 percent of total visitors were domestic tourists, while the remaining 2 percent were international tourists.

In terms of tourism type, the most visited tourist attractions in Kulon Progo Regency during 2019 were marine tourism and nature tourism [10]. Approximately 33.6 percent of tourists chose marine tourism, while 31.9 percent visited nature tourism. Both types of attractions are highly attractive to tourists because they offer beautiful natural scenery. Marine tourism, in particular, requires greater government attention. Despite its limited number of attractions, this sector attracts the largest number of visitors compared to other types of tourist attractions.

The increase in visitor numbers has led to an increase in supporting facilities and a variety of activities available to tourists at these destinations. Previous research has shown that Indonesia's stable economic growth, coupled with advances in infrastructure development, have transformed people's lifestyles [11]. The availability of recreational facilities, including tourism, is supported by easy access to various destinations. Culinary delights are now recognized as a key asset of a tourist destination [2]. The unique food and snacks offered are a draw for tourists, and sampling local cuisine has become a highly coveted experience.

Several cities in Indonesia are famous for their culinary delights, so that every weekend or during holidays, these cities are crowded with tourists who want to enjoy their typical foods[3]. The culinary and shopping sectors contribute significantly to tourism investment, where around 60%

comes from HORECA WOW, which includes business actors in the culinary and shopping sectors [3]. The development of culinary tourism has great potential, and currently, exploring a place's culinary delights has become a crucial element in tourist itineraries. This is more popular than simply visiting well-known landmarks or shopping. Culinary exploration is now a major focus of tourism, which shows that many tourists choose destinations based on their culinary appeal [12]. Those who visit culinary tourism destinations are usually interested in trying the local specialties, feeling that their travel experience would not be complete without sampling the local cuisine on offer. This also supports the development of culinary tourism there and initiated a SWOT analysis specifically for culinary tourism in Kulon Progo Regency.

### 3.2. SWOT Analysis of Culinary Tourism in Kulon Progo Regency

According to the UNWTO definition, culinary tourism is a travel experience focused on gastronomy, intended for recreation or entertainment. It includes visits to food producers, both primary and secondary, as well as participation in festivals, exhibitions, farmers' markets, cooking shows, and demonstrations [3]. In addition, culinary tourism also involves tasting quality food products and various other food-related tourism activities. Based on the results of data collection, several important items were obtained in the culinary tourism development strategy in Kulon Progo Regency. The important items for each criterion in the SWOT analysis can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. SWOT Analysis of Culinary Tourism in Kulon Progo Regency

No.	Kriteria	Keterangan
1	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A rich and unique diversity of local cuisine.</li> <li>✓ A culture that supports authentic travel experiences.</li> <li>✓ The presence of other tourist attractions that can attract visitors.</li> </ul>
2	Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Lack of promotion and marketing of culinary tourism.</li> <li>✓ Inadequate infrastructure to support tourism.</li> <li>✓ Limited tour guide skills.</li> </ul>
3	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The growing trend of gastronomic tourism among tourists.</li> <li>✓ Opportunities for collaboration with culinary businesses for joint promotional programs.</li> </ul>
4	Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Government support for tourism development</li> <li>✓ Competition with other, more well-known culinary tourism destinations.</li> <li>✓ Economic instability that can impact tourist spending.</li> <li>✓ Rapidly changing tourist tastes.</li> </ul>

The Strengths analysis focuses on several strengths of the Kulon Progo region. Kulon Progo Regency boasts a rich and unique variety of local culinary delights. Each sub-district (kapewon) in the regency offers a unique culinary attraction for tourists. There are nine sub-districts: Temon, Galur, Kokap, Girimulyo, Samigaluh, Kalibawang, Panjatan, Sentolo, and Lendah. The strong local culture within each sub-district also contributes to an authentic and engaging tourism experience. Some offer heritage food preparation and culinary business development. This offers significant potential for further exploration, allowing for not only flavor but also cultural exploration. Entrepreneurs who offer products with a refined hospitality style also contribute to Kulon Progo's culinary tourism. Furthermore, the presence of other nearby tourist attractions can increase visitor numbers.

Based on 2019 data from the Kulon Progo Tourism Office, various types of tourist attractions (ODTW) and their supporting facilities are listed in Table 2. This data is constantly evolving and growing.

