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### The Gastronomical Treasures of the Wonder City Of Vigan, Philippines

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Vigan City, dubbed as the “New Seven Wonder Cities of the World” is a place of commendable food and drinks. The discussion in this study focuses on discovering the authentic foods originated and found in the city. This study will also discuss ways and ideas on how to preserve and maintain these authentic foods. Exploratory design of research was utilized to determine the various authentic gastronomic attractions that can only be found and originated in the wonder city of Vigan, and a survey questionnaire to determine the tourists' level of awareness of the authentic foods in the city. Results in this study revealed that the classic and authentic foods available in the city are highly distinguishable marks as they pertain to the uniqueness of the place's rich cultural presence. The city has high potentials to be regarded as a gastronomic destination as evident that food is worth significant in structuring a distinct local identity. Tourists and visitors are very aware of most of the gastronomical treasures in the city. Thus, this is a positive lead for the promotion of gastronomic tourism in Vigan City. Further, certain recommendations were articulated.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Peregrination is the best tutelage, and by experiencing each other's foods, folks learn something contemporary about each other's cultures. Food defines and identifies the rich and unique culture and history of a particular place. Travelers can ask a local to lead them to a place to witness and experience the region's specialty and mouthwatering dishes. It has been said that culinary tourists are audacious, as they

wanted to experience and try something unusual that foods are not usually prepared and served in a diner. Travelers wanted to taste foods that are cooked and set traditionally and authentically.

Among the places in the northern part of the Philippines with a high value of promising kaleidoscopic tourism is Vigan City, now dubbed as the “New Seven Wonder Cities of the World.” As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, since it is a place of commendable food and drinks, Vigan City is worth traveling and visiting in the Philippines.

Vigan cuisine offers a wide range of fineness and flavor. It is not limited to its well-renowned Vigan *empanada*, *longganisa*, and peculiarly distinctive dishes. They camouflage the idea of unsophistication and hold dearly the exquisite taste of its ingredients, which are primarily vegetables. Ilocano dishes are characterized by sweet, sour, or salty taste. Food lovers visiting Vigan has a fascinating mix of authentic restaurants, sprinkled with snippets of history and culture, bound by the charm and warmth of hospitable citizens.

Vigan upholds its rich tradition while it unapologetically embraces contemporary refashioning. This subtlety is exhibited remarkably in the city's dining options, where impressive remarks are seemingly claimed often. Influences from neighboring nations, primarily Asian and Western countries, augment these dishes' palatability, giving pleasure to those who have discriminating tastes. Unfortunately, the rampant manufacturing of synthetic seasonings and ingredients in the world market substantially affects these local foods' exquisiteness. Moreover, industrialization, the unceasing introduction of commercial goods, technological advancement, and dissipation of pioneer cooks make it a little arduous to tail the authenticity of Vigan cuisine nowadays.

The discussions in the research study will focus on hunting original and authentic Vigan food attractions. This paper will supply on how to preserve these dishes for the next generation despite commercialization and advancement. This research will also be favorable to the Local Government Units (LGUs). This is advantageous to the LGUs, and other agencies are tasked to coordinate culinary tourism's growth and progress. Finally, it can serve as a type or model for the same fixed purpose or even be a good source of reference material for their future and more detailed studies for future researchers.

## **2. Objectives of the study**

1. To discover the authentic food attractions available in the Wonder City of Vigan,
2. To know and determine the level of awareness of tourists on the authentic food attractions found in the city of Vigan, and
3. To come up with ideas and ways on how to preserve and maintain these original and authentic Vigan food attractions.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

**Potentials of Culinary Tourism in Vigan City.** In the third week of January, the City of Vigan holds its Vigan *longganisa* Festival or City Festival to commemorate the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul and the City of Vigan's anniversary featuring the colorful *Festival of Longganisa*. The street dance contest is celebrated every 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January to promote the *longganisa* -making industry. Aside from the dance, there are also *longganisa* eating contests, longest *longganisa* making, and *longganisa* cooking on the ravishing roads where residents and visitors are free to indulge in the mouthwatering *longganisa*—a celebration to promote Vigan *longganisa*, a significant product of the city. Further, there are food fairs/culinary tourism activities set up during the five major festivals in the city that lasts for a week to offer savory, exotic Vigan foods to boost further the market of conventional Bigueño and *Iloco* products (Rosino, et al 2013).

