

Seed Snacks Made from Purple Sweet Potatoes as Souvenirs to Support Wellness Tourism in Manado

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ABSTRACT

Wellness tourism is a form of travel aimed at improving an individual's health and well-being and strengthening the connection between mind, body, and spirit. According to surveys from 2023 and 2024, it is estimated that approximately 56.41 percent of health and wellness tourism will become a major tourism trend in the coming years. Health tourism itself offers significant benefits for a destination, including market diversification, increased tourist spending, mitigation of seasonal fluctuations, as well as the creation of investment and economic benefits for rural areas and their surroundings. In this context, snacks made from purple sweet potatoes support health tourism. These snacks hold potential for tourists seeking health benefits. Most of the baked goods currently sold to both local and international tourists often feature health or wellness themes, although the concept of health tourism has a niche market that attracts loyal tourists—especially those who prioritize a healthy lifestyle. In the city of Manado, it is very difficult—even nearly impossible—to find local culinary souvenirs or snacks that promote a healthy lifestyle. Purple sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas*), known locally in Manado as “batata ungu,” are a plant with health benefits. Using a descriptive-experimental approach, researchers will create snacks made from purple sweet potatoes. The research results show clear differences in color and taste, as revealed in interviews with five informants (loyal customers). Moving forward, this product will be developed by expanding distribution through a network of MSMEs that sell souvenirs in the city.

Keywords: seed snacks, purple sweet potatoes, souvenirs, wellness tourism

Introduction

Currently, most of the baked goods sold as souvenirs to both local and international tourists often feature health or wellness themes, even though the concept of wellness tourism has a specific niche market that attracts loyal and predominantly international tourists. Data from the World Tourism Organization indicates that over the past five years, economic growth in wellness tourism has reached 5%, and the global economy is expected to continue growing post-COVID-19 pandemic. A niche market, when well-served, fosters consumer and tourist loyalty and impacts the length of stay in a specific destination. In the context of baked goods, this is expected to increase the number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in a destination and, more specifically, boost the local economy by stimulating community economic activity.

The purple sweet potato, *Ipomoea batatas* L. Poir, or as the people of Manado call it, batata ungu / batata tinta, has deep purple flesh and is very eye-catching due to its striking color. This distinctive purple color is caused by the presence of purple anthocyanin pigments that spread from the skin to the

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flesh of the tuber [1]; [2]. Historical records indicate that the purple sweet potato, or “sweet potato,” is a vine-like plant (sweet potato) native to the Americas. Due to its relatively simple cultivation process and the fertile soil in Indonesia, this plant is easy to cultivate and thrives in the country.

It is easy to find this tuber in almost all provinces and regencies in Indonesia. In the 1990s, before research had advanced as it has today, this plant was referred to as a “rustic” crop, and a derogatory label was applied to certain people or communities who consumed it, implying they were backward. However, this stigma has faded due to the benefits derived from the purple sweet potato. Manado-style seeds are a snack shaped like small pebbles (seeds) that come in salty or sweet flavors—originally, only these two flavors existed. This treat is typically available during Christian holidays like Christmas and has a long shelf life. It is highly popular among the local community. The production process is very simple and does not require a large budget.

Field observations indicate that this cake has not yet been officially developed as a signature Manado souvenir; even where it is sold, distribution remains traditional—based on orders among family, relatives, or friends—and it lacks a brand that reflects the product’s origin. Furthermore, the innovation of substituting the base ingredient with purple sweet potato—which promotes health (dietary benefits)—aligns with the priority of wellness tourism. The objective of this study is to develop a purple sweet potato-based snack with low sugar content as a signature souvenir of Manado.

Literature Review

Wellness Tourism

The concept of wellness, which encompasses physical, spiritual, mental, social, emotional, occupational, and environmental health, has gained popularity in recent decades. According to [3], wellness is the desire to live a balanced and healthy life, while wellness tourism, according to the [4]; [5], is travel related to maintaining or improving an individual’s well-being. The health paradigm is transforming nearly every sector of travel, and health tourism is poised to flourish in the coming years as it sits at the intersection of two rapidly growing industries: tourism and health [4]; [5]. Since the coronavirus pandemic substantially impacted travel in 2020, 2021 has been designated as the year of travel reset, with slower, more purposeful travel, and when all travel becomes wellness travel [6]; [7]. Given all the challenges associated with travel today, particularly due to the global pandemic, wellness tourism can counteract these negative aspects and open up travel opportunities to maintain and improve overall health. Globally, the wellness sector has emerged, with each country reaping significant benefits from promoting and developing its own wellness offerings [8]. Many destinations offer health products ranging from Ayurvedic retreats, yoga, meditation, hot springs, wellness cruises, weight-loss and detox retreats, hot spring parks, and so on [8], relying on the preservation of natural heritage and cultural values. Tourists who visit and use these health products ensure the protection and replication of health culture and the overall sustainable growth of health tourism [8]. As mentioned earlier, health tourism incorporates a wide range of experiences at tourist destinations, emphasizing the importance of understanding the concept of the tourism experience.

