

PROJECT ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) AND GASTRONOMIC TOURISM IN
PERU AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF
GASTRONOMIC TOURISM THROUGH IP

MALAYSIA

Scoping study on the gastronomic tourism sector: an inventory of Malaysia's key culinary traditions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Scoping study on the gastronomic tourism sector: an inventory of Malaysia's key culinary traditions* constitutes a project output of the project entitled "Intellectual property and gastronomic tourism in Peru and other developing countries: promoting the development of gastronomic tourism through Intellectual Property" which is spearheaded, funded and coordinated by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

The main objective of the project is to build the capacity of economic operators involved in gastronomic tourism and of national authorities to use and leverage Intellectual Property (IP) tools and strategies to add value that differentiates their products and services, and to diversify their economic activities while respecting local traditions and culture.

In Malaysia this project is owned by the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) and support to this project are given by various agencies and other relevant stakeholders.

The feasibility study is divided into five chapters:

- Chapter 1 briefly introduces the country and its gastronomy, describing also the objective of the scoping study as part of the Project on intellectual property and gastronomic tourism in Peru and other developing countries: Promoting the development of gastronomic tourism through Intellectual Property.
- Chapter 2 discusses the characteristics of Malaysian gastronomy from a historical, geographical, socio-cultural and economic point of view and the impact of gastronomy on the development of local economies.
- Chapter 3 outlines the methodology of the study and describes the criteria of selection of culinary specialties for the purposes of the study.
- Chapter 4 analyzes the selected typical dishes and recipes, including their ingredients, the traditional forms of cultivation and production of these ingredients, production and processing techniques, typical cooking utensils and food habits.
- Chapter 5 is the conclusion.

This scoping study is to serve as a guide for the project's stakeholders (main tourism, gastronomy and other public entities and opinion leaders in the sector) to discuss and gather information regarding the current challenges they face in the gastronomic tourism sector related to Intellectual Property (IP). The scoping study will also serve as a basis for the selection of a number of culinary traditions from the 15 dishes put forward from each State in Malaysia, for which an analysis of the IP-related areas of the value chain will be further developed in accordance with the objective of the project.

The dishes are (1) Nasi lemak, (2) Nasi dagang, (3) Nasi beriyani gam Johore, (4) Nasi Daging Air asam from Perlis and Kedah, (5) Nasi kerabu from Kelantan and Trengganu, (6) Laksam, (7) Lemang, (8) Laksa from different territories in Malaysia, (9) Ambuyat and Linut from Sabah and Sarawak, (10) Tempoyak ikan Patin from Pahang, (11) Rendang Tok from Perak, (12) Gulai Daging Salai from Negeri Sembilan, (13) Asam Pedas from Malacca, (14) Satay and (15) Nasi Kandar from Penang.

Another long-term result should be the possibility of identifying Malaysia dishes and products through various IP tools, which would facilitate their marketability on the domestic and

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international markets. This would result in a positive outcome of putting Malaysian gastronomy on the world map.

This study does not cover the intellectual property aspect since another study will be conducted on the area of the intellectual property aspect of gastronomy in Malaysia.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Malaysia and the impact of gastronomy and tourism in Malaysian economy

Malaysia is a country in the Southeast Asia, separated by the South China Sea into West Malaysia and East Malaysia. It consists of a federation of 13 states and 3 federal territories. The neighboring countries surrounding Malaysia are Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam and the Philippines.



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West Malaysia consists of states Kedah, Perlis, Perak and Penang in the north, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Selangor, the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya in the middle and of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan on the eastern side of the Peninsular.

East Malaysia consists of state Sabah and Sarawak, while the island of Labuan forms the third limb of the Federal Territory area.

The capital city is Kuala Lumpur, whereas the administrative capital for the Malaysian Federal government is Putrajaya. The national language of the country is Bahasa Malaysia or Malay but English is taught as a subject from primary school to tertiary education and thus is widely spoken and written by the masses. Other prominent language is Mandarin, Indian and other local dialect such as Hokkien, Javanese, Minang etc.

Malaysia has a population of 32 million people. The three major ethnic groups are Malay (67.5 % of the population), Chinese (24.6%) and Indian (7.3%). Islam is the official religion, almost 61% percent of the population practices Islam. Other religions include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and traditional Chinese religions. Malaysia is a place where a multitude of communities coexist. Their cultures are reflected in many social and economic facets of the society, including in the country's gastronomy. Thus, in terms of gastronomy, Malaysia is a melting pot and its culinary specialties have become tourist attractions. Thus, in terms of gastronomy, Malaysia is a melting pot.

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The local weather is equatorial and affected by the annual northeast (October to February) and southwest (April to October) monsoons. However, due to climate changes, monsoons arrive either earlier or later than estimated. The temperature ranges from 26 C to 33 C each day with about 12 hours daylight each day.

The government is framed under a federal constitutional elective monarchy and Parliamentary democracy similar to the Westminster Parliamentary System, a legacy of British colonial ruling.

Malaysia gained independence from the British in 1957. It was initially an agricultural oriented country which produced and exported rubber and palm oil. In the early 1970, agriculture dedicated about 60% of its Gross Domestic product. Later in 1980s, the emphasis shifted where Malaysia started to produce electronics and electrical goods. It also divested itself into the production of iron and cement as well as starting a national car industry namely PROTON.

In 1995 onwards Malaysia ventures into the service-oriented country. These sectors would cover education, finance, and more importantly tourism. Now Malaysia is regarded as a newly industrialized nation. Its GDP in 2019 based on purchasing power parity is worth approximately \$380 billion, the 25th largest in the world. Malaysia is striving to increase the share of tourism, health care and other services from 55.2 percent of GDP in 2013 to 65 percent in 2020. Malaysia ranks 36th among the 132 economies featured in the Global Innovation Index, released by WIPO in 2021.

Gastronomic tourism is an emerging phenomenon that is being developed as a new tourism product, due to the fact that over a third of tourist spending is devoted to food. Wolf (2002) pointed out that gastronomic tourism motivates tourists to enjoy both food and unforgettable dining experience at the same time. In this sense, destination and location play a significant role presenting gastronomic tourism as a key factor in the competitiveness of tourist destinations through motivating tourists and in determining their choice (Henderson, 2009). As a result, tasting local foods has formed an important path to enjoy the local culture (Long, 2004), where Cohen and Avieli (2004) argue that local foods might be an attraction or impediment to tourist experience. Within this framework, it becomes important to differentiate the bridge between nature and the motives of human being and gastronomic experiences effecting factors like emotions and satisfaction. Schmitt (1999 and 2003) discussed the role of a holistic experience which resulted from the interaction of sensorial (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), behavioral (act) and social (relate) experiences.

Tourism activities and products are not only seen related to accommodation, leisure, recreation, sports, culture but also food since over a third of tourist spending is devoted to food. This led to emerging gastronomic tourism is an emerging phenomenon that is being developed as a new tourism product. Wolf (2002) pointed out that gastronomic tourism motivates tourists to enjoy both food and unforgettable dining experience at the same time. In this sense, destination and location play a significant role presenting gastronomic tourism as a key factor in the competitiveness of tourist destinations through motivating tourists and in determining their choice (Henderson, 2009). As a result, tasting local foods has formed an important path to enjoy the local culture (Long, 2004), where Cohen and Avieli (2004) argue that local foods might be an attraction or impediment to tourist experience. Within this framework, it becomes important to differentiate the bridge between nature and the motives of human being and gastronomic experiences effecting factors like emotions and satisfaction. Schmitt (1999 and 2003) discussed the role of a holistic experience which resulted from the interaction of sensorial (sense), affective (feel), cognitive (think), behavioral (act) and social (relate) experiences, transportation, business but it goes beyond that. Efforts are continually being made by international organizations to discover new tourism products

and activities that would provide a great market opportunity to be promoted as excitement and motivation factors to encourage tourists to come to a particular destination.

Of the many new tourism products identified gastronomy is the most relevant to the Malaysian context. These tourism products are now seen as valuable means of attracting tourists from all over the world to visit Malaysia. This study investigates the Malaysian gastronomy tourism products and is worth reiterating that the inclination of food, beverages and food related cultures to become one of the important tourism products for Malaysia are significantly promising. With this inclination, the Ministry of Tourism through Malaysian Tourism Promotional Board need to increase what they have done now of promoting the glorious haven of the country as land of fascinating, Island life, adventures, sauna, fauna and city excitement to the international tourists but make known what Malaysia can offer for arriving tourist relation to tourism gastronomy products. The government in fact starts to realize and aspires that this country can also be as 'gastronomy paradise'. This is in line with what the Director General, Tourism Malaysia said; "Food has become an important tourism product for our country as it enriches the experience of the visiting tourist. We are certainly ready to entice travelers to our shores and offer them a flavor of Malaysia Truly Asia."

1.2 Project on Intellectual Property and Gastronomic Tourism in Malaysia

Within the framework of the Committee on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP) in November 2018, WIPO Member States had agreed to a proposal put forward by the Delegation of Peru. The proposal consisted on launching of a project that would seek to promote intellectual property (IP) related to culinary traditions (food and beverages) for use in the tourism sector (please see document CDIP/22/14 Rev. available at https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=50417).

In June 2019, the Government of Malaysia expressed its interest in participating in the project. Currently, the project is implemented in Peru, Cameroon, Malaysia and Morocco.

The project was launched in Malaysia by WIPO and MyIPO with the approval of Country-Level Project Plan in July 2019. The project aims to:

- allow the mapping, development and sustainable use of culinary traditions of Malaysia,
- strengthen the capacity of economic operators linked to the gastronomic tourism sector and national authorities, including MyIPO, to use and take advantage of IP tools and strategies, and
- raise awareness of the advantages that the use of IP can bring to gastronomic tourism activities.

The scoping study on the gastronomic tourism sector will provide a mapping of key culinary traditions in Malaysia. It constitutes the first step of the project.

The next step will consist in presenting the study in a round table that will bring together the main tourism, gastronomy and IP public entities and stakeholders of Malaysia, as well as opinion leaders in the sector, in order to discuss and gather information regarding the current challenges they face in the gastronomic tourism sector related to IP, and how they are coping with them.

