
Paon Bali: A Culinary and Local Cultural Education Facility base on Community-Based Tourism

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Abstract:

The research aim to determine the appeal of Paon Bali in cooking class activities, especially in introducing traditional Balinese food in terms of ingredients, cooking techniques, and moral values. The research uses descriptive qualitative methodology. This study used a qualitative descriptive method, collecting data through in-depth interviews with two experts to explain the layout of Paon Bali and religious matters. To complete the data of 30 respondents from internal students, guests from outside the campus, and guests from abroad (Tiongkok, South Korea and Malaysia) assisted in evaluating the cooking class activities at Paon Bali. Observations were conducted at each activity at Paon Bali, and documentation was obtained from several books and article on Balinese culture. The findings highlight that the cooking class learning at Paon Bali is very helpful in preserving Balinese culture in the field of traditional culinary arts.

Keywords: Paon, Education, Culinary, Culture

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INTRODUCTION

Cooking class is a cooking learning activity that aims to improve culinary skills through direct practice (Winarno, 2004; Efendi, 2025). The cooking class at Paon Bali not only functions as a place to cook, but also as a space full of religious and cultural values for the Balinese people. This program, designed as a culinary and cultural education medium, allows participants, both domestic and foreign tourists, to understand Balinese philosophy and traditions directly. Paon Bali as educational tourism, because Paon Bali was developed into an educational tourism attraction based on culture and culinary. Paon functions as a learning laboratory, participants learn through various activities such as (Tour de Paon Bali), traditional games, and cooking competitions (Parwati, 2025).

Paon Bali is a historical place, because in local tradition, paon is the stana (residence) of Lord Brahma, the god of fire, who is believed to neutralize negative energy from outside. After traveling or attending a deceased person, Balinese people are required to enter the paon first as a stage of cleansing themselves (Detik.com, 2024). Foreign tourists who like Balinese food. The choice of traditional Balinese food is traditional food that uses Balinese spices called (base genep) with the main dish category. The dining experience of foreign tourists who consume traditional Balinese food has a positive and significant effect on foreign loyalty (Hendriyani & Budiarsa, 2020). The goals and benefits of Paon Bali as an educational place: 1) To preserve Balinese culture through real activities; 2) Increase awareness of the younger generation to know about local traditions; 3) An interactive learning place for tourists, students, and researchers; 4) Support the creative economy and tourism in Bali.

Cooking classes at Paon Bali are an educational tool for introducing Balinese culture and cuisine. Through these activities, tourists gain hands-on experience preparing Balinese dishes, including learning about various spices, equipment, and traditional cooking techniques. This activity contributes to the preservation of authentic Balinese culinary culture (Parwati & Jayendra, 2023). It also supports the development of educational tourism attractions based on Community-Based Tourism (CBT). This research can help design sustainable tourism attractions such as cooking classes, traditional market tours, and cultural games, thereby increasing the added value of local tourism and empowering the surrounding community (Parwati & Jayendra, 2023). Factors that determine cooking class participant satisfaction include instructor expertise, teaching methods, and instructor empathy. These elements are crucial for increasing tourism and the competitiveness of cooking classes (Adi & Ariani, 2017).

Balinese cuisine is an integral part of Balinese culture which is rich in flavors and uses special spices. The main characteristic of this dish is the combination of traditional spices (base genep) with cooking techniques passed down from generation to generation. Balinese dishes not only offer delicious taste, but also reflect the ritual, symbolic and social values in the lives of the people. Paon comes from the word "Pawon" in Javanese which means kitchen. In Balinese tradition, Paon is generally located on the south side of the house, based on the belief that the God Brahma, the ruler of fire and protector of the south, resides there. Traditional kitchens that use fire are called Paon Cangkem, included in the sarwa daksa category, namely capable of burning anything around them. Apart from being a place for cooking, Paon is also believed to neutralize negative energy (Bhuta Kala) that follows the occupants of the house. This energy must pass through the kitchen before entering other rooms. Balinese traditions are a collection of values, beliefs and cultural practices passed down from generation to generation by the Balinese people, covering aspects of spiritual, social and traditional life, which are closely integrated with Balinese Hindu teachings.

This research focuses on Paon Bali, IPBI campus as a culinary education facility that not only teaches techniques for cooking typical Balinese dishes but also introduces local traditions to participants. In several previous studies, there are differences of opinion regarding Paon Bali as a cooking class educational activity, anyone can attend and enjoy it (Parwati, 2025). Meanwhile, other research states that Paon Bali is a historical and sacred place, so there are several etiquettes that must be maintained when visiting Paon Bali (Hendriyani & Budiarsa, 2020). The aim of this research is to maintain and preserve Balinese paon without reducing the sacredness of Balinese paon by creating

an interesting cooking class program by combining cooking classes with an ice carving show as an added value to this activity.

