

## **HERITAGE OF KOTAGEDE TRADITIONAL CAKES: KIPO CAKE AND LEGOMORO CAKE AS SYMBOLS OF TOGETHERNESS, SUSTAINABILITY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

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### **Abstract**

Kipo and legomoro are two legendary traditional cakes typical of Yogyakarta. Both have a deep philosophy that reflects human values, such as simplicity, togetherness, and harmony. The term kipo comes from the expression "iki opo" which means "what is this". Kipo is a typical Kotagede cake made from glutinous rice flour filled with young grated coconut and java sugar. The manufacturing process involves patience and high precision, which reflects a respect for hard work and traditional craftsmanship. In its manufacture, kipo uses tools such as pottery to maintain an authentic taste, kipo has become a symbol of cultural heritage that has existed since the time of the Mataram Kingdom. On the other hand, legomoro symbolizes family harmony through the philosophy of the four ties contained in the wrapper. This cake is a symbol in the tradition of the proposal which is a symbol of the union of two families in the spirit of mutual respect. Even though times are constantly changing, the values contained in kipo and legomoro are still relevant. Original ingredients such as glutinous rice flour and coconut milk are retained, which brings out an authentic taste that evokes memories of family warmth and togetherness. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data was collected through interviews with Mrs. Wiwiek Ngesti Widanin, Chairperson of the Prenggan Tourism Village, direct observation of the process of making kipo and legomoro, as well as literature studies related to the history and philosophy of these cakes. Interviews were also conducted with traditional cake experts in Yogyakarta who have long experience in maintaining the authenticity of the taste and the process of making these two cakes. The results of the study show that kipo and legomoro are not only culinary cultural heritage, but also a link between the past and the present, which teaches that tradition is a mirror of the soul of a community.

Keywords: kipo, legomoro, traditional cakes, Yogyakarta, cultural heritage.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Yogyakarta, as one of the cultural cities in Indonesia, is famous for its rich traditional cuisine, including a variety of cakes that have deep cultural meaning. Yogyakarta's traditional cakes such as kipo, legomoro, bakpia, yangko, and lawu flower cakes are part of a cultural heritage that is not only delicious, but also loaded with symbolism that reflects the values of the community such as simplicity, togetherness, and harmony. These cakes are often present in various traditional ceremonies and celebrations, such as weddings, celebrations, or other family events (Sulistyawati, 2021). Traditional cakes in Yogyakarta have a variety of ingredients and different manufacturing techniques, reflecting the richness of local culture.

Kipo cake is one of the traditional snacks typical of Kotagede, Yogyakarta. Kipo is made from the basic ingredient of glutinous rice flour that is dyed green using suji leaves or pandan leaves and filled with a mixture of grated coconut, tamarind sugar, and a little salt. The name "Kipo" is said to be derived from the Javanese phrase "iki opo" (what is this), reflecting the local people's curiosity about this unique food. The cake has a chewy texture and a distinctive savory sweet flavor, often baked on a pottery oven to produce the authentic aroma of burnt banana leaves (Hakim & Hamidah, 2022).

Legomoro cake, made from glutinous rice and filled with shredded chicken used in the marriage tradition, is also a symbol of the union of two families, symbolizing harmony and togetherness. These cakes are often found in traditional markets or served in traditional ceremonies, which shows how important the role of food is in building social relations in Yogyakarta (Darmawan, 2018).

The process of making Yogyakarta traditional cakes has undergone many changes, both in terms of recipes and ingredients used. In the past, the making of traditional pastries relied heavily on natural ingredients that are easily available around the home environment, such as shredded coconut, coconut sugar, and banana leaves, as well as using traditional utensils such as *sudi* (coconut grinders) and wood stoves for cooking (Nugroho, 2019). However, as technology has evolved, the process of making these traditional pastries has begun to shift to the use of modern tools, such as coconut grinding machines and dough beaters, which make production more efficient and fast.

In addition, the materials used have also changed. For example, packaged coconut milk is now often used to replace fresh coconut milk, and granulated sugar replaces coconut sugar. The use of ingredients like this makes it easier to make, but it can change the authentic taste of the traditional cake. Although this change makes the process easier, there are concerns that the distinctive taste of the cakes will be lost (Sulistyawati, 2021).