Based on this scoping study and the results of the round table, an analysis of the IP-related areas of the value chain of selected culinary traditions in Malaysia will be provided. The analysis will aim at identifying potential IP tools, which could be used for the promotion of the selected traditions throughout their value chain.

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The following are the agencies that will garner the most benefit out of the project:

- Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, responsible for tourism, culture, archives, library, museum, heritage, arts, theatre, handicraft, visual arts, convention, exhibitions, Islamic Tourism and craft;
- Department of Tourism in each state of Malaysia;
- Malaysian Tourism Centre (MaTic);
- Malaysian Tourist Guides Association;
- Malaysian Tourist Guides Council;
- Malaysian Women Tourist Guide Association;
- Pahang Tourist Guide Association;
- Negeri Sembilan Tourist Guide Association;
- Malaysian Association of Tour Agency;
- States Association of Tour Guide;
- Malaysian Chinese Tourism Association;
- Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA);
- Malaysian Association of Hotels;
- Malaysia Budget Hotel Association;
- The Malaysian Food and Beverage Executives Association;
- Cafe Owners Alliance.

Additional to these main players in the industries, the supporting or downstream beneficiaries would be those involved in the supply chain such as the producers or breeders of the raw materials used in each special culinary dish.

CHAPTER 2: SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF MALAYSIAN GASTRONOMY

2.1 Introduction to Malaysian Gastronomy

Ainuddin defined Malay food by five characteristics: (1) rich in herbs and spices; (2) coconut milk is one of the main ingredients; (3) usually spicy; (4) meat is usually stewed with a thick gravy; and (5) fried fish and seafood are usually seasoned with turmeric powder.

Analyzing these characteristics one can certainly say that Malaysian gastronomy has deep historical roots nourishing from a rich biodiversity spread over a wide geographical area. The historic socio-cultural diversity has had an impact on the formation of Malaysian gastronomy, which in turn, impacts the development of tourism, agriculture and economy in general and local economies, in particular.

Representative Malay food includes plain rice with different kinds of dishes, meat or fish with spices, including glutinous rice or different kinds of fried rice.

In addition, the noodles are also highly prized dishes, particularly in Malaysian Chinese cuisine, no matter if they are pre-fried noodles or vermicelli derived from wheat, rice or green beans.

Meat (mostly beef and poultry), fish and seafood are also consumed at a large scale. Locally-grown vegetables are available year-round and add complement deliciously the Malaysian diet.

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The desserts are special and delicious, mostly containing coconut milk, tropical fruits and, in some cases, rice and noodles.

As to the beverages, soft drinks, fruit juices, teas or coffees and in some cases, wines, harmoniously complements any meal. The country's culture is a combination of Malay, Chinese, Indian, and several native tribes. According to the report of census in 2000, over half of the populations in Malaysian cuisine is a mixture of Malay, Thai, Indian, Chinese and other cultures to create a fruitful and new cuisine of their own. Malaysian Cuisine is influenced by other ethnic group like the Arabs, Thai, Peranakan and Nyonya's and the native tribes in Sabah and Sarawak.

2.1.1 Rice as a staple food

Rice is the staple food for all Malaysians and a very important defining culture for all the races in Malaysia. Malaysians consume the grain daily either as cooked rice or indirectly in the form of rice flour. Malaysian consumed about 80kg of rice per person per year which amounted to about 26% of total calorie intake per day. This cost an average of RM44/month per household.

Before independence, paddy was only cultivated by small-scale Malay farmers. Post-independence the development of paddy cultivation received special attention by the government especially through the launch of the Green Book Plan (1979) and also during the First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970). More initiatives were undertaken with the establishment of dedicated agricultural research institution and the formation of key granary area. In 1969 the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) was established to spearhead research in agriculture and this institute has been the leading entity for research on paddy and rice. In 1971 Lembaga Padi dan Beras Negara (LPN) was formed to oversee the adequate supply of rice. Farmers organization was consolidated through the setting up of National Farmers Organization (NAFAS) in 1972. Continued improvement was made by the ability to have two harvests per year and other significant improvement in farming practices.

For domestic paddy production, Malaysia relies primarily on ten key granary areas, among which are the following:

- Muda Agricultural Development Authority (MADA) (this is in the Northern Peninsular of Malaysia which produces about 38.8% of the total national paddy production and is known as the "Rice Bowl" of the nation);
- Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority (KADA);
- Integrated Agricultural Development area (IADA) Barat Laut Selangor;
- IADA Pulau Pinang;
- IADA Ketara;
- IADA Pekan;
- IADA Rompin.

Despite having ten granary areas, Malaysia still imports rice since rice is the staple food for all Malaysians. Malaysians eat rice or rice-related products for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

2.1.2 Cultural impact on Malaysian gastronomy

Since Malaysia is made up of people from different cultural background, the influence of all these cultures such as Malays, Javanese, Minangkabau, Indian, Chinese, Arab and natives has impacted Malaysian gastronomy. As a result, Malaysian food and flavours are highly varied. Malaysian food can be very rich and spicy as well as sweet and sour depending on

the dish prepared. Malaysians love to eat and love their foods. It is normal to greet a friend by asking him "Have you eaten? (Dah makan?).

Malaysia has a rich cultural life, much of which revolves around the traditional festivities of its population. Malays, the majority of whom are Muslim, celebrate major Muslim holidays such as Hari Raya Puasa ("Holiday of Fasting"), or Aidilfitri, which is a day to celebrate the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Another important day is Hari Raya Haji ("Holiday of the Pilgrimage"), or Aidiladha, to celebrate the culmination of the season of pilgrimage to Mecca. Malays of Chinese origin, who are Buddhists, celebrate and honor the life of the Buddha on Hari Wesak ("Wesak Day"). Additionally, Chinese Malaysians celebrate Chinese New Year.

Malays of Indian origin celebrate the Hindu festival of lights, called Deepavali (Diwali). Meanwhile, for the Christian, Christmas is celebrated on the 25th of December each year in Malaysia. For the native of Sabah and Sarawak there is also the State holidays for the celebration of the harvest festivals, known as Hari Gawai in Sarawak (Gawai Dayak Harvest Festivals) and Pesta Keamatan in Sabah, which are celebrated to give thanks for a bountiful rice harvest. The people of Sabah believe that rice was a gift from their God who sacrificed his daughter for that purpose. Thus, every year, Sabahan go through the Magavau ritual in order to invite the spirit of Bambaazon to attend the festival.

To celebrate most of these holidays, it is customary to host an "open house" or "rumah terbuka", where guests are treated to Malaysian delicacies and hospitality. Open house means that the host house is open to receive well-wishers and guests. Everyone is invited to attend regardless of their cultural or religious background, and varieties of food are served at the "open house".

Beside the official holidays and other religious festivities, other important events such as birth, circumcision (for young Muslim men), engagement and marriage are usually celebrated by a feast, known as *kenduri*. The wedding ceremony is generally the most important and elaborate of such events among both Malay and non-Malay peoples. In rural areas the *kenduri* is normally held at the host family's house, while in urban areas the feast often takes place in a large hall or hotel.

Malaysian cuisines served at open house or the *kenduri* reflect the mixture of ethnic groups in the country's population. The three most prominent cuisines are Chinese, Indian, and Malay. Popular Chinese foods include sweet-and-sour Cantonese dishes and a milder favorite, such as Hainanese chicken rice. Indian cuisine ranges from the hot vegetarian dishes of southern Indian cooking to the more subtly spiced Muslim Indian food to the yogurt-marinated meats of tandoori cookery from northern India. All these foods, while recognizably Chinese or Indian, have developed a distinctly Malaysian character.

2.1.3 Biodiversity impact on Malaysian gastronomy

Malaysia is one of the world's megadiverse countries. It is also ranked 12th in the world, according to the National Biodiversity Index, which is based on estimates of country richness and endemism in four terrestrial vertebrate classes and vascular plants.

Malaysian biodiversity has an impact on its gastronomy. Malaysia has undergone rapid economic development since independence, which is attributed to the utilization of the country's rich natural resources and development of human capital.

Based on 2012 statistics, approximately 60% of the country's total land area is still forested, including permanent reserved forest (PRF), state land forests, national parks, and wildlife and bird sanctuaries. This is in line with Malaysia's commitment to maintain at least 50% of forest and tree cover in perpetuity, as pledged at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In addition, a total of 10.6% of Malaysia's land area has been designated as terrestrial protected areas. The remaining land uses comprise agricultural crops, rubber plantations, oil palm plantations, urban and other uses. Malaysia has an estimated 15,000 species of vascular plants, 306 species of mammals, 742 species of birds, 242 species of amphibians, 567 species of reptiles, over 449 species of freshwater fish, over 500 species of marine fish and more than 150,000 species of invertebrates.

Marine protected areas represent a wide range of habitats, including coral reefs, sea grasses and mangrove forests. As of 2013, the Department of Marine Park Malaysia manages 248,613 hectares of marine protected areas, which include 42 islands in Peninsular Malaysia and federal territories that are gazetted as marine parks. Another 32 islands are located within the area covered by the marine park waters. Almost 20% of Peninsular Malaysia and federal territories is located within the area managed by the Department of Marine Park Malaysia. Marine protected areas cover 73,793 hectares in Sabah and are managed by Sabah Parks. In Sarawak, marine protected areas are managed by the Sarawak Forestry Department and cover 234,362.4 hectares.

Based on the 2008 IUCN Red List, Malaysia is home to 1,141 threatened species, including plants and animals. Threats to biodiversity in Malaysia include threats to ecosystems and species, such as land development, pollution, poaching and collection, encroachment, climate change and invasive alien species. While invasive alien species affect all sectors, based on past records, the agriculture sector has been most seriously affected in this regard. The main drivers of these threats consist of economic growth, increased demand for food, agricultural products, goods and services, exotic wild meat, traditional and herbal remedies, wild animals for pets and wild ornamental plants.

