

## BETAWI GEPLAK CAKE BECOME A STANGER IN ITS LAND

### (KUE GEPLAK BETAWI YANG MENJADI ASING DI TANAHNYA SENDIRI)

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#### ***Abstract***

*Betawi is one of the ethnicities which exist in DKI Jakarta with its rich culture and foods. Among the variety of food on Betawi, there is Geplak cake as one of the traditional cakes of Betawi made from sangrai rice flour. From all cakes that represent DKI Jakarta, this cake is one of the least known cakes of other traditional Betawi cake. This research was designed to re-discover more about history, philosophy, and eating culture of Betawi Geplak cake as the way to make this cake known more to wider society and documenting the original method in making this cake. The descriptive qualitative approach used to analyze the data and information regarding Geplak cake. Sources for this research were Betawi cultural practitioner, existing Geplak cake makers, and sellers located in DKI Jakarta and respondents from age 18-39 years old. The results of this research were Geplak cake has existed since the 1900s. Geplak cake is not appeared by itself but because of several backgrounds such as the abundant ingredients in the ecosystem, creativity of the ancestors, and demand of the cake as part of a important ceremony. Geplak cake made from rice flour which also represents the prosperity and bridging hospitality among the Betawi people. Geplak cake is quite known among Betawi natives but not for other ethnicities live in DKI Jakarta moreover by the visitor who comes to Jakarta. Geplak cake appears in important events such as engagement, wedding, and Eid al-Fitr. In eating traditional cake like a Geplak cake, it is not the matter of eating this cake as it is just from the dimension of flavor but also from the history, philosophy, and cultural perspective. The food and its story become more valuable and can be an interesting tourism product as well. The term rarely found or nearly extinct must be seen through different perspectives because this cake still exists among Betawi Native especially elder people. A traditional cake like a Geplak cake needs to be preserved as a cultural asset of DKI Jakarta because its existence enriches the whole culture of DKI Jakarta.*

**Keywords:** *Betawi Geplak Cake, Jakarta, Traditional Cake*

#### **Abstrak**

Betawi adalah salah satu etnis yang berada di DKI Jakarta dengan kekayaan budaya dan makanannya. Dari banyaknya ragam makanan Betawi, Kue Geplak adalah salah satu kue tradisional Betawi yang terbuat dari tepung beras yang disangrai. Dari antara banyak kue yang mewakili DKI Jakarta, kue ini termasuk dalam kue yang kurang diketahui dibandingkan dengan kue tradisional Betawi lainnya. Penelitian ini dirancang untuk menelusuri terutama dalam hal sejarah, filosofi dan budaya makan dari kue ini sebagai upaya untuk membuat kue ini lebih dikenal oleh masyarakat luas dan mendokumentasikan metode asli dari pembuatan kue ini. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan untuk menganalisa data dan informasi terkait kue Geplak. Sumber untuk penelitian ini adalah dari para praktisi budaya Betawi, penjual dan pembuat kue Geplak Betawi yang masih ada yang berlokasi di DKI Jakarta dan responden dari usia 18-39 tahun. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah kue Geplak Betawi sudah ada sejak tahun 1900-an. Kue Geplak Betawi tidak muncul begitu saja melainkan berdasarkan beberapa latar belakang seperti bahan pangan yang melimpah di ekosistem, kreatifitas para leluhur dan adanya permintaan akan kue ini sebagai bagian dalam upacara penting. Kue Geplak terbuat dari tepung beras yang juga melambangkan kemakmuran dan menjembatani silaturahmi diantara orang Betawi.