The transformation in traditional baking recipes and ingredients poses several challenges, especially related to the loss of the authenticity of the product and the historical value it contains. One of the main challenges is the change in taste that can occur due to the replacement of traditional ingredients with more modern or commercial ingredients. For example, the use of granulated sugar which is sweeter than coconut sugar or the use of packaged coconut milk which tends to taste lighter than fresh coconut milk, can affect the authentic taste of these cakes (Nugroho, 2019).

In addition, many traditional cakes contain historical and symbolic values that are closely related to people's lives. Legomoro, for example, is used in the tradition of the proposal to symbolize the union of two families. If the ingredients or the way of making this cake are changed, the symbolic value can be degraded (Darmawan, 2018). This change in ingredients and manufacturing process can reduce the meaning of traditional cakes that should be part of the cultural identity of the community.

Business actors in the culinary industry in Yogyakarta face a dilemma between maintaining tradition and following the demands of the modern market. Some entrepreneurs still stick to original recipes and ingredients even though the price of raw materials is getting more expensive and scarce. They remain committed to maintaining the quality and authenticity of their products, which is the main selling point in the market (Sulistyawati, 2021). However, there are also business actors who innovate by adjusting recipes and ingredients to suit the tastes of today's consumers.

Some entrepreneurs are creating new variants of kipo cake, such as adding premium ingredients or creating healthier versions, for example by using low-calorie sugar or gluten-free flour. This innovation aims to attract a market that cares more about a healthy lifestyle, but still maintains traditional elements (Widodo, 2020).

In addition, some business actors also use digital technology and social media to promote their traditional cakes. This not only opens up wider market opportunities, but also helps maintain the sustainability of traditional cakes in the midst of growing globalization (Darmawan, 2018).

This research aims to explore how recipes and ingredients are maintained in the making of traditional Yogyakarta cakes, namely kipo and legomoro and how business actors adapt to these changes. By understanding this process, it is hoped that ways can be found to preserve the authenticity and historical value of traditional pastries, while also answering the challenges faced in the midst of modernization and changing consumer tastes.

**Problem Formulation** How does the process of making traditional Kipo and Legomoro cakes maintain the authenticity of recipes and ingredients in the midst of modernization? What are the challenges faced by business actors in maintaining the authenticity of Kipo and Legomoro traditional cakes? How does modernization innovation and adaptation affect the sustainability of Kipo and Legomoro traditions? How can the cultural philosophy of Kipo and Legomoro be preserved and passed on to the younger generation? What is the role of Kipo and Legomoro cakes as a symbol of togetherness and cultural heritage of Yogyakarta?

**Research Objectives** Analyze how the process of making Kipo and Legomoro still maintains the authenticity of the recipe and ingredients. Identify the challenges faced in the preservation of Kipo and Legomoro traditional cakes. Exploring modern innovations and adaptations in promoting the sustainability of Kipo and Legomoro traditions. Exploring the cultural values contained in Kipo and Legomoro and their preservation efforts. Provide insight into the importance of traditional cakes as a cultural symbol that can be passed on.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses Data Triangulation by combining qualitative and descriptive methods to enhance credibility and validity. Qualitative method is a research method primarily focused on understanding phenomena, behaviors and experiences through non-numerical data. Qualitative and Descriptive research methods, to enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data was collected through interviews with Ms. Wiwiek Ngesti Widanin, head of Prenggan Tourism Village, observations of kipo and legomoro production, and literature studies on their history. The qualitative approach explores phenomena, behaviors, and perceptions, such as those regarding Yogyakarta's traditional food. Insights from these methods help preserve the authenticity of traditional cakes in Yogyakarta. Documentary analysis focuses on historical records, recipes, and folklore to uncover deeper insights into their heritage. Additionally, focus group discussions with youths, entrepreneurs, and cultural enthusiasts will provide diverse perspectives on the cakes' modern relevance. Thematic and narrative analyses will identify recurring themes, while triangulation and member-checking will ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings





Figure 1. Interview Sessions

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Questions and answers for interviews:

#### 1. Recipe Changes

- a. What is the original recipe for this traditional cake? Is the recipe still used today or are there any adjustments? *(The original recipe of Legomoro and Kipo is still used today, especially when it comes to ingredients. For example, glutinous rice flour, coconut, and brown sugar remain the main ingredients).*
- b. Since when has there been a change in the recipe? What is the main reason behind the change? *(No changes to the kipo and legomoro cake recipes).*
- c. Do these changes affect the taste of the cake? How have customers responded to the change? *(No changes to the kipo and legomoro cake recipes).*