Malaysia attaches great importance to establishing protected areas for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. At present, 10.6% of Malaysia's land area has been designated as terrestrial protected areas. With regard to marine protected areas, in 2013, the Department of Marine Park Malaysia managed 248,613 hectares of marine protected areas, covering 42 islands in Peninsular Malaysia and federal territories that have been gazetted as marine parks. Sabah Parks and the Sarawak Forestry Department manage a total of 73,793 and 234,362.4 hectares of marine protected area, respectively. Since Malaysia shares common borders with Thailand on the peninsula, and with Indonesia in Borneo, the Federal Government has also initiated the establishment of transboundary protected areas on a bilateral basis and through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the regional

level, Malaysia is implementing the Heart of Borneo Initiative which aims to conserve 20 million hectares of forest within the 3 participating countries, namely, Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei. Out of this area, 3.9 million hectares are located in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. For marine conservation, Malaysia is also implementing the Coral Triangle Initiatives which is a joint collaboration project among 6 countries to conserve important marine biodiversity within the coral triangle area. Within the country, Malaysia has also started to implement the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Master Plan which aims to create a contiguous forest network linked through ecological corridors covering 5 million hectares in Peninsular Malaysia.

Conservation includes *in situ* and *ex situ*. For *ex situ* conservation measures, Malaysia has established a number of *ex situ* conservation centres to preserve the genetic resources of some species. For instance, traditional varieties of rice, wild rice species, and other accessions, including pure line varieties, modern high-yielding varieties, elite breeding lines and special types are stored in various seed gene banks in Malaysia. The Department of Wildlife and National Parks (DWNP) manages 11 wildlife conservation centres. The programmes include captive breeding of endangered and commercial species, research and sampling for the Wildlife Genetic Resource Bank (WGRB) and the establishment of baseline data on wildlife DNA. For example, in order to halt the decline of the Milky Stork (*Mycteria cineria*), the DWNP and the National Zoo began reintroducing this species into the mangrove forests of the Matang Forest Reserve in the State of Perak. Ongoing monitoring programmes have indicated that the storks have acclimatised to their natural habitat. The DWNP has also started to reintroduce captive bred gaur (*Bos gaurus*) into the natural habitat. In addition, various efforts have also been taken to reverse the rate of loss of natural habitats. Specific action plans also exist for flagship species, such as the National Tiger Conservation Action Plan (NTCAP) and the National Elephant Conservation Action Plan (NECAP).

To address issues on invasive alien species, a National Working Group was formed, composed of members of agencies working in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, veterinary services, environment, irrigation and drainage, wildlife, forestry, public health, medical research, maritime, transportation, aviation, customs, research institutions and universities. The working group has developed, among other plans, a National Action Plan for the Prevention, Containment, Eradication and Control of Invasive Alien Species. The Action Plan was adopted by the National Biodiversity Council in 2013.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is responsible for administering a programme dedicated to the documentation of traditional knowledge. This includes bringing together existing databases based in sectoral agencies, research institutions and universities, documenting traditional knowledge that has not yet been documented and developing a national action plan on traditional knowledge. The Government also intends to establish a Digital Library on Traditional Knowledge.

The mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations has occurred in various policies, strategies and action plans. Wildlife protection in Peninsular Malaysia is regulated by the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 (Act 716) while, in Sabah and Sarawak, the Sabah Wildlife Conservation Enactment 1997 and the Sarawak Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1998 apply respectively. The new Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 places greater emphasis on biodiversity conservation and strengthened related penalties. This legislation also includes provisions to regulate or ban the entry of a list of invasive alien species; it also complements the International Trade in Endangered Species Act (2008) that deals with the import, export and re-export of species on the CITES list throughout Malaysia. Malaysia has a national law to regulate Access to Biological Resources and

Benefit Sharing (ABS) and protect associated traditional knowledge. The adoption of the Central Forest Spine (CFS) Master Plan in 2010 and its subsequent implementation will further enhance the long-term sustainability and continuity of the forest in Peninsular Malaysia, through the development of ecological corridors between and within forest complexes.

The National Forestry Policy is currently being updated to address biodiversity concerns and provides an institutional framework for collaboration among federal and state governments in the area of forestry development and management. The Malaysian Criteria and Indicators, which are standards for forest management certification based on the International Timber Tropical Organization's (ITTO) Criteria and Indicators and the Forest Stewardship Council's Principles and Criteria, are the basis for sustainable forest management.

Concerning agricultural activities, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-based Industry has introduced good agricultural practices through the implementation of the Malaysian Farm Accreditation Scheme, Livestock Farm Accreditation Scheme, Malaysian Aquaculture Farm Certification Scheme and the Malaysian Organic Scheme. Further, a national technical committee on agricultural biodiversity has been created and is currently in the process of preparing documents for the development of national strategies and action plans for agricultural biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities are undertaken by various government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). A National CEPA Action Plan will be embedded under the NBSAP revision which is ongoing. The action plan will also include promotion of a collaborative approach and framework for encouraging synergies, strengthening links and building upon current activities and developments. Various indigenous and local communities are also involved in CBD implementation and related processes. In addition, the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Facility in Malaysia has been created to support local initiatives and enhance the capacity of NGOs and Community-based Organizations (CBOs) in the development of policies and practices.

Malaysian staples food is rice based, yet now Malaysia relies on rice imports to sustained local consumption. Similarly, local consumption on coconut milk is also increasing. Coconut milk gives the curry a rich, thick and creamy texture. Local cooking in Malaysia is heavily dependent on coconut milk and spicers such as cardamom, chilli pepper, clove, ginger, daun kesum (Vietnamese coriander), banana leaves, serai (lemon grass), daun pandan to name a few important raw produces. The biodiversity of Malaysian fauna and flora adds to the enhancement of tasty culinary dishes in Malaysia.

2.2 Economic analysis of Malaysian gastronomy and the impact on development and local economies

Of the many new tourism products identified, gastronomy is the most relevant to the Malaysian context. For examples the sales of local cuisine in big cities in Malaysia has led to the opening up of specialized restaurant that served local cuisines. Malaysia now has renowned nasi lemak restaurant such restaurant Nasi Lemak Antarabangsa, Chicken Rice Shop that concentrated only on chicken rice, various restaurant nasi kandar or restaurant and stall that served tempoyak ikan patin, Local restaurant now becomes a major competitor to the international franchises available in Malaysia such as KFC or McDonalds.

Malaysians are more health conscious. Organic grown rice and vegetables are rising in demand even though the prices might be higher. In February 15, 2019 there was a gathering of farmers, education professionals, doctors, indigenous people and activists representing eleven of the country's fourteen states as well as international body volunteers in Kedah for the first Local Farmers, Local Food gathering that was held in Malaysia for the first time. The four day conference had the goal of creating a dynamics network of local farmers who are passionate towards small farming in Malaysia. They wanted to learn about good, clean and fair food. Local Farmers, Local Food presented a Farmers Declaration at the end of the conference where they hope the single document identifying the needs and desires of their community and the importance of natural farming and agriculture. This newly formed movement wants to push for new and sustainable policies within the government as well as share best practice that farmers and activities can use in their own farms.

In 2019, the Department of Agriculture identified an area of 103,563 hectares of idle land involving 46,382 lots in Peninsular Malaysia in the Federal Territory of Labuan. Pahang and Selangor have the highest area of idle agricultural land at 29000 ha and 20000 ha respectively. This land can be used for food farming. Malaysia obtains vegetables, fruits and meats from at least 120 countries. Malaysia food imports is around RM56 billion a year. Though the country is a food paradise most food ingredients are not from local source.

These food tourism products are now seen as valuable means of attracting tourists from all over the world to visit Malaysia. This study investigated the Malaysian gastronomy tourism products and is worth reiterating that the inclination of food, beverages and food related cultures to become one of the important tourism products for Malaysia are significantly promising. With this inclination, the Ministry of Tourism through Malaysian Tourism Promotional Board need to increase what they have done now of promoting the glorious haven of the country as land of fascinating, Island life, adventures, sauna, fauna and city excitement to the international tourists but make known what Malaysia can offer for arriving tourist relation to tourism gastronomy products. The government in fact starts to realize and aspires that this country can also be as 'gastronomy paradise'. This is in line with what the Director General, Tourism Malaysia said; "Food has become an important tourism product for our country as it enriches the experience of the visiting tourist. We are certainly ready to entice travellers to our shores and offer them a flavor of Malaysia Truly Asia.

2.3 Reputation of Malaysian gastronomy, including local and foreign influence

2.3.1 Reputation of Malaysian gastronomy

The result of a study conducted by YouGov which is an international market research agency in 2019 showed that Malaysian food does not rank high among visitors. In that study 25,000 people in 24 countries were asked to rank 34 national cuisines that they had tried. Malaysian ranked 20th out of 34 cuisines. This prompted Datuk Redzuwan Ismail or Chef Wan as he is popularly known to acknowledge that Malaysian food may not have as much of a global footprint as the more ubiquitous Thai and Vietnamese cuisine.

He went on to comment that "I don't really know who these people are that they interviewed, whether they are seasoned travelers and really food connoisseurs. If it's just random people, not many of them have really travelled all over Malaysia and explored the food so a lot of it is down to ignorance," he said. "Some people have only eaten at restaurants in their own countries such as Vietnamese or Thai restaurants, so they are familiar with the food. But there are not as many Malaysian restaurants overseas, they don't exist in every street corner," he said.

Scoping study on the gastronomic tourism sector in Malaysia

In the same study, among the people polled, Malaysians were the biggest appreciators of their own cuisine, with 97% showing love of local food.

2.3.2 Local Influence

Malaysia is a multiracial country. In addition to that, there are the intermingling of the various ethnic groups. In Peninsular Malaysia, the Bumiputera (son of the land) are essentially the Malays and the Orang Asli of West Malaysia. The Malays are inclusive of various ethnic such as Javanese, Minangkabau and Bugis. In the East Malaysian states of Sarawak, Sabah, and Labuan, the Bumiputera includes all the indigenous groups such as Malay, Melanau, Dayak (including Iban, Bidayuh, and Orang Ulu), Kadazan Dusun, Bajau and other native ethnic groups as listed in Article 161A Federal Constitution. Malaysian dishes are greatly influenced by hybrid cuisine of Malaysia deriving from Chinese, Indian and Malay culture. For example, the marriages Chinese immigrant/merchants and native Malay women in Malacca during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought about the Baba-Nyonya community or the Peranakan. The Baba –Nyonya adopted Malay customs and social practices while retaining Chinese traditions and religious belief and lets to the introduction of popular Nyonya cuisine. The Malaysian gastronomic products are now a mix of various races, particularly Malays, Chinese, Indians, and other ethnic groups.