Table 2. Tourist Attraction Objects (ODTW) and Supporting Facilities in Kulon Progo

No.	Jenis Tempat	Jumlah
ODTW		
1.	Natural Tourism	33
2.	Man-Made Tourism	22
3.	Marine Tourism	7

4.	Cultural Tourism	4
	Supporting Facilities	
1.	Tourist Lodges	192
2.	Restaurants/Eating Places	171
3.	Lodging	82
4.	Hotels	6

The next analysis is the Weaknesses analysis. Despite its potential, culinary tourism promotion and marketing remain ineffective, which can reduce its appeal to visitors. Inadequate infrastructure poses a challenge to increasing tourist visits. Furthermore, limited tour guide skills can diminish the quality of the experience provided to tourists.

Effective marketing and promotion play a crucial role in making culinary and shopping products popular. This is achieved through various methods such as branding, advertising, sales, and marketing strategies that include the use of social media, sponsorships, and both offline and online sales. Furthermore, curation and interpretation through methods such as storytelling and mapping culinary tourism potential are crucial. Other aspects include concern for waste management, sanitation, and cleanliness. The availability of environmentally friendly transportation is also necessary to alleviate congestion in Bandung and provide convenience for visitors. Finally, packaging for culinary and shopping products must be environmentally friendly, such as avoiding the use of plastic and Styrofoam.

The Opportunities analysis further examines the growing trend of gastronomic tourism, which presents an opportunity for Kulon Progo to attract more tourists. There are opportunities to collaborate with culinary businesses on mutually beneficial promotional programs. Government support for tourism development can also be leveraged to increase competitiveness.

A Threats analysis was also conducted. This analysis examined the potential for intense competition with other, more well-known culinary tourism destinations to pose a threat to culinary tourism development in Kulon Progo. Economic instability can impact tourist spending, while rapidly changing tourist preferences require strong adaptation from the local tourism sector.

Based on the SWOT matrix analysis, researchers formulated several development strategies that can serve as recommendations for relevant parties. The goal is to further advance Kulon Progo's culinary scene and make it a major tourist attraction in the region. These development strategies are divided into four categories, organized based on the relationships between the various SWOT components identified [13]. The following development strategies are formulated in Figure 1.

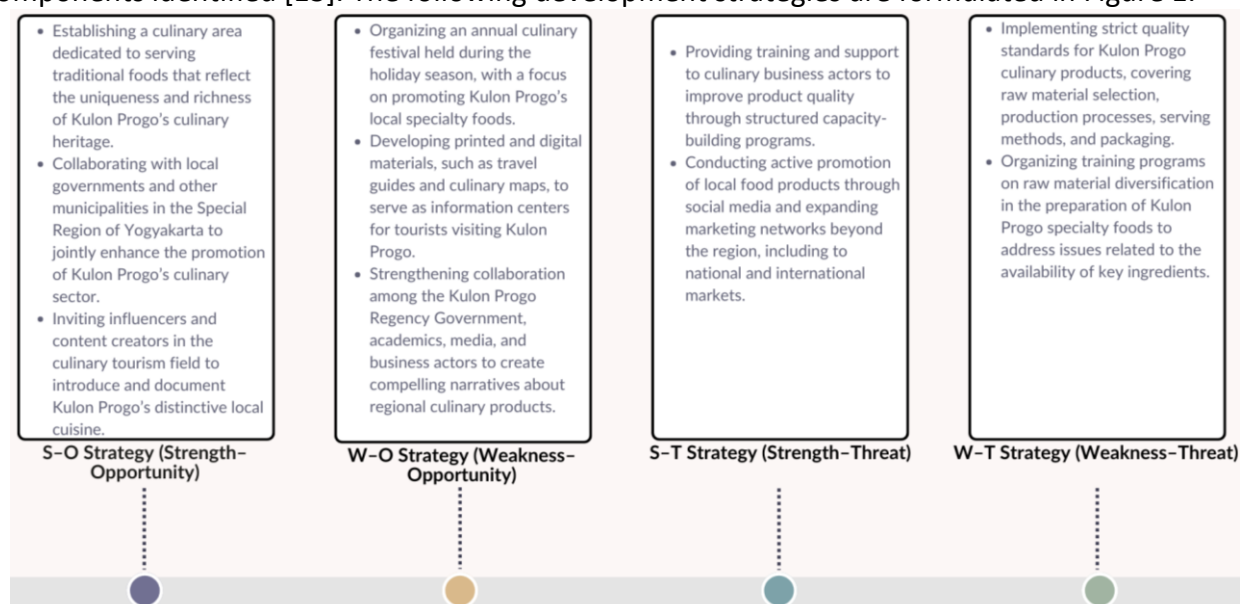


Figure 1. Culinary Tourism Development Strategy in Kulon Progo Regency.