Kue Geplak cukup diketahui di kalangan orang Betawi asli tapi tidak bagi etnis lain yang tinggal di DKI Jakarta terlebih pengunjung yang datang ke DKI Jakarta. Kue Geplak muncul pada acara penting seperti lamaran, pernikahan, dan Idul Fitri. Dalam mengonsumsi kue tradisional seperti kue Geplak, tidak hanya ditinjau dari dimensi rasa namun juga cerita dibaliknya melalui sejarah, filosofi dan perspektif budaya. Makanan dan ceritanya menjadi lebih bernilai dan akan menjadi produk pariwisata yang lebih menarik. Istilah jarang ditemui atau hampir punah harus dilihat dari perspektif yang berbeda karena kue ini masih ada di antara orang Betawi asli terutama orang yang berusia lebih tua. Kue tradisional seperti kue Geplak Betawi perlu dilestarikan sebagai aset budaya dari DKI Jakarta karena keberadaannya akan memperkaya keseluruhan budaya DKI Jakarta.

**Kata kunci:** Kue Geplak Betawi, Jakarta, Kue Tradisional

## **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia is a country rich in natural and cultural resources. Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy consistently promotes a wide range of natural and cultural resources through the Wonderful Indonesia campaign worldwide. There are many tourism products to offer in promoting Indonesia, and one of them is Indonesian food. The food industry contributes to gross economic income by 42 % (Ministry of Tourism, 2018). CNN had appointed food like gado-gado and rendang as one of the World Most Delicious Food (Wijanarko, 2018). Those Indonesian foods have been well-known locally and internationally.

Indonesia has a lot of regions with its uniqueness in terms of culture and food. One of those regions is Jakarta as the capital city of Indonesia for decades. As a capital city located in Java Island, Jakarta is a center of government, economy, and tourism as well. In Jakarta itself, there is an ethnicity called Betawi. Betawi people had already existed in Jakarta since the Neolitikum era, and until the present time, this ethnic live in Jakarta with its culture and food legacy. All signature foods in Jakarta often associated with Betawi and known as Betawi food. In Jakarta, there is a lot of speciality food becomes signature and well-known, such as *kerak* telur. It is a rice cooked with an egg on a pan until dry and form a crust because *kerak* means crust), like dodol Betawi (Javanese palm sugar cooked with coconut milk for a long time until it forms a sticky dough). On the contrary, some foods originally from Betawi, in particular sweets delicacies, are least known or rarely found.

Many articles are discussing the food in Jakarta, which nearly extinct or least known. There are savory and sweet Betawi foods consider as least known or rare such as Gabus Puncung, Sayur Besan, Sayur Babanci, Kue Geplak, Kue Sengkulun, and many more (Khairunnisa, 2020). Several Betawi cakes started to rare such as Kue Geplak, Kue Cincin, and many more (Potoboda, 2019). Based on the online articles, many Betawi foods are rare to find even in Jakarta, although they originated from Jakarta. It is interesting to know more about all of them, but in particular, the research explores more into the sweet foods in Jakarta. Kue Geplak is on the list of the least known food in Jakarta to examine further. Kue Geplak Betawi or Betawi Geplak Cake is one of the cakes from Betawi. This cake appears several times in the article as one of the least known cake and considers as rarely found even in Jakarta (Rasmi, 2017). Betawi Geplak Cake rarely found in and sold by the Betawi Cake seller in Jakarta (Tauhid, 2014).

On the way to find out the reasons behind the minor popularity of Betawi Geplak Cake, this cake can be known later not only from a taste and appearance point of view but also the story behind the cake. The history, philosophy, and culture of this cake will be known by learning the story behind this cake, which are the primary reasons to preserve this cake into existence. Whether this cake is least known or not needs to be explored deeper from several points of view.

**METHOD**

There are several ways to know more about Betawi Geplak Cake's reason that rarely found in Jakarta. This research uses the qualitative approach by conducting an in-depth interview with Betawi cultural practitioner from Betawi Cultural Center in Jakarta and the quantitative approach by a conducted survey to respondents to find out the knowledge about Indonesian Betawi cake. Qualitative research emphasizes an understanding of social life issues based on reality. This research used purposive sampling as the technique by choosing the purposive subjects and supported by snowball sampling. The first interviewees recommend the other relevant interviewees. The interviewees are Mr. Andi Yahya Saputra, Mrs. Cucu Sulaicha, and Mrs. Annisa Diah Sitawati as Betawi practitioners in the culture and culinary of Betawi. Observation and interview did to the existing Betawi Geplak Cake seller in Jakarta, such as Mrs Yuyun and Mrs Erna. Furthermore, this research is strengthened with the quantitative approach using simple random sampling as a technique by collecting surveys from 51 people in Jakarta to know whether they know about Geplak Betawi Cake or not. The data gained from the study will be elaborate in descriptive.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the survey about the respondents' knowledge about Traditional Cake, in particular Betawi cake, 51 respondents in 18 to 39 years old stay in Jakarta and its surroundings.