2.3.3 Foreign influence

Malaysia is a country separated by the South China Sea into two regions: Peninsular Malaysia, which is also known as West Malaysia, and East Malaysia, which is located in Borneo Island and thus shares it borders with Brunei and Indonesia. The Peninsular shares land borders with Thailand in the North and with inn in the South, Singapore is linked to it by a causeway. Malaysia is situated right above the equator.

The historical beginning started in the early 15th century, whereas a small fishing village of Melaka on the West Coast of the Malay Peninsula began to grow into a significant port. Melaka was strategically positioned as a harbor and later boomed as a multicultural center. The arrival of Arab traders around this period brought with them the practices of Islam. This later led to the conversion of the Sultan of Melaka into Islam in the middle of the 15th century. Under the feudal system once the King converts the whole of his people would convert into Islam as well. These added to an increased trade with other Muslim communities such as Indonesia and the Middle East, which had a lasting effect on Malay cuisine.

In the 15th century, Europeans too started to venture to Southeast Asia in search of spices as well as to expand their kingdom. The Portuguese were the first to arrive in Malacca, and they were later followed by the Dutch and English. The Europeans not only sought spices but also introduced many new ingredients such as peanut, pineapple, avocado, tomato, squash and pumpkin to this region. The cultural landscape of the country changed in the 19th century. Later, when Malaysia and Singapore were under the British colonial rule, the British brought in large number of Indians and Chinese to work in the rubber estates and tin mines, respectively. The influx of Indian and Chinese workers had a strong influence on Malaysian culture, language, and food. In 1963, the Federation of Malaysia was formed and comprised the states of the peninsula combined with Sabah and Sarawak.

Based on all the above history, Malaysian cuisine has been greatly influenced by traders from the neighboring countries, such as Indonesia, India, the Middle East, China, and Thailand. Malay cooking is very unique; however, it has been assimilated to other influences such Arab, Indonesian, Thai, Portuguese, Chinese, and Indian.

According to Brissenden, Malay food emerged during the 13th century and continuously developed during the trading years, where it was greatly influenced by Thailand and Indonesia. It can be categorized based on the regions. Given the history of Malaysia, it is understandable that in the northern states of Penang, Perlis, and Kedah (which are closer to Thailand), liking for fiery-hot spicy and sour flavors is quite strong. In Penang, tamarind, sour carambola, and limes are used for tanginess, fragrance, and sourness and fiery-hot fresh bird's eye chilies, so often present in Thai food, are also popular in the northern states <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352618117301737> - bib10.

Further east, the cuisine of the state of Kelantan, which borders Thailand, and Terengganu, which borders Kelantan, also shows distinct Thai influence. The use of kaffir lime leaves, torch ginger, and mint leaves in rice dishes such as nasi kerabu, a popular Kelantan dish that bursts with green confetti of wild pepper leaves, basil, and daun kesum (Vietnamese coriander), is another influence from Thai dishes.

Malaysia is further enriched by culinary heritage it shares with neighboring countries and regions. As a result, Malaysia is one of the few places where one could find an amalgamation of flavors and varieties of heritage food, which stands as a living proof of the famous motto ***Malaysia, Truly Asia***.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Primary data and secondary data

This study adopted a qualitative method. Both primary and secondary data have been collected by the author from first-hand observation, interviews, questionnaires, access from the library, archives and online data bases and other internet forums.

3.2 Geographic coverage and field work

To first identify the culinary specialties of each of the States of Malaysia, an initial field work was carried out by the author in the following states: Sabah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Malacca, Penang, Kedah, Pahang, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Negeri Sembilan. Observation was made on the popularity of the dish and its availability to the public, as well as its historical origin. This field work was conducted before the Movement Control Order was proclaimed by the Government due to an increase in Covid-19 cases in Malaysia. During the initial field works the author was able to list down all the culinary dishes popular in each of the states and gain better insights as to their history and preparations.

It had been planned that, once the final list agreed upon by MyIPO, there would be a second round of field work to further investigate the historical and socio-cultural implications, economic impacts, reputation and other matters related to selected specialties. However, Malaysia being still under Movement Control Order, conducting further field works and interviews proved to be impossible. Therefore, the possible way out from that situation was to conduct online interviews and searches in available online materials.

As a result, from September 2020 onward, secondary data was obtained through library and research based on journals and articles from the internet and information available from websites of various stakeholders.

3.3 Interviews

During the field work interviews were held with restaurant owners, café owners and traders in the local market. In view of the Movement Control Order that restricted inter district and interstate travel, further interviews were done through virtual means. The question that was repeatedly asked was the acceptance of local delicacy amongst local and foreigner especially in big cities like Kuala Trengganu, Kuantan, Langkawi and Kota Kinabalu. Majority of the interviewee agreed that those who came to consume and purchase the local delicacies were mainly local customers . These maybe due to the impact of COVID 19 which put Malaysia under Movement Control Order and the closing of Malaysian borders to foreigners.

3.4 Selection criteria of food specialties

After the initial field work, a first list was prepared and presented to MyIPO for consideration by MyIPO' officials.

This first list included the following dishes from West Malaysia: nasi lemak, nasi ayam, yong tau fu, mee rebus, char kuey tau, roti canai, ayam golek, ketupat sotong, laksa, laksam, nasi dagang, nasi kerabu, nasi daging, pais ikan, pasembor, asam laksa, rending tok, gulai daging salai, rendang Negeri Sembilan, ikan pekasam, ikan bakar, gulai udang galah and others.

For Sabah and Sarawak, the first list of dishes included laksa Sarawak, Ambuyat, Linut, Sabah vege, ulat Mulong, Sayur Midin, Umai, Ayam Pansuh, mee kolok, Mee Tuaran, Hinava and Kuih Cincin, daging masak hitam, ikan masin terubuk, kek lapis, gula apong bubur pedas, ketupat lau, rojak kucei and buah dabeii.

First of all, MyIPO and the author agreed on applicable selection criteria of Malaysian specialties for the purposes of the study. After long and careful consideration, it was accepted that one important criteria towards including the specialties in the inventory would be the geographical representation. Therefore, each State in Malaysia is represented by at least one popular dish. The final list has a total of 15 culinary dishes.

CHAPTER 4: INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS OF SELECTED MALAYSIAN CULINARY SPECIALTIES

Fifteen traditional dishes, representative of different regions/culinary traditions in Malaysia, selected as per the methodology explained in the previous chapter, are further analyzed from the following points of view: the ingredients, the traditional forms of cultivation and production of these ingredients, production and processing techniques, typical cooking utensils and food habits, such as ways of cooking and ways of serving. Some examples illustrates how local delicacy or cuisine can be capitalized to provide employment opportunities, growth in uses of local ingredients such banana leaves and coconut, chillies, peanuts, spices, lemon grass etc.

4.1 Nasi lemak

The iconic *Nasi Lemak* is a very popular breakfast menu all over Malaysia. It is a traditional Malay cuisine from West Malaysia but commonly found everywhere in Malaysia and considered as a national dish. Initially, consumed only for breakfast *Nasi Lemak* are nowadays available at all times of the day in stalls, restaurants and hotels.



The word *Nasi Lemak* comes from the effect of using coconut milk to cook the white rice. And for the distinctive fragrant floral smell *pandan* leaves or screwpine leaves are added together to the rice while it's being cook. Both the coconut milk and *pandan* leaves gave nasi lemak its distinctive aroma. A *Nasi Lemak* will not be authentic without the pandan leaves and coconut milk. *Daun pandan* or *Pandan* leaves or screwpine leaves are the secret ingredient added to the rice. The leaves are highly fragrant with floral smell.



Historically, *Nasi Lemak* was stated to begin amongst Malays community that lived near the seacoast. To cook the rice, coconut milk is used. Coconuts grow abundantly along the beach front. *Sambal tumis ikan bilis*, or anchovies cooked in chilli paste and tamarind seeds, are added to the rice. Boil eggs are added together with slice cucumber to the cooked rice. *Nasi Lemak* is usually served with *sambal tumis*, fried crispy anchovies, toasted peanuts, boil egg and slice cucumber. It is a complete meal all by itself. All this provides protein and energy in the morning to the paddy planters and fishermen. The *Nasi Lemak* is wrapped with banana leaves for the ease of packing to bring to the paddy fields.

Nasi Lemak is cooked over a slow fire. The rice can also be steamed. Today the rice is easily cooked in an electric rice cooker.

The ingredients for cooking *Nasi Lemak* are the following:

- White rice
- Coconut milk
- *Daun pandan* (screw pines leaves)



Daun pandan/screw pines leaves

Today, added dishes such as fried chicken, beef or chicken *rending*, act as additional complement to the main dish.

Nasi Lemak is also served during festivities. The price of *Nasi Lemak* is cheap and the dish is very popular with city dwellers, being easily available either in stall or restaurant. *Nasi Lemak* is also served by Malaysian Airlines.

Nasi Lemak is popular not just in Malaysia but also in Sumatera. In Jakarta it is called *Nasi Uduk* and in Central Jawa it is known as *Nasi Liwet*, whereas in Aceh it is call *Nasi Gurih*.

This dish has made an impact into the development of local economy. One such example is the famous *Nasi Lemak Saleha* which is well known among local nasi lemak lovers.

The *Nasi Lemak Saleha* is aromatic and wrapped in banana leaves. Saleha Abdullah started her business venture in a small stall/warung 10 years ago. She was initially working with her late mother in a small shop. Her husband recommended that she sell nasi lemak in Kpg Pandan. She started selling nasi lemak with the beginning of one kilo of rice per day.

