

Peran Wisata Kuliner di Pantai Losari dalam Mendukung Pariwisata Kota Makassar

The Role of Culinary Tourism at Losari Beach in Supporting Tourism in Makassar City

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menganalisis peran wisata kuliner di Pantai Losari dalam mendukung pariwisata Kota Makassar. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif eksploratif dengan observasi lapangan, dokumentasi, dan wawancara dengan pelaku usaha kuliner serta wisatawan domestik di kawasan Pantai Losari. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kuliner lokal telah menjadi bagian penting dari daya tarik Pantai Losari karena menghubungkan pengalaman menikmati ruang pesisir dengan cita rasa dan identitas budaya Makassar. Pisang epe muncul sebagai produk yang paling mudah dikenali oleh informan, sedangkan coto Makassar, sarabba, nasi goreng merah, dan makanan lokal lainnya memperkaya pengalaman wisata. Aktivitas kuliner juga mendukung pendapatan pelaku usaha mikro, kecil, dan menengah, terutama pada akhir pekan, musim liburan, dan saat kegiatan berlangsung di kawasan tersebut. Di sisi lain, keterbatasan tempat sampah, toilet, penataan parkir, pencahayaan, serta konsistensi kualitas layanan masih memengaruhi kenyamanan pengunjung. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan wisata kuliner Pantai Losari memerlukan pengelolaan kawasan yang lebih terintegrasi, peningkatan kapasitas pelaku usaha, promosi digital yang konsisten, serta kolaborasi antara pemerintah, pelaku usaha, dan masyarakat lokal.

Kata kunci: identitas destinasi; Kota Makassar; Pantai Losari; UMKM; wisata kuliner

Abstract

This study examined the role of culinary tourism at Losari Beach in supporting tourism development in Makassar City. This exploratory qualitative study used field observation, documentation, and interviews with culinary business operators and domestic visitors in the Losari Beach area. The findings showed that local food had become an important part of Losari Beach's appeal because it connected the coastal setting with Makassar's culinary identity. Pisang epe was the most readily recognised product among the informants, while coto Makassar, sarabba, red fried rice, and other local dishes broadened the visitor experience. Culinary activity also supported the income of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, particularly on weekends, during holiday periods, and when events were held in the area. At the same time, limited waste bins, public toilets, parking organisation, lighting, and inconsistent service standards affected visitor comfort. The study concludes that strengthening culinary tourism at Losari Beach requires more integrated area management, capacity development for local businesses, sustained digital promotion, and closer collaboration among government, entrepreneurs, and the local community.

Keywords: culinary tourism; destination identity; Losari Beach; MSMEs; Makassar City

1. INTRODUCTION

Food is no longer treated only as a supporting service within tourism. In many destinations, it has become part of the reason to travel, a way of interpreting place, and a practical entry point for visitors who want to encounter local culture through everyday experiences. This shift is particularly relevant to cities with a strong food tradition because culinary activity can connect attractions, local enterprises, public space, and cultural identity within a single visitor experience. In Makassar, gastronomy has repeatedly been identified as an important tourism asset, with Bugis-Makassar foods offering distinctive flavours, preparation practices, and cultural meanings that can strengthen the city's attractiveness (Saptadinata et al., 2023).

Makassar has long been recognised as a gateway to Eastern Indonesia and as a city with a dense culinary landscape. Dishes such as coto Makassar, pallubasa, konro, barongko, sarabba, and pisang epe support its food reputation and are found in formal restaurants as well as small-scale street businesses. Recent research has also discussed Makassar's potential to develop a stronger identity as a culinary city, suggesting that local food can function not merely as a consumption product but as part of city branding and the creative economy (Jariyah et al., 2024). This potential becomes especially visible in tourism spaces where food and sightseeing occur side by side.

Losari Beach is one of the most prominent of these spaces. The waterfront draws visitors for its sunset views, public promenades, urban landmarks, and social atmosphere, but culinary activity has also become embedded in how the area is experienced. Visitors encounter street vendors and small food businesses offering familiar Makassar dishes and snacks, particularly in the late afternoon and evening. Research on the culinary zone around Losari has identified both development opportunities and management challenges, suggesting the area has a strong market position but still needs improvements in facilities, organisation, and strategic management (Zulkarnain et al., 2023).

Losari's tourism value therefore depends on more than the coastline's physical appeal. Visitor experience is shaped by the interaction between scenery, food, service, accessibility, cleanliness, and the atmosphere of the public space. Studies of Losari have linked destination potential with visitors' intention to return, while research on Makassar traditional food shows that both intrinsic qualities, such as taste and authenticity, and extrinsic qualities, such as presentation and service, contribute to the attractiveness of culinary products (Amirullah, 2025; Syahdan, 2022). These relationships suggest that culinary tourism can reinforce destination appeal when food quality and place management support each other.