- d. Is there a request from customers that encourages you to change the recipe? *(There is no significant request to change the recipe. The focus of the change is more on packaging and presentation to be more modern and environmentally friendly).*

## 2. Raw Material Replacement:

- a. What ingredients have been replaced in making this cake? Why are these materials replaced? *(There is no substitution of the main ingredients such as glutinous rice flour, coconut milk, pandan leaves, or suji leaves. All remain original to maintain traditional flavors and values).*
- b. Is material substitution more due to price, availability, or other reasons? *(Material replacement is not yet necessary because the original materials are still well available. The focus of adaptation is more on technique and efficiency).*
- c. Do you feel the difference in quality or taste of the cake produced after the ingredient change? *(There is no difference in quality or taste because the ingredients are not changed).*
- d. Are there certain ingredients that are harder to find now than they used to be? If so, what are the alternatives? *(So far, the ingredients used are still available in the market).*

## 3. Influence of Consumer Trends and Preferences:

- a. Do market trends or demand have an effect on these changes in traditional cake recipes and ingredients? *(For recipes and ingredients there are no changes. Changes are only made in the packaging aspect).*
- b. How is the difference in consumer demand in the previous and current eras regarding the taste or texture of cakes? *(There are no special requests regarding the taste and texture of the cake. Today's consumers appreciate the stories and cultural values behind cakes like Kipo and Legomoro. They love authentic flavors and traditional textures).*

## 4. Production Process and Adaptation:

- a. Do you make changes in the cake making process to adapt to new ingredients? *(No, the change is more about time efficiency, for example using modern tools like Teflon to grill Kipo without changing the ingredients).*
- b. How do you ensure that quality is maintained even if there are changes in materials? *(No material changes. In order to maintain quality, the manufacturing process is carried out patiently and painstakingly, as is characteristic in making Kipo).*
- c. Are there any obstacles faced in adapting a recipe or process with different ingredients? *(The main obstacle is more to maintaining the traditional way of production to remain relevant in the modern market.)*

## 5. Culture and Preservation:

- a. Do you feel it's important to stick to the original ingredients in traditional cake recipes? *(Very important. The original ingredients are the soul of this traditional cake, especially to preserve its flavor and historical value).*
- b. How do you keep this traditional recipe in demand in the midst of competition with modern cake products? *(To keep traditional recipes in demand amid competition with modern baking products, we highlight the uniqueness of the culture and story behind the cake, maintain the authenticity of the flavor, and innovate in packaging).*

## Discussion

### 1. Kipo Cake

The process of making Kipo starts with the selection of high-quality materials. Kipo is made from glutinous rice flour, which is mixed with natural green dyes using suji leaves and pandan leaves. Then it is filled with young grated coconut, java sugar, pandan leaves, and a little salt. These ingredients are chosen not only for their flavor and texture, but also

because they have a deep cultural meaning. In its preparation, sticky rice is chosen for its chewiness which is the hallmark of Kipo, while young grated coconut and tamarind sugar add a distinctive sweet and savory taste.

The process of making a kipo is carried out with great precision and patience. Glutinous rice flour dough that has been mixed with water, then flattened in small sizes and filled with a mixture of grated coconut and tamarind sugar. Once the glutinous rice dough is filled, the kipo is baked using a furnace made of pottery or clay. The baking process using this pottery produces a distinctive aroma of burnt banana leaves, which is a characteristic of Kipo.

Although the use of Teflon or other modern baking tools is increasingly common in making Kipo, tradition still prioritizes the use of pottery because it is believed to provide a more authentic taste and distinctive aroma. In this process, not only skills are needed, but also the mood of the maker, because in Yogyakarta culture, traditional cakes such as Kipo are believed to be more delicious if they are made with sincerity and patience.

The philosophy contained in the making of Kipo is very profound. Each stage in its creation reflects the values of life in the Yogyakarta community, such as hard work, precision, and togetherness. One of the most condensed values in making Kipo is precision and patience. Making Kipo, which takes a lot of time, illustrates the effort and perseverance that must be done in life to achieve maximum results.

In addition, Kipo also has a symbolic meaning in Yogyakarta culture. Kipo is often served at various important events, such as weddings, traditional ceremonies, or meetings. This shows that Kipo not only functions as food, but also as a symbol of harmony and togetherness. In many cases, this cake is often used to strengthen relationships between family members or between communities. Kipo, as a traditional cake, also teaches the importance of preserving traditions, even though times continue to evolve. The values contained in the creation of Kipo, such as hard work, meticulousness, and respect for culture, become of very important relevance in modern life.