In 2009 with rm3000 she expanded her business. After 10 years her business now earned almost rm400,000.00 a month. She did not take any loan from the bank. Currently her business has expended to have a second branch in Sri Rampai where they managed to purchased a building worth RM3.8 million with the help of PUNB.

Nasi Lemak Saleha today has 60 employee and has a daily income of rm12000 a day. Customers can buy *Nasi Lemak Saleha* in selected Shell Petrol stations in the Klang Valley as well as through their official website. *Nasi Lemak Saleha* can also be bought online through Foodpanda.

4.2 Nasi Dagang

Nasi Dagang (Trader's Rice) is a very common breakfast enjoyed by the masses along the eastern coast of the Malay Peninsular namely the states of Terengganu and Kelantan. There are two types of *Nasi Dagang*.

Nasi Dagang from Kelantan are prepared with husked red rice or popularly known as *Beras Nasi Dagang*.

The manner of cooking is similar as to cooking *Nasi Dagang Terengganu* and also eaten with *gulai ikan tongkol* (red tuna curry) and *acar Timun* (cucumber pickles).



Kelantan Trader's Rice

The manner of cooking and the ingredients



Trader's Rice from Trengganu

In Terengganu, the rice is prepared using a mixture of white rice (usually fragrant) which is soaked with one part glutinous rice. It is then cooked through steaming the rice and adding coconut milk for its wonderful aroma. Slices of shallots and fenugreek are added on last steaming of the rice.

This rice is eaten with *Gulai Ikan Tongkol* which is a spicy red fish curry cooked with tuna and spices.

The spices consist of top-fennel seeds, coriander seeds, fenugreek seeds and black peppercorn.

Blended dried chillies and coconut milk are added to it. *Belacan* (dried toasted shrimp paste) and palm sugar are also added for taste. To complement the dish "acar timun" or cucumber pickles are served.

Additionally, sometimes red chicken curry is served as an alternative to the *gulai ikan tongkol*. Added to the curry are hard boil eggs, toasted coconut, *sambal* and fish crackers.

Nasi Dagang today are well accepted as a breakfast menu not just in Kelantan and Terengganu but also all over the peninsular and in East Malaysia. The produce required to cook this dish is easily obtained from the local market. *Nasi Dagang* are available in most states, being sold either in stalls, restaurant and are part of the menu in some Five Star Hotels in Malaysia.

4.3 Nasi Beriyani Gam Johor (From Johore)

Nasi Beriyani Gam Johor is another popular Malay rice dish originating from Johore. The resepi is brought into Johore during *Kesultanan Melayu Johor-Linggi*.



The word *beriani* are taken from Parsi which means to fry or to roast. Various spelling of *biryani* includes *biryani*, *buriyani*, *biriani* or *beriani*. *Beriyani* has a long history. It's stated that it's invented in the kitchen of Mungal Muslim Maharaja. Its popularity reaches Southeast Asia, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Malabar, Delhi, Agra, Dhaka, Kashmir, Karachi, Lucknow and Lahore. The traders from Southern India brought the dishes to the Malay Peninsular and obtained royal acceptance by the Johor – Linggi Malay Sultanate.

The recipe was modified to add more Malay accepted taste and the name *Nasi Beriyani Gam Johor* was coined.

The ingredient and manner of cooking

The rice is cooked using Basmati rice, usually long grain Basmati rice. Beef or chicken is added to the rice together with herbs and spicers. The beef and chicken are usually marinated for a few hours before it is added to the rice and cooked.

Nasi Beriyani Gam is very popular for weddings and other important celebrations. Now it is served in restaurant and Beriyani house.



4.4 Nasi Daging Air Asam from Kedah and Perlis

This is a popular rice dish from Kedah in the Northern part of Peninsular Malaysia. It is also popular in Perlis.

Manner of cooking

The beef is boiled with spicers and salt until it becomes tender. The water is then added to the rice and cooked. Sometimes the beef can be added together to the rice.

Once the rice is cooked, it can be served together with the beef and tamarind sauce.

The meat is beef meat and it is dip into the *air asam* or sauce that are made purely from tamarind seed, onion, red chillies and a bit of palm sugar.

Salads are added to supplement the dish. Additionally, a simple curry is also served together with the rice.

Today *Nasi Daging* is gaining popularity all over Malaysia and can be found in many restaurants or stalls in major cities in Malaysia.



4.5 Nasi Kerabu from Kelantan and Terengganu

Nasi Kerabu is a rice dish that originated from the state of Kelantan and Terengganu in East Peninsular of Malaysia. The rice is blue in colour which comes from the petals of flowers called “Bunga Telang” (*Clitoria ternatea* or butterfly-pea) or “morning glory” which is as a natural food colouring in the cooking.

The word “kerabu” is a common Malay reference for salad or green vegetables salads which are usually eaten raw. The “kerabu” is also used in preparation of dishes such as *Kerabu Mangga* (Mango) or *Kerabu Pucuk Betik* (from young papaya leaves of trees).

The *kerabu* comprises of finely shredded local herbs and vegetables in the raw. Usually, the cook is likely to use what is available in the garden or vegetation surrounding the home compound.



Nasi kerabu

The Kelantanese *Nasi Kerabu* has a hint of Thai origin thus it has a stronger hint of the herbs such as lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves and zest, lime zest, Thai basil and wild pepper leaf (*daun kaduk*). Additional to that, the Malays love *Nasi Kerabu* which has torch ginger flower, turmeric leaf, and *daun kesum*.

The manner of preparation

The rice is cooked together with colouring from *Bunga Telang* to give the rice the blue colour distinctive of *Nasi Kerabu*. It is a complex dish involving various components: the rice, herb salad, a coconut and fish relish, a spicy *sambal* sauce or two and various condiments.



Bunga Telang/morning glory



Bunga Telang/Morning Glory grows wild

All the elements are made separately and assembled on a plate for serving. The finely shredded ingredients and dressings that are tossed together with the rice. While aromatic herbs provide the top notes, vegetables form the base of *Nasi Kerabu*. These vegetables include long beans, bean sprouts, cabbage, four angle beans and cucumber.

The fishy taste comes from fish and *Budu*, the region’s iconic fermented fish sauce used in the gravy (*kuah sambal tumis*). Some cooks use *Belacan* as well or use it as a *budu* substitute. The relish is made from toasted, grated coconut tossed with flakes of freshly grilled fish, grated ginger, sugar, salt and pepper.

Various accompaniments include *Solok Lada* (stuffed green chilli), salted duck egg, *keropak ikan* (fish cracker), fried fish or roasted chicken and fried or roasted beef.

Usually, *Nasi Kerabu* is eaten with one main dish such as dried fish/fried fish, fried chicken/roasted chicken, or fried /roasted beef. Added to that will be the salted duck egg, pickles, salad, and crackers. It can also be paired with *Solok Lada* (stuffed green chilli). This dish is very popular for breakfast though now it can be purchased anytime of the day. It is sold in stalls, restaurants and hotels.

4.6 Laksam (flat wide noodles)

Laksam is traditionally associated with the regions of Kelantan and Terengganu. It is very popular local dish for breakfast. It consists of rolled rice noodles served in a rich and creamy fish broth.

Manner of preparation

The noodles are prepared with a thin rice flour batter that is poured on a flat surface, steamed, and then rolled and sliced into bite-sized pieces. The rice flour is added with ordinary flour and steamed.

The broth is made from fish paste which has been debone added together to coconut milk and is usually seasoned with ginger, shallots and garlic.

Once the broth is cooked, it is poured on top of the noodles and complemented with vegetable such as long bean, *Daun Kantan* and salad leaves are added to it together with chilli *sambal*.



Laksam

4.7 Lemang (Glutinous rice cook in bamboo)

Lemang is a traditional Malay food that is made from glutinous rice. Coconut milk and salt are added to the glutinous rice and it is then cooked in a hollowed bamboo tube coated with banana leaves. The banana leaves prevent the glutinous rice from sticking to the bamboo.



The bamboo is placed beside a fire and rotated to ensure the rice is cooked evenly and not burnt.



Cooking Lemang

Lemang is an iconic food during *Hari Raya* Festive Season. *Lemang* are paired off with other dishes such as “rendang ayam” or “rendang daging”. During the *Hari Raya* celebration almost all Malay households will be having *Lemang* as part of their dish for the celebration.

The main ingredients for cooking *lemang*:

i. Glutinous rice

There are many varieties of rice in the world with different shapes and sizes ranging from the long and slender to the short and tubby. In the world market as well as in Malaysia, much emphasis is placed on grain length and whiteness as a criterion of grade and quality. Other factors such as palatability characteristics (appearance, cohesiveness, tenderness and flavor) also constitute as important considerations in quality grading.

In Malaysia, the main varieties of rice found in retail outlets are ordinary local and imported white rice, brown unpolished rice and specialty rice such as fragrant rice, Basmati, parboiled and glutinous rice. The main criteria in the classification are length of grain, content of head rice, content of broken rice and milling degree.

Glutinous rice goes by many names including sticky, waxy and sweet rice. The medium-length, opaque-white grain originated from the *Oryza Sativa L. Glutinosa* variety. Glutinous rice is a starchy grain that will become soft and mushy if cooked the same way as regular rice. Usually the best way to prepare this rice is to soak and steam it. When cooked, the grain loses its shape and becomes soft and sticky. The taste is silky and rich with a mild sweet aftertaste. To cook *Lemang* only glutinous rice is used to get the sticky texture.

ii. Coconut milk

The coconut is grated finely and squeezed to get the fresh milk without adding any water.. This will ensure that the milk produce will be thick and juicy. Sometimes the grated coconut is placed in a muslin cloth and squeezed tightly until the coconut milk is produced.

Coconut milks are used extensively in cooking of a varieties of dishes in Malaysia. Its use is dominant compared to milk, butter or ghee in cooking. In Malaysia, coconut is the fourth largest industrial crop behind oil palm, rubber and rice. Most of the plantation can be found in Sabah and Sarawak. According to a report by the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), Malaysia is among the top 10 coconut producers in the world.

iii. Banana leaves

Banana leaves are used to line the inner part of the bamboo before the glutinous rice is poured into the bamboo.