Culinary tourism at Losari is also closely connected with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Small food businesses create direct economic opportunities, keep local recipes visible in a highly visited urban space, and offer visitors relatively accessible ways to experience local food. Yet these businesses' ability to support destination development is not automatic. Vendors operate in a public tourism environment, so infrastructure, sanitation, parking arrangements, promotion, and coordination with government and other actors affect their performance. The quality of the wider destination environment can consequently enhance or weaken the value created by individual food businesses.

The draft study on which this article is based recorded several practical concerns from both vendors and visitors. Culinary businesses reported stronger activity on weekends and during events and described the growing use of Instagram and TikTok for promotion. At the same time, respondents pointed to inadequate waste bins and other public facilities. Visitors valued the combination of food and the coastal atmosphere but raised concerns about toilets and parking organisation. These observations indicate a gap between the strength of the culinary attraction and the consistency of the supporting visitor environment.

Against this background, this study examines how culinary tourism at Losari Beach contributes to tourism in Makassar City and identifies the main constraints affecting its development. The analysis focuses on five interconnected dimensions: destination attractiveness, local economic participation, culinary heritage and identity, visitor experience, and promotion

and collaborative management. By examining these dimensions together, the article seeks to provide a more focused account of how a well-known urban waterfront can use culinary activity not simply as an amenity, but as a core component of destination development.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Culinary Tourism and Destination Attractiveness

Culinary tourism refers to travel experiences in which food and drink contribute meaningfully to the attractiveness and interpretation of a destination. In the Makassar context, this relationship is evident in the range of traditional foods associated with place-specific ingredients, preparation techniques, and eating practices. Saptadinata et al. (2023) identify Bugis-Makassar gastronomy as a tourism resource with the potential to strengthen destination appeal, while Amirullah (2025) shows that the attractiveness of Makassar traditional food is influenced by both intrinsic product attributes and extrinsic attributes surrounding the consumption experience. Culinary tourism is therefore best understood as a combined product: the food itself matters, but so do setting, service, accessibility, presentation, and the meaning attached to the meal. At Losari Beach, this combined product is especially important because the culinary offer is consumed within one of the city's most recognisable public tourism spaces.

2.2. Culinary Heritage and Place Identity

Traditional food can serve as cultural representation because recipes, ingredients, preparation methods, and eating customs carry knowledge across generations. Wibawati and Prabhawati (2021) emphasise the role of culinary tourism in promoting food as cultural heritage, while Lestari et al. (2023) discuss coto Mangkasara as a traditional food that contributes to Makassar's regional identity. The tourism significance of culinary heritage lies in its capacity to make culture tangible and immediately accessible: visitors can taste, observe, ask questions, and associate a dish with a specific place. However, heritage value can weaken when food is presented without context or when commercial adaptation obscures the cultural story behind the product. The challenge for destinations such as Losari is therefore to allow innovation while maintaining recognisable local identity and communicating the cultural meaning of signature dishes.

2.3. MSMEs, Community Participation, and Local Economic Value

Tourism-related MSMEs are important because visitor expenditure can circulate directly through small local businesses. Anggarini (2021) illustrates the contribution of tourism-sector MSMEs to local economic activity, while Wibowo et al. (2017) discuss tourism as a mechanism for broader economic development through the demand it creates for goods and services. In community-oriented tourism, however, economic participation is closely linked to local actors' ability to influence how tourism is organised. Rusyidi and Fedryansah (2018) argue that community-based tourism requires meaningful local involvement rather than the passive receipt of benefits. More recent work by Amelia and Susanti (2024) similarly highlights local communities' role in sustainable tourism development. Applied to culinary tourism, these perspectives suggest that food vendors should be recognised not only as sellers but also as actors who shape destination character, service quality, and the continuity of local food culture.

2.4. Promotion, Experience Quality, and Destination Management

The competitiveness of a culinary area depends on how effectively its food offer is connected with promotion and destination management. Jariyah et al. (2024) note that Makassar possesses substantial potential as a culinary tourism city, but realising that potential requires more than a diverse menu. At Losari, Zulkarnain et al. (2023) identify management factors that influence the culinary zone's development, including internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. Visitor decisions also remain sensitive to the overall quality of the destination experience. Syahdan (2022) links Losari's development potential to revisit intention, underscoring the importance of creating conditions that encourage visitors to return. Taken

together, these studies support an integrated perspective in which promotion attracts attention, product quality provides value, and well-managed public facilities help convert a culinary visit into a satisfactory destination experience.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used an exploratory qualitative design to understand how actors who participate directly in the area experience and interpret culinary tourism at Losari Beach. The approach was selected because the research question concerns roles, perceptions, opportunities, and practical constraints rather than measuring causal relationships. The study site was the Losari Beach area in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Fieldwork documented in the original manuscript was conducted on 22 October 2025, when the area was observed as an active waterfront tourism and culinary space.