Souvenir

Souvenirs have been studied through aesthetic, economic, functional, and philosophical lenses. Research on souvenirs is not isolated but is integrated with, or embedded within, studies of shopping, retail, handicrafts, authenticity, material culture, gift-giving customs, and consumption. The meanings and messages of souvenirs have been examined, and the souvenir objects themselves have received scholarly attention [9]; [10]. Souvenirs are sometimes described as metonyms for events, places, or experiences, imbued with meaning and significance. Souvenirs can trigger a return to unforgettable

times and places in the imagination, and are often strategically placed in the home where they can be best seen by family members and visitors [11]; [12]. Both aspects of souvenirs can be observed primarily from the perspective of vendors or suppliers of tourism commodities, which are found in souvenir shops and handicraft markets. These items have an exchange value in the market and are produced, distributed, and consumed with little emotional attachment. It should be noted that the two (i.e., meaning and commodity) are not mutually exclusive [13]. From the perspective of this study, it can be concluded that souvenirs provide unique memories for tourists, especially when linked to an individual's personal well-being. Souvenirs that incorporate health-related aspects are likely to be more memorable for tourists visiting specific destinations.

Purple Sweet Potato

Nutritional Content: Purple sweet potatoes (*Ipomoea batatas* L. Poir) are low in calories; every 100 grams of sweet potato with skin contains 90 calories, or 376 kJ. Sweet potatoes are also rich in complex carbohydrates, fiber, beta-carotene (a provitamin A carotenoid), vitamin C, vitamin B6, manganese, and potassium. Other sweet potato varieties—including yellow, pink, orange, and green—are also high in beta-carotene. They are rich in fiber, complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium, and rank highest in nutritional value among vegetables. **Benefits:** (1) **Maintains Blood Pressure:** Sweet potatoes are one of the best food sources of potassium. This electrolyte is essential for maintaining healthy blood pressure. In addition, potassium also plays an active role in regulating muscle and nerve function. (2) **Cancer Prevention:** Sweet potatoes are rich in beta-carotene. This nutrient is an antioxidant that fights free radicals and helps prevent cancer. (3) **Weight Management:** People who frequently eat potatoes, especially in the form of chips, are at high risk of gaining weight. However, for those who enjoy eating sweet potatoes, their weight will actually remain stable or even decrease because the skin is rich in fiber and complex carbohydrates, which make a person feel full longer. This helps avoid unhealthy eating and keeps blood sugar levels stable [14]; [15]; [16]; [17].

Methods

The method used in this study was a descriptive experimental method [17]; [18]; [19]. The choice of this method was based on the research objective itself, which was to describe the production of healthy snack products that could serve as souvenirs or typical Manado gifts. This study is an experimental study with a completely randomized design using the following ingredients: 1 kg wheat flour, 1 kg purple sweet potato, 1 kg sugar, 75 grams red onion, 75 grams garlic, 100 grams ginger, 100 grams butter, 1 liter coconut oil, 2 tsp baking soda, small can of Kara coconut milk, 1 packet Royco seasoning, 1 egg, 1 tbsp salt. The required equipment is as follows: a large bowl, a mixer, a noodle roller, a fine sieve for sugar and flour, a spoon, a blender, plastic wrap, a plastic stand, and gloves. The preparation time depends on the amount of flour used. For 4 kg, it is estimated to take 5 hours, while 1 kg takes about 1–2 hours. Additionally, the researcher used an interview method to further examine the responses of repeat buyers regarding this snack.:

Results and Discussion

The following are the steps for making a snack made from purple sweet potatoes:

- 1) First, prepare the ingredients you've purchased, including flour, sugar, shallots, garlic, ginger, 100 g of butter, coconut oil, a small can of coconut milk, one packet of Royco seasoning, purple yam paste, and 3.5 kg of sweet potatoes.
- 2) Next, boil the sweet potatoes and wait until they're cooked through and have a soft texture.
- 3) Peel the shallots, garlic, and ginger, then wash them thoroughly.