Historically, Malaysia was a net exporter of bananas. Banana is easy to grow and most houses in the village will grow their banana for the fruits or for the leaves. Beside the fruits, various parts of the banana are utilized, for example, the banana leaves are used to line the bamboo. The banana leaves add the fragrance smell to the *Lemang*.

iv. Bamboo

To cook *Lemang* in the traditional way, bamboo is a very important ingredient. Malaysia has about 70 species of bamboo. 50 of the species can be found in Peninsular Malaysia, 30 species can be found in Sabah and 20 species can be found in Sarawak. Bamboos are evergreen perennial flowering plants in the subfamily *Bambusoideae* of the grass family *Poaceae*. The bamboo that is used for making *Lemang* must have a texture that is not too hard or else it will be difficult to cut open the bamboo when the rice is cook. The scientific name for this type of bamboo is called *schizostachyum brachycladum* and it can reach up to 10-15 metres tall when it's fully grown.

Initially, bamboo for *Lemang* making was not readily available during non-festive season. But now, because of the popularity of *Lemang*, effort is made by bamboo supplier to those involved in selling *Lemang* during non-festive season. Thus, *Lemang* is available at some night market and some restaurant. The bamboo can also be bought online from suppliers.

4.8 Laksa from different territory in Malaysia

Laksa is spicy noodles soup dish, popular all over Malaysia, as well as in Southeast Asia. It consists of thick noodles made from rice. *Laksa* is widely available all over Malaysia but each differing in the type of spices and accompanying broth. It's called various name such as *Laksa Penang*, *Laksa Kedah*, *Laksa Pahang*, *Laksa Kuala* in Perak, *Laksa Kuala Perlis*, *Laksa Nyonya*, *Laksa Johore*, *Laksa Sarawak*, *Laksa Kelantan*, *Laksa kari*, *Laksa kuah Putih* and *Laksa Kuah Merah* in Terengganu and Kelantan.

The word *laksa* can be traced in various languages. In Persia/Hindi the word "lakshah" meant "meehoon". In Sanskrit the word *laksa* came from the word "lakshas" which meant "ten thousand" which refers to various ingredients used to prepare the dish. In Kantonese the word *laksa* came from the word "La sha" which meant hot spicy sand since a lot of dried prawns are used to prepare the broth.

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Laksa is brought into the Peninsular by Chinese traders as early as the 15th Century. The intermarriages between the Chinese traders and the Malay women led to a new race that is called Peranakan. These lead to the introduction of *Laksa Nyonya*.

The *Laksa* noodles are made from rice and can be bought easily in most shops all over Malaysia.

CNN Travel had list *Penang Assam Laksa* in its list of the “World ‘s 50 best foods”. *Penang Assam Laksa* rank 7th in the updated 2021 list by CNN Travel.

Laksa Sarawak is served with *Bee Hoon* (Rice vermicelli). The color of the broth is red orange. Prawns and sambal are added together with beansprout.

Laksa Sarawak was introduced by Goh Lik Tek in the year 1945 along Carpenter Street in Kuching.

Another family called Tan Yong Him made changes to the recipe by adding spicers and herbs which was sold as laksa paste for Sarawak.



Laksa Sarawak

Laksa Kedah, *Laksa Penang* and *Laksa Kuala Perlis* are more or less similar except there is a slight difference in the preparation of the broth.

Laksa Penang use as a basis pieces of fish that had been boiled and shredded into little pieces. This is added to the boils together with fresh red chillies, onion, garlic, galangal and lemongrass. Tamarind juice from tamarind pastes is added to the broth. *Laksa Penang* is served with slices of cucumber, pineapple, boil eggs and salad.

Laksa Kedah use as a basis fish meat that had been blended finely and added to the broth. Added to that are dried chillies, onion, garlic, ginger and tamarind slices. This makes *Laksa Kedah* less sour compared to *Laksa Penang*. *Laksa Kedah* is served with cucumber slices, boil eggs and Ceylon leaves.



Laksa Kedah

Laksa Johore is different from the other *laksa* because the noodles used are spaghetti.

According to historical information *Sultan Abu Bakar* who was then the Sultan of Johore from the year 1886 to 1895 had gone to Italy for an important meeting.

While there, he was very appreciative of spaghetti Bolognese. When he came back to Johore, he had instructed the royal chef to modify the dish by making it into a special type of *laksa*.

That is why *Laksa Johore* till today uses spaghetti.



Laksa Johore

The manner of preparation of the broth is similar to the other *laksa*. The fish meat comes from *ikan parang* (wolf herrings) which is boiled and blended finely. This is added to the broth together with blended turmeric, galangal, ginger dried chillies, red onion, garlic, *belacan* (prawn paste) lemongrass and dried prawn. Coconut milk, curry spices, Vietnamese coriander leaves, *bunga kantan* (ginger torch flower), pudina leaves and tamarind slices are added to it. To enhance the taste, palm sugar (gula Melaka) is added to the broth.

Laksa Johore is served with mixed vegetables comprising of grated cucumber, beansprout, Vietnamese coriander, sliced onion, calamansi and chilli paste.

4.9 Ambuyat and Linut from Sabah and Sarawak

Ambuyat / Linut is a dish very popular in Labuan, Sabah and Sarawak. It is called *Ambuyat* in Sabah and *Linut* in Sarawak. It is also very popular in Brunei. In Sabah it's a popular dish for the *Kadazan, Murut, Dusun* and *Bajau*.

This dish is made from the interior trunk of the sago palm, which usually grows wild in the fringes of the jungle in Sabah and Sarawak. It is a starchy bland substance and is eaten with a bamboo fork called a *chandas* by rolling the starch around the prongs and then dipping the *ambuyat* into a sauce that can be made from many varieties.



It is taken with a sauce made from sour local fruits like *binjai* (mango like fruit but very sour). The *Ambuyat* is rolled around the *chandas* until about the size of a children small fist, immerse it into the sauce and swallow the whole thing without chewing.

Ambuyat is eaten while hot, with vegetables and dishes of fish, meat or prawn.

According to a local custom, if there is death in the family and the body is still in the house, *Ambuyat/Linut* cannot be served. If the family insists on eating *Linut* then the body will

become soft and sticky like the *Linut*. Another important customary observation is that a person cannot speak rudely while eating *Ambuyat* or *Linut*.



Method of preparing *Ambuyat/Linut*

Ambuyat is made from pouring hot water into *ambulung* or better known as *sago*. *Sago* is derived from a tree trunk of a *rumbia/rembia* tree (scientific name *metroxylon*). The *rumbia* tree is a family of palm trees such as coconuts. In order to make *sago*, the trees are cut down. Then they are stripped of fronds and other coverings before being cut into several pieces. These cut pieces are stripped of their hard bark. The pieces are then grated by scraping with the impurities sifted out leaving the *sago* in a wooden trough filled with water that will be drained away once the *sago* has settled down.

The dug out is then filled with water once more and the mixture is stirred thoroughly. After the water is drained off, it will reveal the *sago* as white solid or lumps. These *sago* lumps are then packed in basket-like *tampin* woven from the *nipah* leaves before being taken to the market.

To make the *Ambuyat* or *Linut*, hot water is poured slowly to the basin or container that had been filled with the *sago* powder. The pouring and continuous stirring of the hot water to the *sago* must be done as quickly as possible so that the *sago* will be finely cooked by the hot water. To enjoy *Ambuyat* and *Linut* it must be eaten while still hot or warm.

The *rembia* tree/or *sago* tree

The *rembia* tree or *sago* tree is also available the jungle/forest of Malaysia, Indonesia and in Papua New Guinea. Today *sago* is sold in packet and easily available in the morning market in Sabah. It can also be bought online from Shopee.

4.10 Tempoyak Ikan Patin from Pahang

Tempoyak ikan patin is a favourite culinary dish in Malaysia made famous in Pahang.

Ikan patin or silver catfish with its scientific name *Pangasianodon hypophthalmus* is a species of freshwater fish that can be found living in rivers or mines.

This silver catfish is native of the rivers in Pahang and other rivers all over Malaysia; they can also be farmed.

The silver catfish found in the river is known as *patin sungai* or *patin liar* (wild silver catfish) while farmed silver catfish is known as *patin kolam* (pool silver catfish).



Tempoyak Ikan Patin

In Malaysia, especially in Pahang, the silver catfishes' price can be as high as RM180.00 (€40.00) per kilogram, particularly for the wild silver catfish. Silver catfish in Pahang is known for its rich and delectable taste due to the conducive environment the river of Pahang offers to the silver catfishes' habitat.

Manner of preparation

Tempoyak ikan patin is cooked using fermented *durian*. *Durian* is a seasonal fruit. Once it's ripe, the freshness of the *durian* flesh does not last long. So, it is fermented to enable the *durian* to be added to various dishes when the durian seasons is over.

Fermented *durian* is made by mashing the *durian* flesh (without the pit) and sprinkling around 3% of salt through the *durian* flesh before storing them for three to five days for the fermenting process.



Durian



Peeled *Durian* with its flesh



Durian flesh

To cook this dish, the other ingredients added to the fish are turmeric, *daun kesum* (Vietnamese mint), *bunga kantan* (torch ginger flower), chillies and water. Sometimes coconut milk is added to thicken the broth. It is then brought to boil.

This dish is eaten with white rice.

4.11 Rendang Tok from Perak

Rendang Tok is a delicacy that is very popular from the state of Perak in West Malaysia. It originated from a village called *Kampung Pisang* (Banana Village) from the district of *Batu Gajah* in Perak. Later this *Rendang Tok* grew in popularity all over the State of Perak.

Rendang Tok gets its name from the fact that this dish is cooked by the elderly. In Malay culture an old man is called "Tok" or grandpa. So, the word "Tok" remained as a recognition to the elderly who cooks the *rendang* and pass the recipe to the young generation today.

The word *rendang* refers to a meat dish that is very spicy and hot. It is cooked slowly over a wood stove and takes about 4-6 hours to prepare.