**Food Authenticity.** According to Lindholm (2008), Authenticity is contemplated as a core element in the social establishment of heritage sites. For him, being authentic means being original and chase; they appear the way they naturally do, their sources are vindicated and familiar, and their essence and countenance are integrated. To substantiate if something possesses this quality, it is a pre-requisite to build a provenance for it, provide it with the different specifications, and establish familiarization with its roots to validate its etymology.

Chhabra (2007) argued that there is an argument on how to define authenticity radically. To him, five perspectives encompass the concept, which includes: objective/essentialist, constructivist, negotiated, existentialist, and theoplacity. The objective notion pertains to originality and truthfulness, such as being processed in its birthplace or by its very own ethnic people. Constructivist uphold the idea that the existing market forces and environment establish discernments. These latter two perspectives point to a simultaneous creation of authenticity.

Meanwhile, theoplacity refers to the concept that product buyers in an objectively authentic setup can experience the utmost and invigorating feeling. The connotations that are patterned on this perspective are associated with entirely commodified authenticity, like hyper-real and painstakingly structured pseudo-backstage. It is also imprinted in the study that pure authenticity often pertains to an objective authenticity. It implies a factual, original, chase, tangible, and unmodified version of heritage.

According to Robinson and Clifford (2012), in terms of characterizing efforts on ethnic eateries' facet, the dimensions of authenticity are noteworthy. This includes (1) composition, cooking techniques, and equipment utilized in which food and beverage are produced authentic to medieval era; (2) oral and written elucidation of menus, dishes, and ingredients in which food and beverage are depicted as authentic to the medieval period; (3) sourcing and choosing the ingredients (authentic to medieval times); (4) exhibition of food platters and accouterments on the table; (5) synthesis of other authenticating factors on perceived taste; (6) dramatization and costuming of service staff; (7) menus and dishes trying to duplicate that perceived medieval food; and (8) covering of factors of authenticity to deliver an experience unique to the

medieval era. Consumers clamor for authenticity is triggered by their desire for products that can give a strand of uniqueness to their lives.

Furthermore, authenticity allows people to cast away the obscurity and senselessness of this life when modernization is inevitably evident. Hence, a popular theme in published literature tackling the concept of authenticity suggests that a product that possesses a more natural, home-made, or handcrafted countenance has a greater possibility of being criticized for being authentic or not. Therefore, consumers seek to find authenticity on the product per se and the peculiar social and cultural circumstances under which the product was manufactured. Truly, cultural authenticity is much appreciated in the sought and cooked food.

Taylor (2001) said that purchasers who behest for food that are ostensive to be “traditional” and “local” could also be assimilated in the pursuit of defining authenticity. Academic arguments about the definition and soundness of authenticity have become a core element in tourism literature. Taylor claims that there is a vast array of ways to name authenticity because many have made it their subject of interest. As a denouement, authenticity means originality and uniqueness of a product with high regard to its importance, vindicated and familiarized etymology, and essence and countenance are integrated. Authentic native dishes are one of the many persuasions for a voyager to sojourn a specific destination. Authentic food reflects a destination's perpetual heritage, culture, and traditions that become the driving force to motivate tourists to crave more experience and memories. Food is labeled authentic if the following elements are made evident: 1) ingredients used, 2) cooking method, 3) culture, and 4) distinctiveness of the dish.

**Awareness of Tourists on Culinary Tourism.** Culinary tourism elucidates how self-consciousness transpires out of our encounters with the unknown, concomitantly testing our knowledge about what lies ahead. The authenticity of a dish yields to an authentic experience. Authenticity is vital in culinary tourism because it allows us to recognize differences from one dish to another.