METHODS

This is a qualitative descriptive study, using in-depth interviews as the data collection technique. Two types of data were used: primary data in the form of interviews, and secondary data in the form of documentation and articles. Thirty respondents, both internal and external to the campus, as well as international guests, were involved in the study. Two experts on Balinese paon (traditional Balinese kitchen) were involved, providing spiritual and religious insights, and another on the layout of Balinese Paon) and its cuisine. The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 158)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the era of modernization, the Balinese Paon has undergone a shift in function from being a traditional kitchen to a multifunctional space. Many paons are now integrated with dining rooms and family rooms, in line with the influence of modern home design. However, despite this physical change, the symbolic and spiritual value of the paon is still maintained, especially in traditional houses in rural areas and indigenous communities (Sudiarta, 2020). However, the paon has not been closely aligned with the modernization era, especially in maintaining cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual values. The paon is a traditional Balinese kitchen and is not only a kitchen, but also a place for family gatherings, sharing stories about culture and traditions, and the values of Balinese life in ancient times. Where before the paon directly followed the era of modernization that occurred and before it followed the increasingly developing era in the world. The Balinese Paon, a traditional kitchen with high religious and social values, has now undergone various changes due to the modernization era. These changes include:

1. Changes in Layout and Shape. The paon, which was once separate and followed the "Asta Kosala Kosali" rule, is now often integrated with the main house, and its shape has changed from a pyramid to a rectangle or L, adapting to the needs and developments of the times.
2. Changes in Function and Materials. The paon's function as a cooking area, as well as a place for ritual ceremonies and offerings, is still maintained, but the use of modern building materials such as cement, concrete, and reinforced concrete construction is replacing traditional materials like wood and bamboo.
3. The Influence of Technology and the Tourism Era. Traditional Balinese architecture, including the paon, is beginning to adopt modern technology in construction without losing its traditional characteristics. This is crucial to ensure cultural heritage is not lost in the digital age. Overall, the modern era has brought changes in the form, function, and materials of the paon, but its religious and social values remain intact.

Paon Bali is a popular cultural tourism attraction, particularly in culinary tourism and cultural experiences. Through traditional cooking activities, tourists can directly engage with and understand Balinese cultural values. This activity not only provides an authentic experience but also contributes to the preservation of local culture (Suardana, 2015). Based on observations and interviews, Paon Bali is attractive to both local and international tourists because it offers a direct experience with traditional values. Paon Bali introduces culture, traditions, religion, and social values rooted in its history in tourism until the modern era (Parwati & Jayendra, 2023; Hendriyani & Budiarsa, 2020). Some of the obstacles experienced by Paon in the tourism world are as follows:

1. Limited Tourist Access to Authentic Paon Bali. Paon are usually located within the walls of traditional Balinese houses, and not all families are willing to open their private spaces to tourists. This limits access to authentic paon (Putra, 2010).
2. Commercialization Without Cultural Education. Many tourism operators include Paon in tour packages solely as commercial attractions, without explaining their philosophical and

spiritual values. This risks turning Paon into entertainment, rather than a revered heritage (Marhaeni, 2017).

3. Limited Funds for Maintenance and Preservation. Some families state that they lack the funds to maintain traditional paon made from natural materials (bamboo, clay, wood), as these materials require regular maintenance and are very expensive (Bali Provincial Cultural Office, 2019).

Although Paon Bali is increasingly popular in tourism, there are challenges that must be overcome to ensure it remains a sustainable and meaningful cultural symbol, not just a tourist attraction. Support from the community, tourism stakeholders, and the government is crucial to its preservation. The appeal of the cooking class at the Paon Bali Institute of Tourism and International Business (IPBI) lies in the opportunity for tourists to learn and understand traditional Balinese cuisine firsthand. Built on a 6-acre plot of land and inaugurated on November 12, 2022, by the Deputy Governor of Bali, Paon Bali IPBI is a traditional kitchen complex with distinctive Balinese architectural design. Its unique concept features complete building structures such as a paon (stove), jineng (rice barn), and bale lantang (household), making it a resource for education and cultural preservation. The uniqueness of Paon Bali at IPBI has attracted the interest of various educational institutions, both domestic and international, to visit and learn firsthand. Since its inauguration, IPBI has received visits from Jinan Vocational College (China) in late 2022, as well as other institutions throughout 2023 and early 2024, such as Keimyung University (South Korea), Universiti Teknologi MARA (Malaysia), the National University of Singapore, and the Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology (Indonesia). These visits are due to IPBI being the only educational institution in the tourism sector to have an authentic and architecturally complete traditional Balinese kitchen complex, making it interesting for further in-depth research.