Rendang Tok

The main ingredients to cook *Rendang Tok* are:

i. *Buffalo meat*

Traditional *Rendang Tok* is cooked using buffalo meat though today beef or cow meat is becoming more popular. Compared to beef, buffalo meat has less fat and has high butterfat. The rearing of buffalo is less in Malaysia today compared to rearing of cows, therefore it imports buffalo meat from India for its national consumption.

ii. *Coconut milk and other condiments*

Coconut milk is added to the meat together with chilli paste, onion, turmeric leaves, garlic, ginger, galangal, lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves and other spices.

Manner of cooking

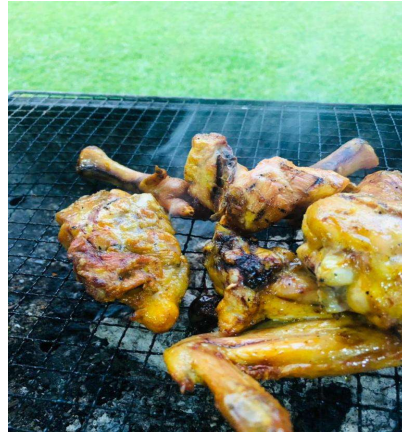
The traditional method of cooking *Rendang Tok* is that the meat is cooked over a wood stove for a period of about six (6) hours with slow fire. Since it takes a long time for the coconut milk and the spices to cook with the meat, this dish does not use any additives, yet it can stay fresh for up to four weeks without refrigeration.

Rendang Tok is usually cooked to celebrate the arrival of festivals such as the coming of Ramadan or *Aidil Fitri*. It is also popular during weddings and other festivities.

Rendang Tok is served with *Lemang*, rice or pulut kuning (yellow glutinous rice) or *ketupat daun palas*.

4.12 Gulai Daging Salai (Smoked Meat) from Negeri Sembilan

Gulai *daging salai* or Smoked meat *salai* dish is a delicacy from Negeri Sembilan. Smoking is a procedure to dry up the meat or roast the meat on top of a slow fire. The intention is to preserve the meat at the time when there was no refrigeration available. Now smoking has become an acceptable manner of drying the meat before the meat is cooked into a complete dish. Previously only beef is smoked but nowadays there are smoked chicken, smoked ducks and smoked fish. Smoked meat can be bought along the road from *Kuala Pilah* to *Bahau* in Negeri Sembilan.



The manner of cooking

The meat is smoked over a slow fire. Traditionally, coconut husk is the popular mean of smoking the meat, since it preserves the delicate taste of the beef and has a nice, scented aroma coming from the coconut husk. Other than coconut husk, branches from the *rambutan* or manggosteen trees or rubber trees are often burned to smoke the meat.

Once the smoked beef is dried and ready for cooking, the meat is cut into small slices. Coconut milk is added to the meat together with chillies, red onion, garlic, lemongrass, galangal and turmeric. Turmeric leaves are added to enhanced the aroma. It is cooked over a slow fire until the broth thickens. Sometimes green mango is added to the dish. Additionally, potato too can be added to thicken the broth. It is then served with white rice or bread.



Chicken *Salai* dish



Beef *Salai* dish

4.13 Asam Pedas from Malacca (Sour and spicy dish)

Asam Pedas is a very popular Malay dish from Malacca and Johore. Historically, it is a popular dish from the *Minangkabau* people living in the West of Sumatera. It then extended to Riau, Jambi, South Sumatera, Kalimantan Barat dan and finally to the Malay Peninsular, especially Malacca and Johore.

The ingredients and manner of cooking

The most popular fish used to cook *Asam Pedas* is the red snapper (ikan merah), toil shad (ikan terubuk), wolf herring (ikan parang), grouper (ikan kerapu), pomfret (ikan bawal) and stingray (ikan pari).

The chilli paste is mixed with red onion, garlic, ginger, *belacan* (a paste made from prawn, turmeric, lemongrass, tamarind paste and galangal).

Kantan flower or torch ginger is added to the water, together with *daun kesum* (Vietnamese coriander).

To enhance the smell, kaffir lime leaves (daun limau purut) are often added to *Asam Pedas*.



The sour taste would come from the tamarind slice (asam keping). *Asam gelugur* or *garcinia atroviridis* is a large rainforest tree native to Peninsular Malaysia.

Asam Pedas is available in restaurant and hotels in Malaysia especially Malacca and Johore. Today *Asam Pedas* beef are also popular.

4.14 Satay

Satay is very popular in Malaysia and in many other Southeast Asian countries including Brunei, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. It is also recognized and popular in Suriname and the Netherlands. In Malaysia, Satay may consist of diced beef, chicken, goat, rabbit, or pork.

The meat is seasoned, skewered and grilled.

Satay is very popular during celebration feasts. In Malaysia the meat is served together with rice that is called *ketupat*. The meat is dipped into the satay sauce.

The sauce are made from ground peanut cooks with chilli paste, prawn paste (*belacan*) and coconut milk added to make a thick and spicy peanut sauce.



The ingredients:

- i. Diced meats
- ii. Ketupat (rice cubes)
- iii. Sliced cucumber
- iv. Sliced onions
- v. Peanuts sauce

In Malaysia, one of the popular satays is called *satay Kajang*. This satay was introduced by Haji Tasmin bin Sakiban in Kajang around 1900. He started selling satay from house to house and along the roadside. Later *satay Kajang* became very popular and now there is a few restaurant branches selling *satay Kajang*.

Another success stories is Satay Kajang Haji Samuri. According to Datuk Samuri Juraimi the owner of restaurant Sate Kajang Hj Samuri the sale of satay in Kajang started in 1917 by Tasmin Sakiban. Samuri started off by helping Tasmin selling satay and later in 1992 he started his own satay business called Satay Kajang Haji Samuri. He started with a capital of rm18000.00. After 21 years Restaurant Satay Haji Samuri has 20 branches and made the owner a millionaire. Today Satay Kajang Haji Samuri is one of the main supplier of satay to various hotel and café in Kuala Lumpur. Satay Kajang Haji Samuri popularized the name Kajang as a place renowned for its satay. It became a beacon of example for satay traders in Kajang.

4.15 Nasi Kandar from Penang

Nasi kandar originates way back during the 18th Century when Indian Muslims from Southern India migrated to Penang during the British Colonial period (Siti Fatimah, 2003).

Nasi kandar got its name from the way the rice is being placed inside a wooden basket, which gives the rice its distinctive aroma and balance on the shoulder using a pole. The word “nasi” in Malay means rice, while “kandar” or “kandha” is an Urdu word which means shoulder (Shanul, 2003).



Nasi Kandar originated from Penang, where the rice and its condiment were originally transported by food-sellers with a pole held over the shoulder. Historically, *Nasi Kandar* was sold to cater for port workers in Penang (Siti Fatimah, 2003). Back then, port workers would have to do heavy work including uploading and bringing down cargo from ships. It may indicate why the pairing dish itself was rich in protein and carbohydrate mainly due to the rice and gravy items.

The name has remained today and *Nasi Kandar's* word appears in most Tamil Muslim or “Malaysian Mamak” restaurants and Indian-Muslim food stall.

The main ingredients

The main ingredients are rice with meat, chicken, fish roe, squids, prawns and curry on top of the rice. The curry can be a combination of fish curry with chicken or beef curry which are poured into the rice. It is usually eaten with pairing dishes such as fried chicken, curried spleen, cubed beef, fish roe, fried prawns, or fried squids (Chin, 2006). The vegetable dishes would usually be brinjal, okra or bitter gourd.

Previously *Nasi Kandar* was only available in the morning where, “Nasi Kandar” was put into large brass pots placed in two baskets and carried by the seller on a pole balanced on his shoulder (Chin, 2009). The sellers would usually be operated by the roadside or under shady trees, but never from a shop (Syed, 2004). In the 20th century, the sellers resorted to a more conventional method of selling where stalls were setup in coffee shops and the alleyways thus continue to be vended as a street food. Tables and chairs were setup around the stall area for customers to dine in and slowly the tradition of carrying the rice in wooden basket on the shoulder began to die out (Siti Fatimah, 2003). The business continues to evolve in the early 1970’s as more “Nasi Kandar” seller began to venture into the restaurant business. From being sold on the streets it has evolved into a multi-million-dollar business available 24 hours (Ahmad, 1999) and competes with the other fast-food franchises (Siti Fatimah, 2003). The modern “Nasi Kandar” business today have long abandoned practice of carrying rice baskets on their shoulder in favor of selection counter with bain-marie heating systems.

Today “Nasi Kandar” is enjoyed by Malaysian from all walks of life regardless of age, gender, profession, race or religion, thus becoming a multi-ethnic food (Netto, 2003). These findings suggested that Klang Valley patrons preferred to consume “Nasi Kandar” more often during lunch while Penang patrons were likely to consume “Nasi Kandar” more often during breakfast and dinner. While originally being consumed as breakfast (Chin, 2009), the frequency of those consuming it during morning is only 7.3% for Klang Valley patrons and 26% for Penang patrons. In a study conducted it is discovered that patrons nowadays prefer to eat “Nasi Kandar” during lunch and dinner. It may suggest that over time social dynamic changes took place.

As more outlets are moving towards a modern approach so does the consumption time. Culture is not a static condition and changes over time, from place to place and in response to social dynamics (Kittler and Sucher, 2004). Changes in food habits also change along together with culture. “Nasi Kandar” has become available 24 hours especially among the franchise owned outlets (Ahmad, 1999).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The significance of the scoping study is to identify the various popular dishes from around Malaysia which can be promoted in its gastronomic promotions. To assist the marketing of such products intellectual property protection will be strategized for it. Promoting Malaysian gastronomy to the world will enhance market acceptance and interest amongst tourist to try and taste Malaysian cuisine. Maybe, at a later date, the acceptance of Malaysian cuisine by foreigner will be as high as the acceptance of Italian foods or American burgers and fries by Malaysia.

As a conclusion, the collaboration and cooperation between food operators, travel agencies and government related authorities and other stakeholders are therefore crucial and should be further strengthened to support the promotion of Malaysian gastronomy.