Data were gathered through field observation, documentation, and interviews. The interview material represented two groups that interact directly with culinary tourism: local culinary business operators and domestic visitors. The field notes included an interview with Abdul Azis, a culinary vendor operating at Losari Beach, and a domestic visitor from West Sulawesi. Observation focused on the culinary setting, visitor activity, the types of food offered, the condition of supporting facilities, and the interaction between culinary businesses and the wider waterfront environment. Photographic documentation supported the field record.

The analysis was descriptive and interpretive. Statements from vendors and visitors were compared with field observations and organised around recurring issues also evident in the draft study: culinary attraction, MSME participation, cultural identity, promotion, and management constraints. The discussion subsequently related these field-based patterns to relevant studies on Makassar culinary tourism, Losari Beach, community participation, and tourism-sector MSMEs. Because the research was qualitative and did not employ a survey or economic impact model, the findings are presented as contextual evidence rather than as statistically generalisable estimates.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The field material indicates that culinary tourism contributes to Losari Beach through a combination of attraction value, local economic activity, cultural representation, and visitor experience. The interviews also reveal that the strength of the food offer is accompanied by practical weaknesses in the management of the public space. The following discussion is organised into five themes in order to distinguish the contribution of culinary activity from the destination conditions that enable or constrain that contribution.



Figure 1. Interview with Abdul Azis, a culinary vendor at Losari Beach
[Source: Authors' documentation, 2025]

4.1. Culinary Tourism as Part of Losari Beach's Destination Appeal

The interviews confirm that food is intertwined with the way visitors experience Losari Beach. The domestic visitor interviewed during fieldwork explained that the visit was not motivated solely by the sea view and sunset; tasting Makassar food was also part of the purpose of being in the area. This combination matters because Losari offers a sequence of experiences rather than a single attraction. Visitors can walk along the waterfront, spend time with family or friends, view nearby landmarks, and then purchase food from vendors without leaving the destination area. Culinary activity therefore extends the use of the waterfront, particularly during the late afternoon and evening.

Among the foods mentioned in the field material, pisang epe occupied a particularly visible position. The visitor described it as a food to try when visiting Makassar because of its distinctive taste and association with the city. Vendors also identified *Pisang Epe*, *Sarabba*, and Makassar-style red fried rice among the products visitors sought. The prominence of pisang epe illustrates how a relatively simple street food can gain destination value when repeatedly encountered within a well-known tourism space. Its value derives not only from the product itself but also from the setting in which it is consumed.

This finding is consistent with research that treats Bugis-Makassar gastronomy as a potential tourism attraction rather than a secondary catering service. Saptadinata et al. (2023) show that local gastronomy can provide a distinctive basis for visitor interest, while Jariyah et al. (2024) place culinary diversity within Makassar's broader potential as a culinary tourism city. Losari strengthens this relationship by giving local food a highly visible platform. The waterfront serves as a meeting point between local residents and visitors, allowing culinary products to enter the city's everyday social life.

The attractiveness of the culinary experience also depends on recognisability and perceived quality. Amirullah (2025) shows that people evaluate traditional Makassar food through both intrinsic and extrinsic attributes. In practical terms, taste, aroma, and authenticity may attract visitors, but presentation, hygiene, service, price clarity, and the surrounding environment can influence the final assessment. This helps explain why strong culinary demand can coexist with visitor criticism of facilities. A memorable food product is not enough on its own if the destination's condition makes the overall experience inconvenient.

The field evidence therefore supports a broader interpretation of Losari Beach as an urban culinary-tourism space. Its tourism role is strengthened when visitors experience the waterfront and the food offer together. This is also relevant to revisit intention. Syahdan (2022) identifies return intention as an important consideration in Losari's development. Culinary experiences can contribute to that intention when visitors associate the destination with food that is inseparable from Makassar's identity. Repetition, familiarity, and the ability to introduce accompanying dishes can turn one culinary encounter into a reason for future visits.