A. Structure of the Paon Bali IPBI

When viewed as part of the general structure of the IPBI campus, Paon Bali is located in the rear corner of the campus, in the northeast. When viewed as a stand-alone yard, Paon Bali covers approximately 6 acres. The area is surrounded by walls made of stone and cement foundations covered with soil to create a classic and traditional feel, as if popolan soil were used. Popolan soil is compacted soil used for building walls. This construction is commonly found in Bali Aga-style buildings (Maharani, 2019). The walls of the Paon Bali, if traced back to their original, classic style, should have been made entirely of popolan soil. However, for the Paon Bali at IPBI, the interior walls still use bricks plastered with cement, then covered with popolan soil. This is intended to ensure long-term durability and ease of maintenance. In this regard, Paon Bali at IPBI does not purely adopt traditional architectural components in detail, down to the choice of materials. This harkens back to the original purpose of Paon Bali, which was to serve as an educational center and tourist attraction reflecting Balinese local wisdom. Therefore, the ornamental design was paramount. The walls surrounding Paon Bali lead to the entrance, or *angkul-angkul*, located to the north. The complex structure of Paon Bali at IPBI is illustrated in more detail in the following plan.

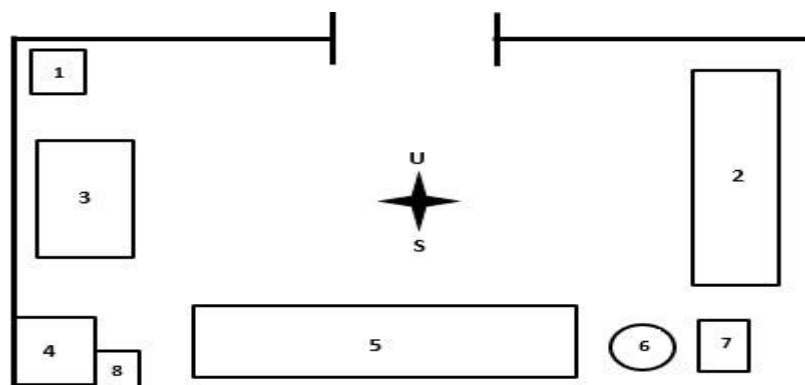


Figure 1. Jayendra Sketch

Source: Sketsa Jayendra, 2024.

Information:

1. Palinggih Panunggun Karang
2. Bale Lantang
3. Jineng
4. Bada (Kandang Babi)
5. Paon
6. Baa Tutu
7. Pangulingan
8. Kamar Kecil (Restroom)

1. Palinggih Pannunggun Karang

as depicted in the image, is located in the northwest. In Balinese Hindu society, the Panunggun Karang Temple is often referred to as Tugun Karang or simply Tugu. A Tugu is a sacred structure used to enshrine all beings (Titib, 2003). Its primary function is to guard the grounds and ward off all negativity. The Panunggun Karang Temple's role as a guardian of the grounds can be referenced in the Asta Kosala Kosali text, which states that the one located in the northwest is called Sang Kalaraksa, where raksa means to block (Sari & Kusuma, 2020). Specifically, the Asta Kosala Kosali text states:

bhatara ngukuhin karang ika, sang sariraksa atemahan Bhatara Sri, Sang Ajiraksa matemahan Bhatara Guru, Sang Rudraraksa Matemahan Bhatara Rudra, Sang Kala Raksa matemahan Bhatari Uma, tanganya membat, ingaranan tambak, sarwwa murah tang kurang pangan kinum ...

Translation:

...God Bhatara will keep the yard steady. Sang Sariraksa becomes Bhatari Sri, Sang Ajiraksa becomes Bhatara Guru, Sang Rudraraksa becomes Bhatara Rudra, Sang Kalaraksa becomes Bhatari Uma, his soft, flexible hands are called tambak (which blocks), everything is cheap, there is no shortage of food and drink ... (Compiling Team, 2015).

2. Bale Lantang

A Bale Lantang is an elongated, open-air structure (Maharani, 2019). A Bale Lantang, also known as a Bale Panjang, is a place for meetings, communal meals (magibug), and so on. The Bale Lantang in Paon Bali is located to the east (Kangin). In the context of educational tourism activities, Bale Lantang serves as a place to learn theories related to the Balinese paon and its functions.