- 4) Next, open the package of powdered sugar and sift it through a sieve to ensure there are no lumps when mixing later.
- 5) Then prepare a blender and add the ginger to the blender, then blend until smooth.
- 6) 6)After blending the ginger, add the peeled shallots and garlic along with the ginger
- 7) Also pour in the coconut milk, then 1 egg, one packet of Royco, salt, and 2 teaspoons of baking soda (equivalent to 1 tablespoon) into the blender, then blend all the ingredients that have been added.
- 8) After blending all the ingredients, check the texture of the spices to ensure they are finely ground
- 9) Once the spices have been blended to a smooth consistency, pour them into a large bowl containing sifted powdered sugar, then mix thoroughly with a mixer, ensuring the mixture is well combined
- 10) Next, remove the boiled sweet potatoes, mash them, and mix them with the spices and powdered sugar already in the large bowl
- 11) Since the texture of the sweet potatoes makes it impossible to use a mixer, use your hands instead to stir the mixture. Ensure your hands are clean and hygienic.
- 12) Stir the mixture until it is thoroughly combined and the dough is smooth and elastic.
- 13) Wait for a few minutes. If the dough is still too soft, add 800 grams of flour and set aside 200 grams for rolling out the dough into the bowl containing the existing dough
- 14) Knead by hand until the dough is smooth and elastic, then let it rest for 30 minutes until it rises evenly.
- 15) Next, prepare the pasta roller and roll out the dough using it. Don't forget to have flour on hand to prevent the dough from sticking after rolling.
- 16) Once the dough has been rolled out, prepare a pot or frying pan and heat the oil first, then fry for 1 to 3 minutes until it looks crispy.
- 17) After that, remove and drain; wait a few minutes until cool, then use the provided plastic bags to package them in 100-gram net weight portions.
- 18) The price per 100-gram package is Rp10,000.

The following images show the processing steps from raw ingredients to the finished snack product



Figure 1: Stages of Snack Product Processing
(Source: researcher's data, 2025)

The researchers then interviewed several customers who had purchased the product multiple times to gather their feedback on the taste and price. Table 1 below shows the responses from five customers who frequently purchase the purple seed snack.

Table 1. Informants' Responses Regarding Purple Seeds

No	Informant	Response
1	Annet	The taste is great—it's different from the usual nuts—and the price is just right for the budget.
2	Jefry	It's really tasty—perfect for a snack while relaxing.
3	Hanny	Delicious—it goes well with coffee.
4	Frangky	Delicious—the price is right for the package, but the packaging should have a label and marketing materials.
5	Novelia	Great taste—the price is right for the package. I suggest adding a label and marketing materials, since it's perfect as a souvenir.

(Source: researcher's data, 2025)

Wellness tourism is a form of travel aimed at promoting an individual's health and well-being (HWB) and fostering a connection between their mind, body, and spirit. According to surveys conducted by experts in 2023 and 2024, approximately 56.41 percent of health and wellness tourism is projected to become a major tourism trend by 2025. This figure reflects consistency from the previous year and positions wellness tourism as a key focus due to the growing interest of travelers in wellness tourism or health and fitness travel [20]. Wellness tourism itself offers significant benefits for a destination, including market diversification, increased tourist spending, mitigation of seasonal fluctuations, and the generation of investment and economic benefits for rural and surrounding areas. In this context, snacks made from purple sweet potatoes support wellness tourism. They hold potential for tourists seeking health benefits.

Based on the interview results, the researchers concluded that these purple sweet potato snacks are popular due to their delicious taste and attractive packaging; they simply need to increase sales in order to market them as souvenirs. As previously mentioned in the theoretical discussion, purple sweet potatoes offer significant health benefits, so it is anticipated that promoting these snacks as a healthy option—especially for those on a diet—will be effective. In the long term, this product has the potential to carve out its own niche market among tourists who prioritize a healthy lifestyle. Consequently, health tourism as part of sustainable tourism will naturally emerge from products like this purple seed snack. However, this study has limitations because the product's nutritional content needs to be tested to ensure its long-term quality. Therefore, it is hoped that future researchers will conduct clinical trials on the product's health benefits, as well as design the product packaging and distribution channels in an integrated and comprehensive approach.

Conclusion

These seed-based snacks are highly promising in terms of taste, price, and the interest of tourists who prioritize a healthy lifestyle. Feedback from repeat customers serves as a distinct indicator of a product that, while seemingly simple, holds significant long-term potential by promoting health-conscious themes. It is anticipated that this snack will add a fresh dimension to the culinary souvenirs currently available in Manado. Moving forward, the tourism market in North Sulawesi is expected to naturally carve out its own niche, driven by local creativity rather than government policy.

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