

# Gastronomy Tourism and Food Security: Somatic, Auditory, Visual, Intellectual Approaches in Cireundeu Indigenous Village

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## Abstract

This study addressed the need to transform conventional gastronomy tourism into an educational medium for environmental resilience. The research aimed to explore how gastronomy tourism in the Cireundeu Indigenous Village internalized local food security values for tourists through a somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual learning approach. Utilizing a qualitative method with an interactive data analysis framework, the study collected data through participant observation and in-depth interviews. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique, involving the traditional leader, community figures, and women's group representatives. The results demonstrated that the indigenous community's philosophy regarding the historical transition from rice to cassava was successfully transformed into a holistic educational experience. The research mapped thirteen cultural expressions into four learning dimensions. Tourists experienced physical involvement through cassava processing, absorbed historical narratives, observed traditional rituals, and constructed an understanding of food sovereignty. In conclusion, the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual approach effectively deepened tourists' understanding of food diversification and environmental sustainability.

**Keywords:** *Gastronomy Tourism; Food Security; Food Diversification; Cireundeu.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy tourism has significantly evolved from being a supplementary travel activity into a primary motivation for global tourists (Ellis et al., 2018). In the context of sustainable tourism development, gastronomy is no longer viewed merely through the lens of culinary hedonism or the consumption of local dishes. Recent perspectives in tourism studies emphasize that gastronomy tourism possesses a profound potential to function as an educational medium, communicating local wisdom, cultural identity, and environmental resilience to visitors. Furthermore, in an era marked by the escalating threats of global climate change and agricultural crises, integrating the narrative of food security into tourism experiences has become a critical strategy for destinations seeking to promote environmental sustainability and ecological awareness (Hall & Gössling, 2013).

In Indonesia, the discourse on food security and diversification is often hindered by a heavy societal dependence on rice as the singular staple food (Suryana, 2014). However, a highly distinct and enduring paradigm of food sovereignty can be observed in Kampung Adat Cireundeu, an indigenous village located in Cimahi City, West Java. The Cireundeu community has successfully decoupled its reliance on rice, transitioning to *karihil* cassava as their primary staple food. This historical transition,

rooted in a collective response to past agricultural crises, has been institutionalized within the community's core philosophy: "*Teu Nyawah Asal Boga Pare, Teu Boga Pare Asal Boga Beas, Teu Boga Beas Asal Bisa Nyangu, Teu Nyangu Asal Dahar, Teu Dahar Asal Kuat*" (One needs not own a rice field as long as they have unhusked rice, needs not have unhusked rice as long as they have milled rice, needs not have milled rice as long as they can cook it, needs not cook rice as long as they can eat, needs not eat as long as they are strong).

This philosophy highlights a profound indigenous knowledge system that rejects dependency on a single food source, thereby ensuring the community's survival across generations. The spatial arrangement of their environment, meticulously divided into *Leuweung Larangan* (strict conservation forest), *Leuweung Tutupan* (buffer forest), and *Leuweung Baladahan* (agricultural forest), further demonstrates an advanced ecological spatial planning that supports this food sovereignty. Consequently, Kampung Adat Cireundeu has naturally developed into a prominent cultural and gastronomy tourism destination, attracting tourists who are curious about the unique practice of consuming cassava rice (known locally as 'Rasi').

Despite its popularity, a significant challenge remains in the tourism implementation. Observations indicate that the tourist experience in Kampung Adat Cireundeu frequently stalls at the level of physical consumption. Many visitors arrive merely to taste 'Rasi' or witness the *Tutup Taun Ngemban Taun* cultural ceremony without fully internalizing the critical underlying messages of ecological resilience, food diversification, and the community's environmental struggle. The profound values of food security embedded within the local gastronomy risk being reduced to mere commodified tourism products if not systematically communicated through an effective educational framework (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

To address this gap, an immersive and holistic learning approach is required to transform the gastronomy tourism experience from passive observation to active internalization. This study utilizes the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual learning approach as its primary theoretical framework (Meier, 2003). Originally rooted in educational psychology, this framework posits that effective learning and meaning-making occur optimally when multiple dimensions of human faculties are engaged simultaneously. In a tourism context, this means tourists must physically engage with the destination (somatic), listen to narratives and local wisdom (auditory), observe authentic cultural expressions and landscapes (visual), and critically reflect on the experience (intellectual) to fully grasp the destination's intrinsic values.