### 2.3. Optimizing the role of culinary tour guides in Kulon Progo

Optimizing the role of culinary tour guides in Kulon Progo is crucial for enriching the tourist experience. Culinary tour guides are not just guides but also facilitators, connecting tourists with the richness of local culture and cuisine. They possess in-depth knowledge of the history, traditions, and preparation methods of regional specialties, enabling them to provide engaging and educational information to visitors.

By involving trained guides, tourists can enjoy a more interactive experience. For example, guides can invite tourists to participate in cooking sessions, explain local ingredients, or share the stories behind each dish. This not only makes tourists feel more engaged but also gives them the opportunity to understand and appreciate the local culture more deeply. Furthermore, culinary tour guides can assist in selecting authentic and quality restaurants and explain how to order and enjoy food properly. This can increase tourist satisfaction, as they feel guided and have a more satisfying experience.

Optimizing tour guides also includes training to improve communication and service skills. Friendly and informative guides can create a pleasant atmosphere, foster better interactions between tourists and local communities, and increase opportunities for tourists to have unique experiences. In this way, the role of a culinary tour guide in Kulon Progo is not only focused on serving food, but also on creating a holistic and memorable tourism experience, which can ultimately increase the attractiveness of the destination and the well-being of the local community.

### 2.4. Discussion

The analysis results indicate that culinary tourism development in Kulon Progo has significant potential to enhance tourism appeal and strengthen the local economy. Based on the SWOT analysis, the region's rich culinary diversity and cultural heritage were identified as key strengths. This aligns with the research objective of understanding how synergy between the SWOT analysis and tour guide optimization can maximize this potential. The data shows that tourists are increasingly interested in authentic gastronomic experiences, underscoring the importance of culinary development in tourism strategies.

These findings align with tourism marketing theory, which emphasizes the importance of a destination's unique appeal [14]. Kulon Progo, with its rich culinary and cultural heritage, offers experiences unavailable elsewhere, a key element in attracting tourists. Theories on tourist experience also support these findings, suggesting that tourists seek engagement and authenticity in every aspect of their visit. Every destination needs to provide a meaningful experience, and tour guides must allocate their resources to meet guests' needs through the services they offer [15]. Optimizing the role of knowledgeable tour guides is crucial in bridging the gap between culinary potential and the experiences tourists desire. The fact that local cuisine is a key driver of tourist interest can be explained by changing consumer behavior, which now prioritizes experiences over destinations. Tourists are increasingly recognizing the value of local products and want to explore the uniqueness of a region through its cuisine. Furthermore, the presence of trained and experienced tour guides who can tell stories about local cuisine also contributes to increasing tourist interest. In this regard, communication is crucial in culinary tourism marketing [16].

Culinary tour agencies need to operate professionally by obtaining all relevant certifications [17]. Furthermore, extra attention should be paid to the food tasting locations, as these serve as a national representation of the culinary scene. These findings also highlight the importance of customization as a key factor in creating a positive customer experience, requiring culinary professionals to understand customer preferences and tailor culinary tours to their desires.

Furthermore, online reputation management is a crucial aspect that needs attention, given the significant impact of online reviews on the hospitality industry. The findings of this study have significant contributions to the field of tourism administration, particularly in the development of policies and planning focused on culinary potential. This research is expected to provide a basis for formulating policies that support tour guide training and collaboration between culinary businesses. This can thus strengthen the tourism ecosystem in Kulon Progo and improve the welfare of the local community.

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations should be noted, such as the focus on a single region and the limited number of respondents. These limitations may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research is recommended to involve more regions and use diverse methods, such as online surveys and in-depth interviews, to gain a more comprehensive perspective on culinary tourism development. Thus, the synergy between SWOT analysis and tour guide optimization is not only key to developing culinary tourism in Kulon Progo, but also has the potential to encourage sustainable tourism industry growth and improve the quality of life of local communities.

#### 4. Conclusions

The development of culinary tourism in Kulon Progo Regency holds significant potential to enhance tourism appeal and the regional economy. A SWOT analysis demonstrates the strength of local culinary and cultural diversity, despite challenges in promotion and infrastructure. Optimizing the role of tour guides through appropriate training is crucial to enhance the tourist experience. Recommendations for collaboration between tour guides and culinary businesses are key to sustainable tourism planning, which is expected to drive industry growth and the well-being of local communities.

#### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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