In its development, Kipo has undergone several changes, especially in terms of the way it is presented. In the past, Kipo was served in a simple form, wrapped in banana leaves and served directly to consumers. However, with the demand of the market that wants more practical and attractive packaging, now Kipo is often packaged in plastic or boxes that are more modern and attractive, to attract the attention of young people, especially Gen Z and millennials. This more aesthetic packaging is expected to make Kipo more attractive to young consumers who are looking for traditional cakes with a more attractive appearance.

However, this modification also poses a challenge in maintaining the essence of Kipo. Changes in packaging and ingredients put some producers at risk of losing the image of Kipo as a traditional cake that has strong cultural roots. Therefore, although there is a trend to package kipo in a more attractive way, manufacturers must be careful not to sacrifice the authenticity of the flavor and philosophy that is in it. This was also stated by (Basthami & City Noor Lailly Rahmavati, 2022), that kipo cake cannot avoid modernization so that it is one of the challenges for kipo cake to maintain its existence with other traditional foods in Yogyakarta

One of the big challenges in preserving Kipo is the regeneration of its makers. The process of making Kipo which requires high skill and precision cannot be easily taught to the younger generation who are more familiar with technology and practical methods.



Therefore, the regeneration of Kipo makers who are competent and able to maintain the quality of these products is a considerable problem. For this reason, there is a need to involve the younger generation in Kipo making training and workshops so that this skill can continue to develop and not become extinct.

Despite the challenges, culinary business actors have a great opportunity to develop kipo more creatively and innovatively, especially with the increasing interest in traditional cuisine among the younger generation. Business actors can also take advantage of social media and online platforms to introduce kipo to a wider audience. Using digital technology to market this product can be an effective solution to maintain the continuity of traditional culinary businesses amid increasingly fierce market competition.

Sustainability is one of the principles that is embodied in the manufacture of kipo. Using natural ingredients that do not rely on chemicals or advanced technology makes kipo an example of environmentally friendly culinary products. The use of pandan leaves as natural dyes and banana leaves as wrappers shows that Kipo still maintains sustainable local wisdom, without having to rely on artificial ingredients that can damage the environment. In addition, the manufacturing process that does not involve advanced machinery and relies more on hand skills also makes Kipo a more sustainable product, as it does not require a lot of energy and can be done by local artisans with traditional skills.

## 2. Legomoro Cake

Legomoro is one of the traditional cakes that has a deep meaning in Indonesian culture, especially in wedding celebrations. This cake is made from glutinous rice and is a strong symbol in the tradition of proposals, where the man who wants to propose brings legomoro as part of the gift to the bride-to-be's family. With a form and meaning that is very thick with family symbolism, legomoro is not only food, but also a means that conveys a message about the bond between two families that will be united.

The name "legomoro" itself comes from two words in Javanese, namely "lego" which means relieved or free, and "moro" which refers to in-laws. This concept describes the atmosphere of relief or happiness felt by both families after the application process is accepted. In this case, legomoro is not just a food, but a symbol of a process of unifying two large families, represented by the bonds formed in each part of this cake. The four bonds on Legomoro reflect two families that are united, with each side connecting and supporting the other.

Making legomoro cannot be considered easy. This cake involves a fairly complicated and time-consuming process, but that's what makes it special. The making of legomoro begins by cooking glutinous rice for 20 minutes to give it a distinctive chewy texture. After being half-cooked, glutinous rice is mixed with coconut milk, which gives it softness and savory, and then let it sit to allow the ingredients to soak in. Next, the glutinous rice is cooked again until it is perfectly cooked, ensuring the cohesiveness between the sticky rice and coconut milk so that the legomoro texture is chewy, dense, and not easily destroyed. The filling is shredded chicken made from shredded chicken cooked with fine spices, namely garlic, onion, lemongrass, coriander, hazelnut, turmeric, and bay leaves, and cooked until dry. In one serving, the glutinous rice used is 50 grams with a filling of one teaspoon of shredded chicken, then wrapped in banana leaves and united with bamboo ties into four pieces.

Although legomoro is now known as a food used in the proposal procession, it has a longer history. In the beginning, legomoro was a special meal made by palace cooks for the nobles. Legomoro at that time had a very high value, both in terms of materials and in social contexts. This food is not only considered a snack or snack, but as a symbol of status and honor.