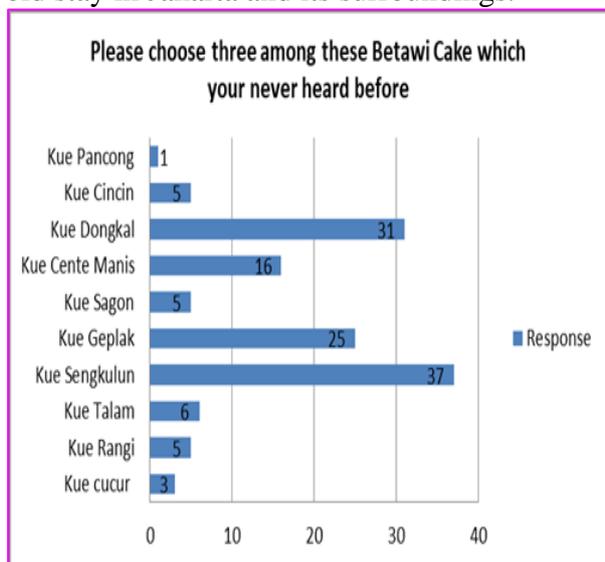


Figure 1. Three least known Betawi Cake Among The Respondents of 18-39 Years Old

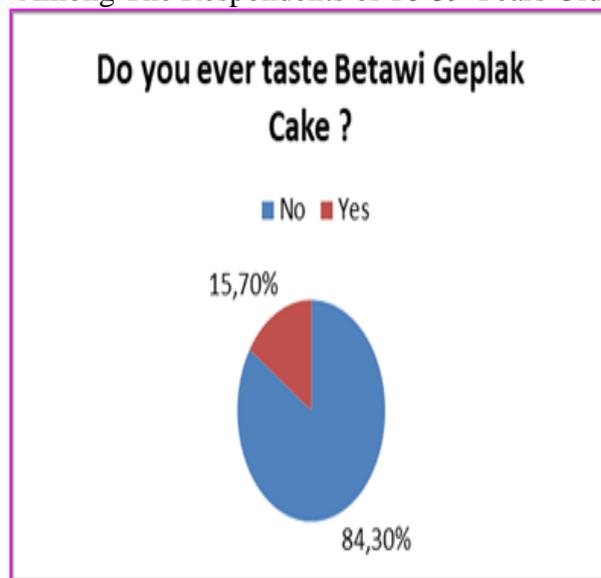


Figure 2. Percentage of respondents who know about Geplak Betawi Cake

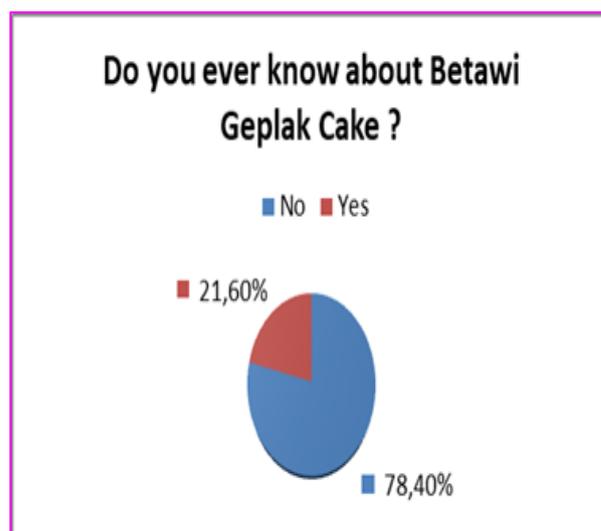


Figure 3. Percentage of respondents who ever taste Geplak Betawi Cake

The survey should do to know people's knowledge about available cakes found in Betawi. Several cakes commonly found in Jakarta or Betawi cake, such as Pancong Cake, Talam Cake, Cucur Cake, Talam Cake, Sagon Cake, and others. Based on figures 2, 3, and 4 presented above, the three least known Betawi Cake among 18-39 years old respondents are 37 responses for Sengkulun Cake, 31 responses for Dongkal Cake, and 25 responses for Geplak

Cake. There are 78,40% respondents equal to 11 respondents who never know about Betawi Geplak Cake and 84,30 % respondents similar to 43 respondents who never taste Betawi Geplak Cake. Those percentages represent people 18-39 years old who don't know about Betawi Geplak Cake.

From Betawi Cultural Practitioners and 18-39 years old respondents have different perspectives about Betawi Geplak Cake. From an older people point of view and Betawi native people, they know where to find this cake quite quickly because they know where to buy and how to make it. Based on their elders' legacy recipe in the past and the cake still can be found during critical events such as engagement, wedding or Eid Fitr. On the contrary, among 18-39 years old respondents who live in Jakarta, above 75 % of them don't know about Betawi Geplak Cake at all. The term rarely found or nearly extinct exist among the younger age people and the people who live in Jakarta, but there are probably not come from Native Betawi.

Betawi Geplak Cake is a cake that originated from Jakarta, primarily known as Betawi Pinggiran. Geographically, Betawi Pinggiran includes areas such as the South and the East part of Jakarta (Purbasari, 2010). Betawi Geplak Cake existed since the 1900s even though it was no exact time to describe it because it has lived at least since 1944 (Sulaicha, 2019). Geplak cake made from simple ingredients *sangrai* rice flour, *sangrai* grated young coconut, a sweetener such as simple syrup and aromatic leaves such as pandan and kaffir lime leaf. Based on the ingredients, Geplak Cake's ingredients made from the elements provided abundantly in Jakarta. The cake adopted from the ancestor's creativity in processing provided ingredients, processing into a dish, and a signature dish to represent the particular region. Cake becomes an object in a cultural interaction with other nations in the past's meaningful ceremony (Saputra, 2019).

