

## **Training in Processing Indonesian Special Foods and Sharing Nutritious Food with the Young Generation of Karo Regency**

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### **Abstract**

The training focuses on managing Indonesian traditional cuisine and disseminating nutritious food to the younger generation, with the objective of showcasing the rich diversity of Indonesian culinary heritage. This curriculum instructs on traditional food processing methods utilizing local resources, while promoting the significance of a nutritious diet and balanced nutrition. Participants get theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the selection, preparation, and presentation of nutritious meals. Furthermore, students are encouraged to provide nutritious food to anyone in need, particularly children and disadvantaged families, to cultivate empathy and social consciousness. This initiative connects the youth with the culinary legacy of the archipelago, promotes a healthy lifestyle, and incorporates local food components. Consequently, the younger generation is anticipated to serve as catalysts for change, prioritizing personal health and community well-being while enhancing quality of life sustainably.

**Keywords:** Food Training, Indonesian Cuisine, Balanced Nutrition, A Young Generation, And Social Awareness



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### **INTRODUCTION**

Karo Regency, situated in North Sumatra Province, boasts a rich cultural legacy, exemplified by its diverse traditional food, characterized by distinctive flavors, true deliciousness, and substantial nutritional value. Culinary items including saksang, naniura, asem-asem, and other preparations utilizing sweet potatoes, corn, fish, and indigenous spices exemplify the cultural history of the Karo people, which has been meticulously kept and transmitted through generations (Medya Ayunda Fitr et al., 2023). This food not only symbolizes cultural identity but also exemplifies the community's prudent utilization of local natural resources (Yuyun et al., 2022). Nevertheless, among contemporary advancements, the challenges of modernization and shifts in consumer behavior, particularly among the younger generation, have commenced to undermine the traditional values inherent in Karo culinary specialties. Young individuals, more influenced by contemporary or global culinary trends, are progressively diminishing their interest in traditional cuisine (Siswati et al., 2022). This culinary tradition risks marginalization and obsolescence without prompt preservation efforts (Hadju et al., 2022). Concrete measures must be implemented to safeguard and enhance traditional Karo cuisine, ensuring its continued significance within the region's culture and its appeal as a tourist destination in an increasingly globalized world. The youth of Karo Regency have a preference for fast food and contemporary processed foods that are convenient, notwithstanding their low nutritional value. This issue jeopardizes the sustainability of local

cuisine and adversely affects public health. Numerous bad dietary practices, low-nutrient foods, and convenience foods can contribute to several noncommunicable diseases, such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and other metabolic disorders (Hardini et al., 2022).

The situation is exacerbated by the younger generation's limited awareness of the significance of a balanced diet and the methods for preparing nutrient-dense local food ingredients (Yanita et al., 2022). Comprehensive education and training initiatives are essential to tackle this issue (Khotimah & Nasiah, 2022). These initiatives should emphasize the utilization of local food ingredients and traditional cuisine to enhance comprehension of balanced nutrition while safeguarding cultural heritage (Farida et al., 2022). This initiative aims to enhance the younger generation's appreciation for healthy traditional cuisine and encourage their active participation in conserving regional cultural heritage (Fatimah et al., 2016). The Indonesian Traditional Food Management and Nutritious Food Sharing Training Program for the Youth of Karo Regency was established as a strategic initiative to address the encountered difficulties. This program seeks to impart practical knowledge and skills to the youth in the preparation of traditional Karo cuisine, which is abundant in nutritional content and health advantages (Anggriansyah & Indri, 2024). Participants will learn to identify, choose, and prepare local foods, including sweet potatoes, maize, fish, and spices, into healthy, flavorful, and nutritious dishes using a practice-based approach. This course aims to rekindle the younger generation's enthusiasm in local food and motivate them to incorporate a healthful diet rooted in local knowledge into their daily lives. Consequently, this program will enhance the preservation of gastronomic cultural heritage while simultaneously elevating public health awareness in Karo Regency.

This initiative promotes social care ideals by facilitating the distribution of nutritious food to the local population, particularly targeting underprivileged groups, including children and their families (Prayitno et al., 2023). This activity promotes empathy and social awareness among youth, fostering concern for their own health and that of others (Rini et al., 2023). This program aims to instill in the younger generation an appreciation for the significance of mutual collaboration and solidarity, integral components of the longstanding cultural heritage of the Karo people. This program possesses a substantial cultural dimension with its health and social care components (Nadirawati et al., 2023). This program significantly contributes to the preservation of the region's cultural history by reintroducing Karo cuisine, which is characterized by its rich spices and indigenous ingredients. Traditional cuisine embodies not only sustenance but also a reflection of history, local wisdom, and cultural identity that must be preserved and transmitted to future generations (Monikasari et al., 2023). This training enables the younger generation to acquire culinary skills while comprehending the significance and worth of each traditional food they prepare (Mughtar, 2024).

From a regional development standpoint, leveraging local food resources and advocating for traditional cuisine yield considerable economic benefits (Masyarakat et al., 2023). Enabling the youth to enhance traditional cuisine with added value can generate local culinary business prospects. This not only creates new economic prospects but also enhances the attractiveness of Karo Regency as a culinary tourism locale (Nurdiansyah et al., 2024). This initiative impacts individuals, families, and the economic development of the community. The Indonesian Traditional Food Management Training and Nutritious Food Sharing aim to empower the youth of Karo Regency to serve as proactive agents of change in advocating for healthy eating habits, safeguarding traditional food, and enhancing social welfare. The younger generation may significantly contribute to the establishment of a healthier, more compassionate, and cultured society through their nutritional knowledge, practical culinary skills, and environmental awareness. This initiative is anticipated to induce enduring modifications in the dietary

practices of the Karo Regency populace and positively influence the overall quality of life. This program seeks to enhance culinary abilities while fostering knowledge of the significance of a healthy lifestyle, the sustainability of local food sources, and the cultural and social values inherent in traditional cuisine. By optimizing local food resources and examining the principles of culinary heritage, the youth of Karo Regency can emerge as leaders in cultural preservation and foster a healthy, compassionate, and economically empowered community.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This program employs an interactive, practice-oriented methodology and promotes the active engagement of participants. The objective is for the youth in Karo Regency to get a comprehensive understanding and mastery of practical skills in the management of healthy and nutritious Indonesian cuisine. The techniques employed in this training comprise:

1. Instructional and pedagogical approaches. This workshop will be led by a knowledgeable instructor or resource individual who will present information on balanced nutrition, the significance of healthy food consumption, and an overview of Karo Regency's culinary specialties and Indonesian cuisine overall. This instruction seeks to enhance participants' understanding of the nutritional composition of local food ingredients and the appropriate methods for their processing.
2. Cooking demonstration. The instructor will personally prepare Karo and Indonesian dishes utilizing wholesome local sources. This demonstration encompasses culinary phases, processing methods that preserve nutritional integrity, and the presentation of appealing and healthful dishes. Participants can observe each stage of the process firsthand and acquire practical cooking skills.
3. Simulation of Nutrient-Rich Food Distribution. Following the cooking session, participants will enact the distribution of nutritious meals to underserved populations, including disadvantaged children and other at-risk groups. We will instruct participants on hygienic food packaging and communicate essential information regarding healthy eating habits to the beneficiaries. This exercise seeks to cultivate empathy, enhance social consciousness, and teach in the younger generation an understanding of the significance of sharing in promoting public health.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The training on managing Indonesian traditional cuisine and disseminating nutritious food to the youth of Karo Regency has yielded notable outcomes, including enhanced comprehension, proficiency in technical skills, altered consumption habits, and heightened social awareness. This curriculum emphasizes on knowledge transfer and practical experience in the processing and distribution of nutritious meals.

1. Improving understanding of nutrition and traditional cuisine. Prior to the program, the majority of participants possessed limited understanding of good eating patterns, balanced nutrition, and the nutritional composition of traditional foods. Participants received knowledge through lectures and counseling sessions regarding:
  - a. The concept of balanced nutrition and its benefits for body health is discussed.
  - b. The importance of local food as a source of healthy nutrition, such as sweet potatoes, corn, fish, and vegetables.
  - c. Traditional Karo cuisine, such as saksang, naniura, and asem-asem, which are rich in taste and highly nutritious.

**Table 1. Outcomes of Enhanced Comprehension and Execution Following Training**

Indicator	Before Training (%)	After Training (%)
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Understanding balanced nutrition	45%	90%
Knowledge of traditional cuisine	50%	85%
Skills in processing local materials	40%	80%
Interest in choosing healthy local food	35%	75%
Awareness of sharing nutritious food	30%	70%

The table indicates a substantial enhancement in comprehension. The lecture technique effectively imparts theoretical knowledge concerning balanced nutrition and the processing of healthful traditional foods.

2. Improving skills in processing healthy food. Cooking demonstrations and hands-on experience equip trainees with practical skills. The training encompasses the following focal areas:
  - a. Methods exist for choosing nutritious and high-quality local food ingredients.
  - b. Processing procedures that preserve the nutritional integrity of food, including boiling, steaming, and baking techniques.
  - c. Displaying nutritious food in an aesthetically pleasing manner to enhance the allure of traditional cuisine. Participants prepare meals for traditional Karo Regency cuisine with local ingredients such as sweet potatoes, fish, corn, and spices. Participants acquire culinary skills while comprehending the need of preserving nutritional integrity in each dish.
3. Alterations in Consumption Patterns. Prior to the training, participants exhibited a preference for convenient although nutritionally deficient fast food. Subsequently, following the instruction, participants' views shifted, leading to an increased appreciation for local cuisine and an awareness of its health advantages. Numerous participants indicated that they implemented the knowledge acquired at home by initiating:
  - a. Decrease the intake of fast food.
  - b. Prepare nutritious meals with locally sourced resources.
  - c. Encourage families to choose a nutritious and balanced diet.
4. Sosial Increasing Social Awareness. The healthful food sharing simulation offers users direct experience in community contribution. Participants acquire knowledge in this activity:
  - a. Ensure food is packed in a hygienic and safe manner.
  - b. Communicate the significance of a nutritious diet to recipients.
  - c. Cultivate understanding and compassion for marginalized populations, including children and disadvantaged families. Certain members begun organizing healthy food-sharing initiatives within their communities. This indicates that the training effectively cultivated social awareness values and motivated participants to apply the obtained information in real-world contexts.
5. A cooperative educational setting. The degree of participants' engagement during practical sessions and group discussions serves as a measure of the effectiveness of the interactive method in this program. Participants engage in both individual learning and collaborative efforts with their classmates. Group conversations facilitate participants:
  - a. We are exchanging concepts and strategies for the preparation of nutritious cuisine.
  - b. Addressing obstacles in the selection and preparation of local food sources.
  - c. Fostering a sense of unity and a culture of collaborative effort to advocate for healthy eating habits.

## CONCLUSION

The training outcomes indicated favorable alterations in participants' comprehension and conduct, particularly in adopting healthy dietary habits and making tangible contributions to

their environment. The younger generation is anticipated to become catalysts for change by employing local food ingredients, so promoting individual health, preserving traditional cuisine, and fostering good social transformation in Karo Regency. This action advocates for the proliferation of such training programs in regions with significant local food potential. Secondly, post-training mentorship activities are essential for continuous support. Thirdly, we must enable the younger generation to work as advocates for nutritious dietary habits and to safeguard historic culinary customs.

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