While previous studies on Kampung Adat Cireundeu have predominantly focused on the anthropological aspects of their rituals or the purely nutritional value of cassava, there is a notable scarcity of research examining how these historical and gastronomic elements are systematically structured as an educational tourism experience. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze how gastronomy tourism in the Cireundeu Indigenous Village internalizes the values of local food security for tourists through a somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual approach.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific effort to map thirteen distinct local cultural expressions—ranging from the physical processing of 'Rasi', the *wuwuhan* (noble advice) narratives, the visual symbolism of the *Ngajayak* ritual, to the spatial philosophy of the *leuweung* zones—into the four dimensions of the aforementioned learning approach. By conceptualizing destination branding and tourist experience as a structured educational process, this study contributes to the broader academic discourse on sustainable tourism, demonstrating how indigenous food sovereignty can be effectively communicated to foster environmental sustainability awareness among modern tourists.

## **B. METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design to deeply explore the integration of food security values within the gastronomy tourism experience at the Cireundeu Indigenous Village. A qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate method to capture complex social realities, cultural nuances, and holistic tourist experiences, as it generated descriptive data in the form of spoken words and observed behaviors (Creswell & Poth, 2017). Data collection was systematically conducted through participant observation and a series of in-depth interviews. During the participant observation, the researchers actively engaged in local tourism activities, observing the physical processing of cassava, cultural rituals, and the spatial dynamics of the indigenous forest zones (Spradley, 1980).

The determination of informants was executed utilizing a purposive sampling technique. This method allowed for the deliberate selection of key individuals based on their profound knowledge and direct involvement in the community's history, cultural preservation, and tourism management (Sugiyono, 2019). The key informants actively involved in this study included the *kuncen* (traditional leader), prominent community figures, youth leaders, and representatives from the local women's groups who held a central role in the traditional gastronomy production.

The collected field data were subsequently analyzed using the interactive data analysis framework proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This rigorous analytical process involved three concurrent streams of activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation phase, raw field notes and interview transcripts regarding the local cultural expressions were selected, focused, and abstracted. Subsequently, in the data display phase, the qualitative information was systematically mapped and categorized into the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual learning dimensions. To ensure data validity, source triangulation was applied by cross-checking information obtained from the diverse group of informants and the field observations (Sugiyono, 2019).

## **C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Context of Food Security in Cireundeu Indigenous Village**

The phenomenon of gastronomy tourism in Cireundeu Indigenous Village cannot be separated from the community's historical struggle to achieve food

sovereignty. Long before the global discourse on food diversification emerged, the ancestors of Cireundeu had initiated a radical agricultural transformation. Historically, this transition was triggered by severe food crises and crop failures during the colonial era, around 1918. According to Triyana Santika (familiarily known as Kang Yana), the head of tourism management and primary spokesperson for the Cireundeu Indigenous Village (personal communication, July 13, 2025), the community leaders made a strategic and collective decision to break their dependency on rice paddy cultivation and substitute it with *karihil* cassava as their primary staple food. This profound transition was not merely a change in diet, but a calculated survival strategy to ensure community resilience against external socio-ecological shocks.

This historical shift was subsequently institutionalized into a guiding philosophical doctrine that continues to be preserved by the current generation. The core philosophy is encapsulated in the expression: "*Teu Nyawah Asal Boga Pare, Teu Boga Pare Asal Boga Beas, Teu Boga Beas Asal Bisa Nyangu, Teu Nyangu Asal Dahar, Teu Dahar Asal Kuat.*" (One needs not own a rice field as long as they have unhusked rice, needs not have unhusked rice as long as they have milled rice, needs not have milled rice as long as they can cook it, needs not cook rice as long as they can eat, needs not eat as long as they are strong). This philosophical statement functions as a cultural manifesto of food independence. It critically challenges the dominant hegemony of rice in Indonesian agricultural paradigms, asserting that human strength and survival are not exclusively bound to a single commodity (Yana, personal communication, July 13, 2025).