4.2. MSMEs and Local Economic Participation

Culinary tourism at Losari is sustained largely by small-scale business activity. The vendor interviewed for this study described culinary trading as an important livelihood and reported that sales had recovered after the pandemic. Demand was noticeably stronger on weekends and when events or festivals were held in the area. Although this qualitative evidence does not quantify income change, it shows how tourism flows translate directly into opportunities for food vendors. The timing of visitor activity is especially important for businesses whose revenue depends on daily foot traffic.

The economic role of culinary MSMEs extends beyond direct food sales. A busy culinary area can create demand for transport, cleaning, supplies, small retail purchases, and other supporting services. This pattern aligns with the wider argument that tourism stimulates local economic activity through visitor demand (Wibowo et al., 2017). Anggarini (2021) similarly highlights the contribution of tourism-sector MSMEs to economic activity. At Losari, these arguments are visible in the close physical relationship between visitors and small vendors: expenditure occurs within the destination itself and can be captured by locally operated businesses.

The field material also suggests that events have a multiplier effect on small businesses because they concentrate visitor numbers within particular periods. Vendors reported increased activity when events were organised in the Losari area. This finding supports using festivals and public events as promotional tools, but it also indicates that event planning should include the operational needs of culinary businesses. Temporary increases in visitor numbers can boost sales, but they can also intensify pressure on waste management, circulation, parking, and sanitation if the destination is not prepared for peak demand.

MSMEs also shape the destination's social character. Vendors are part of the visitor interface: they answer questions, recommend food, explain ingredients, and often provide the informal hospitality through which visitors interpret local culture. In this sense, the role of culinary businesses aligns with community-based tourism perspectives that emphasise local participation in producing tourism experiences (Rusyidi & Fedryansah, 2018). The value a vendor creates is therefore both economic and experiential. Supporting MSMEs means strengthening not only livelihoods but also the quality of interaction within the destination.

This point is important for sustainable tourism planning. Amelia and Susanti (2024) underline the role of local communities in sustaining tourism development, and the same principle is applicable to Losari. If culinary businesses are involved in discussions about facility placement, cleanliness, operating arrangements, event schedules, and promotional programmes, destination management is more likely to respond to on-the-ground conditions. Conversely, policies designed without vendor participation may improve the area's appearance while overlooking the operational realities of the businesses that give the culinary zone its character.



Figure 2. Field interview with a domestic visitor at Losari Beach
[Source: Authors' documentation, 2025]

4.3. Culinary Heritage and Destination Identity

Losari's culinary activity is closely tied to Makassar's cultural identity. Foods such as coto Makassar, Pallubasa, Sarabba, and Pisang Epe matter because visitors can connect particular flavours with the city where they are consumed. Culinary identity becomes especially strong when a dish is repeatedly presented as part of the destination narrative. Lestari et al. (2023), for example, position coto Mangkasara as a traditional food that contributes to Makassar's identity. The field evidence from Losari suggests that pisang epe performs a similar place-signalling function in the waterfront setting.

Pisang epe also shows how culinary heritage can remain recognisable while adapting to changing tastes. The vendor material referred to both traditional palm-sugar toppings and more contemporary additions such as chocolate, cheese, milk, and malt-based products. Such variation may broaden the product's appeal, particularly for younger visitors, while the basic preparation and association with Makassar remain intact. Innovation therefore need not be treated as the opposite

of authenticity. The more relevant question is whether adaptation preserves the elements through which visitors and local communities recognise the food as belonging to the place.

This balance is central to the tourism value of culinary heritage. Wibawati and Prabhawati (2021) argue that culinary tourism can support the promotion and preservation of food heritage. Commercial visibility can keep traditional products in circulation, but preservation is stronger when visitors are also exposed to the stories, ingredients, preparation techniques, and social meanings behind the dishes. A menu name alone communicates only limited cultural information. Short narratives from vendors, signage, digital content, or event demonstrations could help transform consumption into a more interpretive cultural experience.

The idea of Makassar as a culinary city reinforces this opportunity. Jariyah et al. (2024) describe the city as possessing substantial culinary potential within the wider creative-city agenda. Losari can contribute to that positioning because it is already a high-visibility public space visited by people who may have limited time in Makassar. For such visitors, the waterfront can become an accessible introduction to the city's food culture. The quality and diversity of the culinary offer can therefore shape not only perceptions of Losari, but also perceptions of Makassar as a destination.

For destination identity to remain credible, however, culinary representation should not become overly generic. Losari's strongest competitive advantage lies in foods visitors can meaningfully associate with Makassar and South Sulawesi. Maintaining recognisable local products alongside innovation allows the destination to serve both repeat local consumers and first-time visitors. This combination can protect cultural distinctiveness while giving businesses room to respond to new preferences.