The philosophy behind making legomoro is very deep. As a symbol in the tradition of proposing, legomoro reflects a strong bond between families, where two families from different backgrounds will unite in marriage. The four ties on the legomoro represent the four interconnected components of the family, consisting of the groom's family and the bride's family, as well as the two brides-to-be themselves. These bonds show how two individuals from different backgrounds can come together in a sacred marriage bond. Legomoro is also a reminder of the importance of maintaining harmony between families, especially when two different families have to adapt to each other and work together in marriage.

In addition, legomoro also describes the simplicity and authenticity of the ingredients used. In an ever-evolving world with all kinds of innovations and changes in the way food is made, legomoro has remained true to traditional recipes that have been around for a long time. Glutinous rice as the main ingredient of legomoro is a very simple ingredient, but very valuable and meaningful. This shows that authenticity and sincerity in every family relationship are very important and must be maintained.

Legomoro has similarities with several other traditional cakes, such as lempeng, semar mendem, and jadah manten. However, the difference lies in its philosophy, form, and use in various traditions. For example, lempengs are often found at various events, with a long shape that makes them easy to carry. However, legomoro has a unique shape with four bonds that contain deep symbolism, reflecting the meeting and merger of two families.

Legomoro has profoundly supported environmental sustainability, especially through the selection of organic materials and the use of environmentally friendly natural wrappers. For example, legomoro uses banana leaves as a wrapper, which not only gives the cake its distinctive aroma, but is also a natural biodegradable material, reducing the impact of using plastic or other artificial packaging materials. In addition to its ecological benefits, banana leaves are considered more economical and sustainable than synthetic materials and provide a distinctive aroma that enhances the taste of food, as revealed by research related to food technology (Rahmawati et al., 2024). The bamboo ties used to hold legomoro wrap together also have high ecological value, as bamboo is a fast-growing and renewable natural resource. By utilizing these natural ingredients, legomoro not only maintains culinary traditions, but also makes a real contribution to environmental sustainability, by helping to reduce plastic waste and reminding society of the importance of using natural resources wisely and sustainably.

In addition, semar mendem, which also uses sticky rice as the main ingredient, is often found in certain traditional events, but is more of a general dish and is not always associated with the application process. Likewise with jadah manten, which also uses sticky rice, legomoro is better known in Javanese tradition as part of the proposal procession and has strong philosophical ties regarding family and marriage ties.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION





Kipo and legomoro are two traditional cakes that are very important in Yogyakarta culture, both of which have a deep history, philosophy, and symbolism. Both are not only delicious dishes, but also have cultural significance that is closely related to the social life of the people of Yogyakarta, especially in terms of togetherness, harmony, and simplicity. The making of these two cakes reflects the values that are highly upheld in the people of Yogyakarta, such as hard work, precision, patience, and respect for tradition and family.

Environmental sustainability is an inseparable part of the making of these two cakes. For example, in making kipo, many bakers choose to use natural and organic ingredients, such as fresh coconut and coconut sugar, which are more environmentally friendly compared to industrial ingredients. Likewise, legomoro is often wrapped in banana leaves, which not only gives a distinctive aroma, but is also an environmentally friendly alternative compared to the use of plastic packaging. As such, these two cakes not only reflect their rich culture and traditions, but also play a role in preserving nature and reducing the environmental impact of the use of synthetic ingredients.

The findings of this study have several practical implications for stakeholders in the preservation and promotion of traditional culinary heritage. First, it provides valuable guidance to traditional culinary businesses on maintaining the authenticity of Kipo and Legomoro in terms of taste and ingredients, even amidst modernization. The study emphasizes the importance of training programs for the younger generation to engage them in cultural preservation through traditional baking practices. Additionally, innovative strategies in packaging and marketing these cakes are proposed, blending their cultural philosophy with contemporary appeal to attract millennial and Gen Z consumers. Furthermore, the study offers insights to government agencies for designing policies that protect and promote traditional cakes as part of Yogyakarta's cultural wealth, aligning with broader tourism development efforts.

From an academic perspective, this research enriches the literature on Yogyakarta's traditional cuisine, particularly focusing on Kipo and Legomoro as vital elements of cultural and gastronomic studies. It contributes a novel perspective to cultural sustainability research, particularly in traditional culinary contexts. The findings can serve as a reference for future studies on preserving traditional foods in the face of globalization's challenges. Moreover, the study strengthens the argument that food is not just sustenance but a cultural symbol, playing a crucial role in education and fostering local identity. These contributions highlight the intersection of culinary heritage, cultural sustainability, and tourism development.



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