Beyond a mere historical manifesto, this philosophy is deeply ingrained in the daily socio-cultural fabric of the Cireundeu community. It actively dictates their consumption habits and strengthens their collective identity as an indigenous group amidst the pressures of modernization. The consistency in producing and consuming *Rasi* for over a century serves as a daily physical reinforcement of this mindset. For the people of Cireundeu, the dining table is not simply a place for nourishment, but an active site for cultural preservation and the intergenerational transmission of values. This continuous practice transforms the abstract concept of food sovereignty into a tangible, lived reality, which logically extends to how they manage and protect their natural resources. It proves that true independence is achieved when a society can sustainably feed itself without compromising its ecological integrity. This profound realization ultimately dictates their spatial policies, ensuring that agricultural needs never overshadow the importance of their sacred conservation areas.



**Figure 1. The Institutionalization of the Cireundeu Community's Food Security Philosophy**

Source: Author's documentation, 2025

Furthermore, the implementation of this food security strategy is deeply intertwined with advanced ecological spatial planning. The Cireundeu community strictly divides their environment into three distinct zones: *Leuweung Larangan* (strict conservation forest where human intervention is prohibited), *Leuweung Tutupan* (buffer forest utilized for ecological preservation), and *Leuweung Baladahan* (agricultural forest designated for cultivating cassava) (Yana, personal communication, July 13, 2025). This spatial zoning demonstrates that their gastronomy practices are intrinsically linked to environmental sustainability. The production of cassava rice (*Rasi*) is conducted without degrading the primary forest ecosystems, ensuring long-term ecological balance. Consequently, when tourists visit Cireundeu, they are not merely encountering a unique culinary destination, but entering a living laboratory of sustainable food diversification and ecological resilience.

## 2. Mapping the Gastronomic Cultural Expressions and Attractions

In gastronomy tourism, the tourist experience is not limited to the consumption of food but encompasses the entire process of its production, the socio-cultural values attached to it, and the philosophy of the local community. In Cireundeu Indigenous Village, the gastronomy tourism experience is constructed through a series of physical attractions and local philosophical expressions (*wuwuhan*). Based on field observations and in-depth interviews, this study identified 9 physical gastronomy attractions and 13 philosophical expressions that are integrated into the tourist

experience. These elements are systematically mapped into the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual learning dimensions, as presented in Table 1 below:

**Table 1. Mapping of Gastronomy Tourism Element into Learning Dimension**

Learning Dimension	Gastronomy Attractions and Cultural Expressions	Description of Tourist Experience
Somatic (Physical Involvement)	Hands-on Attractions: Exploring cassava fields. Harvesting cassava. Peeling and washing. Grating, pressing, drying. Pounding and sifting Cooking <i>Rasi</i> , cassava noodles, and egg rolls.	Tourists actively use their bodies to experience the physical labor required to produce staple food, transforming passive observation into active participation.
Auditory (Listening/Hearing)	Tourists listen to the <i>kuncen</i> and local guides reciting traditional advice ( <i>wuwuhan</i> ).	Tourists absorb local wisdom through storytelling and oral traditions, hearing the linguistic rhythm of Sundanese expressions that carry moral and ecological messages.
Visual (Observation)	Observing the Landscape and Process: Visualizing the agricultural spatial planning during the field exploration. Observing the physical transformation of raw cassava into white starch and <i>Rasi</i> . Seeing the collaborative nature of the indigenous community.	Tourists witness the tangible evidence of food sovereignty, capturing the aesthetic and authentic environment of the indigenous settlement and the physical forms of the alternative food.
Intellectual (Meaning Construction)	Internalizing and reflecting on philosophies such as: Food Security Ecological Harmony Sustainability	Tourists synthesize the physical, auditory, and visual inputs to critically understand that <i>Rasi</i> is a symbol of resilience, environmental sustainability, and intergenerational responsibility.

### 3. Internalizing Food Security Through the Learning Approach

The mapping in Table 1 demonstrates that destination branding and tourism implementation in Cireundeu are fundamentally structured as an immersive educational process.