4.4. Visitor Experience and Management Constraints

The most consistent weakness identified in the field material concerned supporting facilities. Vendors noted the limited availability of waste bins in some areas and preferred a cleaner, more orderly culinary zone. Visitors raised similar concerns, particularly about public toilets and parking. One visitor explained that motorcycles and cars were no longer clearly separated in the parking area, making entry and exit more difficult. These comments show that visitor satisfaction depends on how the space around food businesses is managed, not only on the food itself.

Cleanliness is particularly important in a culinary destination because environmental conditions affect perceptions of hygiene and product quality. Even when the food is well received, litter or insufficient waste facilities can weaken confidence in the area. The issue also becomes more acute during busy periods, when larger visitor numbers generate more packaging and food waste. This aligns with the strategic issues identified by Zulkarnain et al. (2023), who show that developing the culinary area around Losari depends on addressing internal weaknesses as well as leveraging its tourism opportunities.

Parking and circulation are equally relevant. Losari is an urban public space used by residents, tourists, pedestrians, street vendors, and vehicles, so poorly organised movement can reduce comfort even when the destination remains popular. Visitor comments in this study suggest that simple spatial management measures could immediately improve the experience: clearer parking zones, better separation between motorcycles and cars, visible pedestrian access, and traffic control during peak periods. These measures do not require changing the culinary product, but they can make that product easier and more pleasant to consume.

Lighting and public facilities also shape the waterfront's evening economy. Vendors reported receiving support in the form of subsidised lighting, but the draft study also recorded concerns about the adequacy of facilities in the area. Since culinary activity is concentrated in the evening, reliable lighting has both service and safety functions. Toilets, waste bins, seating, drainage, and clear signs similarly shape how long visitors are willing to stay in the area. These facilities should therefore be treated as part of the culinary-tourism product rather than as unrelated municipal infrastructure.

Taken together, the findings show that the appeal of Losari's food cannot be separated from the management of the public space in which it is consumed. A visitor may value the taste and cultural character of local dishes yet still form a weaker destination impression when sanitation,

parking, lighting, or circulation are inconvenient. For Losari, quality management should therefore operate at two levels: individual businesses need consistent food and service standards, while destination managers need to ensure that the surrounding environment supports a comfortable and credible culinary experience.

4.5. Promotion, Collaboration, and Strategic Development

Digital promotion is already part of the everyday business practice observed at Losari. Vendors reported using Instagram and TikTok to promote their products, indicating that destination marketing is no longer controlled only by official tourism organisations. Small businesses now produce their own photographs, videos, menus, and recommendations, which can extend Losari's visibility beyond the physical waterfront. This opportunity is stronger when individual business promotion connects to a broader destination narrative. Makassar's culinary positioning, public events, signature dishes, and Losari's visual character can be presented together rather than as separate promotional messages. Collaboration is therefore essential: government can support infrastructure and destination campaigns, businesses can provide authentic product content, and local communities can help maintain the area's social and environmental quality.

A more integrated culinary-tourism management model is proposed for Losari Beach. The model should combine a clearly organised culinary zone, minimum hygiene and service standards, coordinated waste and parking management, simple interpretation of signature Makassar dishes, a shared digital directory for vendors, and an event calendar that links culinary promotion with waterfront activities. Regular short training sessions could focus on food handling, visitor service, digital content, and cashless payment, while periodic joint evaluations could involve municipal agencies, vendor representatives, and community groups. This approach would move development beyond isolated promotion by treating food, public-space quality, cultural interpretation, and MSME capacity as one connected visitor experience.

5. CONCLUSION

Culinary tourism plays an important role in supporting tourism at Losari Beach because it adds cultural and economic value to one of Makassar's most recognisable public destinations. Field evidence shows that visitors do not experience Losari only as a waterfront; local food is part of the reason for visiting and contributes to memories of the place. *Pisang Epe* stands out as a culinary marker, while other Makassar foods broaden the range of experiences available to visitors. Culinary activity also creates direct opportunities for MSMEs, with vendors reporting stronger business during weekends, holidays, and events. At the same time, the study identified weaknesses that can reduce the visitor experience, particularly limited waste facilities, public toilets, parking organisation, lighting, and inconsistent service conditions. These findings indicate that the future of culinary tourism at Losari depends on managing the destination as an integrated experience. Government support, active participation by local businesses and communities, clearer facility management, preservation of culinary identity, and sustained digital promotion are all necessary. Because this study is qualitative and based on a limited field setting, future research should measure economic impacts more systematically, examine visitor satisfaction across different market segments, and compare Losari with other urban culinary destinations in Indonesia.

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