Based on how this cake made and how it made, the rice represents natural resources' abundance. The rice flour and grated coconut start from a sandy and not united in form. Still,

when the simple syrup starts to blend, the unity symbolizes hospitality preservation among Betawi people. Betawi Geplak Cake is made by *sangrai* (dry-heat method of heating dry ingredients until it turns golden brown and cooked), and rice flour from rice grain in Indonesia called beras pera. Beras pera is a type of rice grain with high amylose content, and this type of rice is suitable for being the main ingredients in producing rice product which is not sticky such as vermicelli and rice flour) being soaked, drained, and rinsed, then milled using a simple machine and grated young coconut. The simple syrup made from water and granulated sugar cooked until boiling along with pandan and kaffir lime leaves. The hot simple syrup then pours into the dry ingredients. The mixture is mixed well using hands until incorporated and can be shaped and put in the mold. Then let the cake aside until it forms according to the mold then covered with *sangrai* rice flour. When Betawi Geplak Cake mold in big size then cut the cake surface to make a mark to ease the cutting process later before consume. The Betawi Geplak Cake appearance can be seen in figure 2.

Betawi Geplak Cake which existed since the 1900s, is the cake which also gone through some changes. Betawi Geplak Cake in common will have a shape according to the mold used. In the past, there are not many cake mold sellers like present time, therefore most of Betawi Geplak Cake mold inside the big container either round, square or rectangular. This big size of Betawi Geplak Cake then cut or divided into small pieces using hands or tools such as knife. But now, there are many ideas to make Betawi Geplak Cake in smaller size since there are many influences from European country like France where usually cake serve in smaller size and even bite size also called *Petit Fours*, which mean small oven. The term used to describe small cake, pastry or cookie than can be consumed in one or two bites (Gisslen, 2013). Besides, smaller or bite size cake will easier and practical to consume rather than the big size cake. These are figures 1 to 3 to describe Geplak Betawi cake sizes from time to time.