#### a. The Somatic Dimension: Active Physical Engagement

The somatic dimension acts as the primary entry point for tourists. By engaging directly in the hands-on attractions—ranging from exploring the cassava fields, harvesting, to the physical labor of peeling, grating, pressing, and pounding the cassava—tourists develop a tactile and kinesthetic appreciation for the agricultural process. These activities extend to the culinary practices of cooking *Rasi*, cassava noodles, egg rolls, and crafting *wayang* from cassava leaves. This direct physical exertion effectively breaks down the barrier between the host and the guest, transforming passive observation into active, bodily participation in the community's food production cycle.



**Figure 2. Tourists' active physical engagement in the somatic learning dimension.**

Source: Instagram @cireundeuvillage\_,2025

#### b. The Visual Dimension: Observing Spatial and Material Authenticity

The visual dimension continuously reinforces the tourists' somatic experiences. During their visit, tourists visually process the distinct agricultural spatial planning of the *Leuweung* zones, observing firsthand the tangible evidence of ecological preservation. Furthermore, the visual observation of the raw cassava transforming step-by-step into white starch and eventually into the consumable *Rasi* provides a powerful visual narrative.



**Figure 3. Packaged Rasi (Cassava Rice), The Primary Product of Their Gastronomy Tourism.**

Source: Author's documentation, 2025

By witnessing the collaborative nature of the indigenous community and the authentic environment of the settlement, tourists visually comprehend the complexity and reality of traditional food sovereignty, which contrasts sharply with modern, instant food consumption.

c. The Auditory Dimension: Narrating the Local Wisdom

While the somatic and visual dimensions provide the physical context, the auditory dimension delivers the socio-cultural soul of the destination. During the physical activities, tourists continuously listen to the thirteen local philosophies spoken by the community. Expressions such as "*Sareundeuk, saigel, sabobot, saphapean*" (emphasizing unity and cooperation) and "*Silih Asah, Silih Asih, Silih Asuh*" (mutual education and care) provide an auditory backdrop that contextualizes the physical labor. The tourists hear firsthand how the community governs their social relations and agricultural practices through these deeply rooted oral traditions.

d. The Intellectual Dimension: Constructing Food Security Awareness

The culmination of the learning approach occurs in the intellectual dimension, where cognitive internalization takes place. The core philosophy, "*Teu Nyawah Asal Boga Pare, Teu Boga Pare Asal Boga Beas... Teu Dahar Asal Kuat*", is intellectually processed not merely as a historical slogan, but as a living strategy for food security. Furthermore, expressions regarding environmental harmony ("*Gusti nu asih, alam nu ngasah, manusa nu ngasuh*" and "*Akur jeung alam*") and intergenerational responsibility ("*Na Kiwari Ngancik Bihari, Seja Ayeuna Pikeun Jaga*" and "*Mun teu ku urang, rek ku saha*") lead tourists to a profound realization. They intellectually construct the understanding that the transition from rice to cassava is an advanced ecological mitigation strategy. Consequently, the gastronomy tourism in Cireundeu successfully transforms visitors' perspectives, advocating that food diversification is a vital foundation for environmental sustainability.

## D. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that gastronomy tourism in the Cireundeu Indigenous Village transcends conventional culinary recreation by functioning as a profound educational medium for food security and environmental sustainability. By systematically mapping thirteen local philosophical expressions and nine physical gastronomy attractions into the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual learning dimensions, this research reveals how indigenous wisdom is effectively internalized by tourists. The historical transition from rice dependency to cassava (*karihil*) cultivation is communicated not merely as a relic of the past, but as an active, living strategy for ecological resilience.

The integration of these four learning dimensions creates a holistic and immersive tourist experience. The active physical engagement (somatic) and the observation of authentic agricultural spaces and processes (visual) provide a tangible context for alternative food production. Concurrently, the continuous oral transmission of local philosophies (auditory) delivers the socio-cultural essence of the community. Ultimately, this structured integration facilitates a cognitive transformation (intellectual), enabling tourists to critically understand that food diversification is a vital ecological mitigation strategy.

The application of the somatic, auditory, visual, and intellectual approach in Cireundeu offers a highly effective destination branding and educational model. It successfully transforms the tourists' perspective from passive consumers into active participants in environmental conservation. For practical implications, this holistic learning model can be adopted by other cultural and rural tourism destinations seeking to promote local wisdom and ecological awareness. Future research should consider investigating the long-term impacts of such educational tourism experiences on the actual dietary behaviors and environmental consciousness of tourists post-visit.

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