5.1. The government support and political will

The government has shown considerable support towards promotion of Malaysian gastronomy. Many programmes are initiated towards these aims. Some of the notable programmes undertaken are as follows:

5.1.1 Malaysia Kitchen

Realizing the positives economic impact that gastronomic tourism has on the Malaysian economies, several promotional strategies are presently undertaken by the government. One of the projects is called “Malaysia Kitchen” which was introduced by the Economy Planning Unit (EPU) at the end of 2006. The intention is to increase the number of Malaysian restaurants all over the globe in order to popularize the Malaysia gastronomy products internationally. The Malaysia Kitchen Programme (MKP) aims to brand Malaysia as a multicultural, dynamic and vibrant country through the varieties of its cuisine. The objectives of MKP are to make branding Malaysia through its cuisine and to enhance opportunities for trade in products spans from food to non-food and services. Financial assistance is provided through Export-Import Bank of Malaysia Berhad (EXIM Bank) which provides financing facilities through the Malaysia Kitchen Financing Facility (MKFF) to assist Malaysian entrepreneurs in obtaining credit/financing facilities for the purpose of:

1. Opening of new restaurant overseas;
2. Expansion of existing restaurant or opening of new branches; and
3. Expansion of Malaysia homegrown food franchise internationally.

Malaysia Kitchen Promotion programme is open to all Malaysian restaurants abroad and foreign owned restaurants serving Malaysian cuisine. Application for Malaysia Kitchen Financing Facility (MKFF) is open to restaurants abroad that are owned and / or controlled companies with minimum shareholding of 51% either incorporated in Malaysia or in the country of operation. Even a Malaysian who is a permanent resident overseas is eligible to apply for financing. A franchise which are Malaysian owned or originated from Malaysia are also eligible to apply for Financing under MKP.

In these restaurants, there is no minimum percentage of Malaysian menus to be served. However, Malaysian food must be served. Malaysian food is defined as food that is traditionally and customarily consumed by Malaysians. Fusion food is allowed in addition to Malaysian food.

The decoration of the restaurant should portray Malaysian ambiance. The chef may or may not be a Malaysian. If a foreign chef is employed, he/she must be capable of preparing Malaysian food. Evidence of this must be shown, e.g., the chef has a certificate of formal training in Malaysia or has experience in preparing Malaysian food.

MATRADE or the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation is Malaysia’s national trade promotion agency under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) which has been tasked to position Malaysia as a globally competitive trading nation. Its mission is promoting Malaysian enterprises to the world. MATRADE help to make the phrase “Made in Malaysia” synonymous with excellence, reliability, and trustworthiness. MATRADE functions include the following: -

- To promote, assist and develop Malaysia’s external trade with particular emphasis on the export of manufactured and semi-manufactured products and, on a selective basis, imports;
- To formulate and implement a national export marketing strategy to promote the export of manufactured and semi-manufactured products;
- To undertake commercial intelligence and market research and create a comprehensive database of information for the improvement and development of trade;
- To organise training programmes to improve the international marketing skills of the Malaysian exporters;

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- To enhance and protect Malaysia's international trade interests abroad;
- To represent Malaysia in any international forum in respect of any matter relating to trade;
- To develop, promote, facilitate and assist in service areas related to trade; and
- To advise the Government on matters affecting or in any way connected with trade and to act as or for any person, body or organisation on such matters.

MATRADE is also actively involved in assisting foreign companies to source for suppliers of Malaysian products and services and is represented worldwide at 43 locations in major commercial cities. In Malaysia, MATRADE has five local branches in Penang, Terengganu, Johor, Sabah, and Sarawak.

As part of the Malaysian Kitchen's continuous efforts to promote Malaysian food, loans are to any Malaysian who has at least a 1-year experience in managing a restaurant overseas or 3 years in managing a restaurant in Malaysia. The business must be Malaysian owned by at least 51%.

The application may be considered provided the Malaysian partner resides in the country where the business is and jointly manages the business. Evidence that the business is capable of serving Malaysian food. The loan that is given has no ceiling amount so long as the project is viable and the cash flow is measurable and justified. Loan is given to cover the following: -

1. Capital expenditure

- Renovations including furniture, fixtures and fittings
- Table wares
- Kitchen equipment such as the stove and other cooking equipment
- Leasing deposit Pre-Opening cost

2. Working Capital

- Purchase of raw materials and supplies
- Staff salary
- Utilities
- Rental of premises and staff accommodation

3. Soft Cost

- Legal fees
- Auditors fees
- Insurance
- Franchise fee
- Deposits
- Work permits
- Staff uniform
- Broker's commission

The Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister at that time (2008) was Dato Seri Mohd Najib Razak who makes the announcement that the government would offer financial incentives such as cheap loans and tax breaks to entrepreneurs who wanted to open Malaysian restaurants abroad.

One hundred and fifty million (RM 150 million) have been pumped into its Export-Import Bank for this project. The modus operandi of this project was not very different from Thailand's 'Kitchen of the World' initiative. One of the government's procedures to control the standard of Malaysian restaurants overseas is the use of uniform menus. Dishes such as *rendang*, *satay*, *nasi lemak*, *mee goreng*, *teh tarik* a few more are identified as compulsory

items. Malaysian embassies and the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) offices abroad act as advisers and guides for restaurateurs. From such promotional ventures, it is not only generating foreign income through sales of food and service overseas but also popularizes the Malaysian gastronomy products among the potential international tourists.

5.1.2 Cooking Tours and Food Ambassadors

In effort of boosting the Malaysian gastronomy products internationally, the Malaysian Tourism Board also organize a creative cooking tours and promotions abroad through food ambassadors. Many prominent and celebrity chefs have been selected to do a cooking and beverage demonstration in the countries that potentially bringing their people to visit Malaysia. On the same note, Malaysian ambassadors also play their parts by often organizing food events and hold 'Open House' during Eid and other Malaysian festivals to celebrate their foreign dignitaries with great Malaysian cooking. This in turn introducing Malaysian foods to the guests.

5.1.3 Gourmet Festival (Malaysia International Gourmet Festival)

In addition to the above-mentioned promotional strategies, the government through the joint effort between Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Culture, Art and Heritage organized annual international food and beverages event known as Gourmet Festival since 2001 which specializing in Malaysian food and beverages during the peak period of vacation of international to this country. Up to now, this event has successfully attracted more international tourists of trying the authenticity and fineness of local cuisines and experienced the delight of local food related activities during the event. With this good sign, the government or the responsible authorities should continuously organize this event perhaps in a bigger scale as it can be used as a platform to showcase Malaysia as a paradise for epicureans. The festival's humble beginnings date back to the late 1990's when a series of light-hearted restaurant reviews called 'The Gourmet Club' appeared in VisionKL. This led to the establishment of the inaugural KL Gourmet Festival in 2001 with only a handful of fine dining restaurants. After overwhelming response, it became the Malaysia International Gourmet Festival in 2006, enabling restaurants from all over the country to participate.

In 2012, the organisers introduced Taste MIGF as a pre-Festival event to further promote the month-long affair, and then in 2016 the 'G' in MIGF became 'Gastronomy' to better reflect the evolution of the Malaysian dining scene. Throughout its 18-year history, MIGF has continued to remain relevant and help push boundaries to reflect the thriving landscape of Malaysia's dining scene. This has helped draw high-yield tourists and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) visitors to the country, while cementing its reputation as an international destination of choice. Just knowing that Malaysia can offer premium fine dining and different types of cuisines is a deciding factor in persuading many affluent tourists to choose the country as a holiday or MICE destination –not just specifically for food tourism, but all kinds of visits.

MIGF prides itself on raising the bar every year and maintaining global interest and delighted that PATA has recognised our efforts this year. A worldwide reputation for top notch premium dining is vital if Malaysia is to compete for the high-end visitor, and the continued support received in helping to realise that is crucial. Through its comprehensive 360-degree marketing campaigns, MIGF generate tangible worldwide publicity valued at tens of millions of *ringgits*. Promotional elements including TV commercials, print ads, radio contests, magazine publications, digital billboards, social media campaigns, e-newsletters, mobile backdrops, postcards and coverage from external media help spread the word to a regional audience of millions.

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MIGF is recognised by PATA (A not-for profit association), PATA is a leading authority on travel and tourism in the Asia Pacific region, advocating for sustainable growth, value and quality. Its member organisations comprise hundreds of governments, state and city tourism bodies, as well as airlines, airports, hospitality organisations, educational institutions and travel industry companies. MIGF picked up an award from PATA in 2007.

5.1.4 Private support

There is also private support. In 2018 in support of Taste MIGF, Le Cordon Bleu Master Chefs featured unique Malaysian ingredients which they find fascinating and would like to give it prominence with creative dishes to share with all visitors at the Epicure International Gourmet Village and Epicure Lifestyle Workshops.

Being the World leading Culinary School, Le Cordon Bleu Malaysia also developed a Malaysian Cuisine Programme which they hope to deliver for their programme in 2019 by taking in the inaugural batch of students by October 2019. In view thereof they are intending to conduct a survey to find out from all visitors at the event how much Malaysian cuisine is known worldwide and what they had tasted, and which is their favorite.

5.1.5 Halal Hub program

Another impetus idea of the government on promoting the Malaysia gastronomy products is through the Halal hub program. The Ministry of Agriculture in association with the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) was given a task to introduce and promoting the Halal product such convenience products (cooked, canned, packet food and beverages) and the fresh rations through distribution of these products internationally. These efforts so far have shown a positive indication as some of the products are being recognized by the international consumers and in the long term will encourage them to understand better on the Malaysia gastronomy products.

5.2 The Internet as a marketing strategy

The world is a global village. The Digital Report 2021 stated that 4.66 billion people worldwide use the Internet. This made up 59.5% of global population. About 4.32 billion people worldwide use a mobile phone to access the Internet and 4.2 billion people worldwide are active on social media. The global internet penetration rate is 59.5 % this year. Thus, Internet is also considered as a pre-marketing tools to promote Malaysia gastronomy products. International tourists are able to obtain information on the range of Malaysian gastronomy just by clicking the related websites about Malaysia. This notion is in line with the findings of Karim's (2006), which revealed that Internet is the most popular source of information among the international tourist to seek for any information about the gastronomy products of Malaysia.

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