3. Jineng

Jineng, also known as klumpu, is essentially a building used as a rice barn for storing rice (Mudita et al., 2022). Its upper part is shaped like a barn and its lower part is an open hall, often used as a resting place.

4. Bada

Bada is the Balinese term for a pigsty. Owning a Bada, also known as a "Celeng Body," was a part of Balinese socio-cultural life in ancient times, and some villages still have them today. The goal is simply to educate tourists about the importance of raising pigs as a part of Balinese life.

5. Paon

The Paon or kitchen is the main building that gives the entire complex of buildings in the area its name, Paon Bali. It is located to the south, facing the angkul-angkul, or entrance. This building is

used for traditional cooking. The Cangkem Paon, also known as the fire pit, is an iconic building ornament. This is the place for cooking with firewood as fuel. Besides serving as a cooking area, the Cangkem Paon also serves to warm the room or the body (Mudita et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Cangkem Paon is filled with various traditional utensils, such as a saang (firewood), jeding (water jar), sepit (bamboo tongs), and semprong (bamboo blowing instrument). The Bale Langkah-langkahan (Bale Langkah-langkahan) has two main functions. The first is for food preparation, such as preparing, arranging, and mixing spices, chopping vegetables and other ingredients, and making dough. The second is for matektekan (mebat), which involves mincing meat with a blakas (slicing knife) and a cutting board. In this case, the function of the Bale Langkah-langkahan is basically a place to prepare all the food ingredients and spices that will be cooked.

6. **Baa Tutu**

Baa tutu is an area with a small hole in the ground that is used for roasting processed chicken or duck betutu. This term comes from the word "baa", which means "burning embers" in Balinese. This is because the ancient people traditionally cooked processed chicken or duck betutu by putting it in upih (a sheath made from the stem of a areca nut) and then marinating it in hot coals and husks. This cooking method is called betutu. The duration of immersion burning is between six and eight hours. A place where it is cooked is called baa tutu, and this word later became a loan word for the food made there, namely betutu. The word betutu comes from the Balinese word tutu, which means "grilled," and is also referred to as "processed grilled meat" (Sulistyawati, 2022). This Baa Tutu ornament teaches how to make betutu traditionally. Because the process of cooking betutu using traditional methods takes quite a long time, this Baa Tutu ornament is intended to attract tourists and internal students to compare the traditional way of making betutu with a more contemporary way. Therefore, it is only used when there are special events.

7. **Pangulingan**

The area in Paon Bali, filled with rectangular platforms, is called Pangulingan. It's located next to Baa Tutu. In Balinese, "pangulingan" is derived from the word "guling," and in this case refers to a place where roasted suckling pig (babi guling) is prepared. This term has never been used in its original meaning. In other words, the Pangulingan area has never been produced. Tourists and students studying at Paon Bali receive oral lessons on these pangulingan ornaments, which are still produced in small quantities.

Here are some explanations regarding Paon Bali as a culinary education facility, according to two experts and 30 respondents. Paon Bali is more than just a traditional kitchen, but also plays a crucial role as an educational space for preserving and introducing Balinese culinary culture. It not only teaches cooking but also introduces tourists to Balinese spices and the meaning of traditional cuisine. Paon is inextricably linked to the cultural, spiritual, and social aspects of Balinese society. Culinary education at Paon is considered an important medium for preserving cultural heritage as well as a form of cultural diplomacy for tourists. Paon Bali, as a culinary education platform, aims to create a vibrant culinary and cultural education space, foster awareness of the importance of local cultural preservation, and create an authentic tourist experience. The key players in Paon Bali's role as a culinary education platform are the local community/culinary practitioners and academics/cultural observers. Both complement each other in making Paon Bali a holistic culinary education space, encompassing both cultural practices and values.

Balinese cuisine is increasingly well-received by international tourists, as interest in authentic culinary experiences and the diversity of flavors on offer grows. International tourists appreciate Bali's rich, spice-rich flavors, such as babi guling (roasted suckling pig), ayam betutu (chicken betutu), lawar (spicy beef stew), and sate lilit (skewered satay). They also appreciate traditional cooking methods, such as the use of charcoal and grinding spices with a mortar and pestle, which provide a strong, authentic flavor sensation. The goal of welcoming Balinese cuisine to international tourists is to introduce local culture, increase tourism appeal, support the local economy, and preserve traditional cuisine in the era of globalization. Cooking classes are a hands-on method of cooking instruction that includes an introduction to ingredients, techniques, and cultural values associated with traditional cuisine. At Paon Bali, cooking classes teach participants how to make Balinese specialties like sate lilit (skewered suckling pig), base genep (spicy chicken), and lawar (skewered beef stew), while also introducing the cultural meaning and philosophy behind them. This program, also held at the IPB International Campus, is led by experienced culinary instructors and attracts tourists and students to learn authentic Balinese cuisine and cultural values.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a tourism concept that actively involves local communities in the planning, management, and implementation of tourism activities. Within the context of preserving local culture, CBT encourages communities to maintain and develop cultural heritage such as local traditions, cuisine, art, and architecture. Tourists are not merely observers but also interact directly through authentic experiences, such as staying in homestays or participating in cultural activities. This approach provides economic and social benefits to the community and supports the sustainability of local culture. The main goal of local culture-based CBT is to enable communities to participate directly in tourism activities, maintain and preserve local culture, and gain economic benefits. Furthermore, CBT also promotes environmentally friendly tourism and fosters community pride in its traditions.