Figure 1. The large size of Betawi Geplak Cake



Figure 2. The medium size of Betawi Geplak Cake (following the size of the plastic packaging)



Figure 3. The bite size of Betawi Geplak Cake with individual packaging (present time)

Betawi Geplak Cake is also a part of Seseheran or gift in Betawi people's engagement event as a part of Bacot cake. This cake also presents other vital events, such as marriage and Eid Fitr (Sitawati, 2019). Betawi Geplak cake and other cakes such as wajik and dodol are the languages used to tell neighbours about specific family engagement. Those cakes deliver as a gift to the couple. In eating Betawi Geplak Cake, bitter tea or coffee become a perfect companion for this sweet cake. Betawi Geplak Cake can be found in Betawi people's household, especially in the event such as Eid Fitr or in daily routine to welcome guests at their home (Sulaicha, 2019).

Regarding Betawi Geplak Cake rarely found in Jakarta, this cake still can be found especially in South and East Jakarta because these area include in Betawi Pinggiran where Betawi native community still largely found. There are few Betawi Geplak Cake sellers existed in South Jakarta area such as Setu Babakan as one of the Betawi Native Tourism Area where many Betawi sweet and savory delicacies individual sellers open their small stalls there around the artificial lake of Babakan. There are also few Betawi Geplak Cake sellers in East Jakarta especially in Condet area. Betawi Geplak Cake sold in both South and East Jakarta are a home industry and made by the owners themselves. The Betawi Cake from both South and East Jakarta area can be seen in figure 4-6. From figure 4-6, each of Betawi Geplak Cake packaged with simple plastic or paper-based packaging with or without brand on the packaging. The size of each Betawi Geplak Cake from left to right are as follow, 6,5 cm x 10 cm, 7 cm x 13,5 cm and 6,5 cm x 16 cm with rectangular shape following the shape of the packaging.



Figure 4. Betawi Geplak Cake "Mpok Nyai" – Setu Babakan, South Jakarta



Figure 5. Betawi Geplak Cake “Mpok Erni” – Setu Babakan, South Jakarta



Figure 6. Betawi Geplak Cake Condet, East Jakarta

Among the Betawi people events or household, Betawi Geplak Cake still known and made on certain occasions therefore term rarely found or even extinction is not the right term to describe Betawi Geplak Cake. This cake is still known especially among people at adult and senior age and Betawi native (Saputra, 2019). Betawi Geplak Cake is least popular among the other cake such as dodol betawi or roti buaya. Even though Betawi Geplak Cake known among native Betawi people but this cake is least popular among the younger generation who lives in Jakarta.

## CONCLUSION

Betawi Geplak Cake is originated from Betawi Pinggiran and now known as the South and East part of Jakarta. Betawi Geplak Cake has existed since the 1900s. Betawi Geplak Cake made from simple ingredients such as *sangrai* rice flour, *sangrai* grated young coconut, a sweetener made from simple syrup, and aromatic leafs such as pandan and kaffir lime leaf. Betawi Geplak Cake is known among native Betawi people but not among people especially the younger generation who resides in Jakarta and the surrounding area. In order to make Betawi Geplak Cake more known to the younger generation and people living in Jakarta besides Native Betawi, the socialization about the story of this cake must be done. The story includes the history, philosophy, eating culture that can be delivered in many ways and one of them is through scientific writings. The presentation of Betawi Geplak Cake can also be adjusted with the present time where attractive packaging is more appealing rather than just use plastic or simple paper-based packaging. The documentation of this cake in terms of story and also the method of making must be done as a part of the cultural preservation of this region. The documentation can be passed by to the younger generation and similar writings about other traditional cakes from every region in Indonesia can be documented as a part of the history and richness of the culture and food in Indonesia.

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