Paon comes from the Javanese word "Pawon," which means kitchen. In Balinese tradition, the Paon is located on the south side of the house because it is believed to be the abode of the god Brahma, the ruler of fire and protector of the south. The Paon, or Paon Cangkem, has the power to burn (sarwa daksa) and is believed to neutralize negative energy (Bhuta Kala) that surrounds the house's occupants. Before entering other rooms, this energy must pass through the kitchen. The Paon is the first place Balinese women visit in the morning to prepare breakfast and offerings. Although a profane space, the Paon holds important spiritual significance, serving as a place for offerings (mebanten saibab) and self-purification (pengelukatan). Furthermore, the pyramidal shape of the Paon also symbolizes human birth.

According to Bandem (2002), the paon is typically located in the southwest or south of the courtyard of a Balinese house. Its location follows the principle of the sacred cardinal directions in Balinese architecture, known as "Asta Kosala Kosali." The structure of a traditional paon generally consists of:

A stove: made of brick or clay.

An open ceiling: providing natural ventilation.

A simple earthen or tiled base: emphasizing practicality rather than aesthetics.

Traditional cooking utensils: such as a siru, seeng, and kobokan.

The Social and Cultural Function of Paon is not just a place for cooking. According to Suardani (2011) Paon is a social and spiritual space. There are many communal cooking activities, especially during traditional ceremonies such as odalan, metatah, and ngaben. Paon is also symbolic of the

balance of women's energy in the household. In some local doctrines, Paon is considered the center of "apah" energy which is the source of life. Transformation of Paon in the Modern (Yasa, 2019) explains that modernization has changed the form and function of paon. Paon which is usually open has now transformed into a kitchen combined with a dining room, which is used as an open space. Even so, paon is still traditionally used for traditional ceremonies. This is an example of how Balinese culture changes over time, without forgetting their traditions at all. Paon is one example of Balinese local wisdom in utilizing natural resources (Gunarsa, 2015). They use local materials such as bamboo, wood, and clay bricks to match the composition called "Tri Hita Karana" which symbolizes harmony between humans, the environment, and God.

The Melapa-Melapi statue, Melapa-Melapi, can be seen from the origin of the words, namely mala-apa and mala-api, the meaning of which is that all mala will be melted by fire. Many rites are carried out in paon such as panglukatan, nunas tamba (treatment), and so on. As a symbol of the Balinese kitchen, Melapa-Melapi is also a symbol of the strength of the household, the union of husband and wife (Purusa-Pradhana). This is a form of literature that is not written, is not written, but is an interpretation of society that is inherited as a form of respect for the sacred power of Paon for the welfare of the Balinese people. Apart from the power of fire, Paon, in its function as a healer and melter, is also inseparable from the power of water as a symbol of the God Vishnu. The elements of water and fire are used together in this case. The function of the tirtha is as a means of purification.

CONCLUSION

The paon, or traditional Balinese kitchen, holds significant cultural and spiritual significance for the Balinese people. It serves not only as a cooking space but also as a sacred place linked to ancestral traditions and Balinese life. However, as time went by and became more modern, the paon underwent many changes in terms of its main form and function. Moreover, Paon has lost its authenticity and moved away from its philosophical meaning, especially in the cities. Therefore, amidst the development of modernization, preserving the Balinese paon is part of a broader approach to preserving Balinese culture and traditions. Cooking classes at Paon Bali offer hands-on learning and understanding of traditional Balinese cuisine. The benefits include not only tasting Balinese specialties but also learning the history and meaning of these dishes.

For further research, it is necessary to conduct research on the superior menus in each region so that they can be used as menus in cooking classes. Collaboration with other parties is also needed to enhance the appeal of cooking classes, ensuring guest satisfaction by striving to provide an experience that exceeds participants' expectations.

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