Also, culinary tourism established opportunities to search, challenge, and extend the thresholds of the unrecognized. Exquisiteness arises from the unpredictability of culinary tourism to the edge that it encompasses a break with one's daily routine. When the tourism industry is predictable, it affords to give experiences from a vast array of occasions undertaken. New experiences widen our strategies to create and understand ourselves as we unconsciously cast away much neglect. They unsettle habitus— those characters and implicit cognizance that require minimal socks to come into consciousness. Culinary tourism is a shock treatment. It brings life into perception via the surprises afforded by unprecedented and the unstructured. Culinary tourism familiarizes the fresh and estranges the common, redrawing their connection with each new experience (So, 2008).

**Tourists Food Preferences.** Tourist's food preference is highly dependent on their personalities as voyagers. Psychocentrics are those travelers who search for the mediocre at home. Allocentrics pertain to those who consistently search for new adventures and encounters (Libosada and Bosangit, 2007). Midcentrics, meanwhile, fly to areas, which were previously discovered and sojourned by bolder Allocentrics (Cruz, 2000).

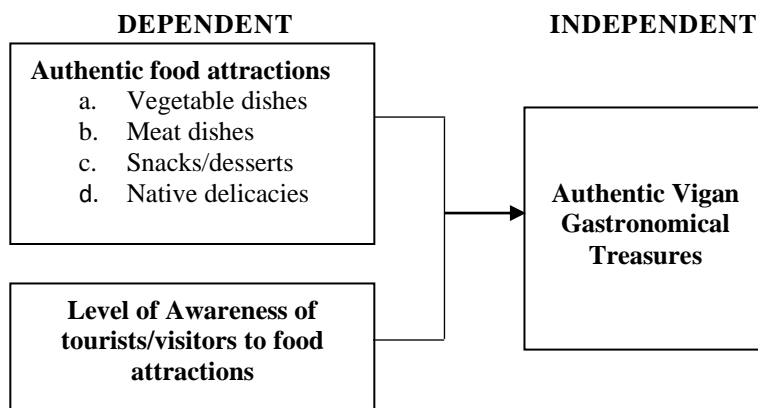
Travelers from Asian nations are so dear to Philippine seafood. Similarly, Japanese loves Japanese cuisine, Koreans are up for kimchi, and Taiwanese adore Chinese dishes. Voyagers from Hongkong want their meal to be prepared without getting tarnished by coconut oil. Singaporeans enjoy eating chili-seasoned foods with great disfavor to pork or beef meats, which is very homogenous to Malaysians. Indonesians are pleased by spicy foods except for pork products. Buddhists like Thais hate cows but not their milk. Indians who also loathe beef eat barehanded mainly when consuming piquant dishes.

Travelers from middle east nations so love Philippine seafood. Jews and Israelis abhor swine products. European are extreme wine drinkers and eat more meat than seafood. French explorers are pure gastronomic. The British are lager drinkers while the Germans and Italians love Philippine beer.

On the other hand, North American people love continental food or classy ones aside from Philippine seafood. Travelers from South and Central America are mainly carnivorous. Oceanians like Australians and New Zealanders are also beer drinkers. Pacific islanders are unsophisticated because they are providential, so island type of cuisine is more than satisfying.

Filipinos are undeniably food lovers too. Filipino cuisine is made up of anything and everything edible. This implies that Filipino food ranges from the mediocre to the extreme down to the most exotic. In some parts of Europe, it is improper to ask for sauces in restaurants because it delineates an impression of insult to the chef. In the Philippines, diners are allowed to participate in making the final product (So, 2008).

**Conceptual framework**



**Figure 1. Research Paradigm**

**Research Design.** The researcher utilized descriptive and qualitative research because it helps provide facts that could form scientific judgments that can help measure things, events, or phenomena such as interviews, observation, and questionnaires. It aims to understand the context in which sensations and behaviors occur (Cinco, M. et al., 2012). Descriptive research is a study that describes the nature of the phenomenon under investigation after a survey of current trends, practices, and conditions that relate to that phenomenon. It involves an analysis of an extensive range of phenomena; its result is a comprehensive presentation and interpretation of statistical tabulations of data yielded by a survey (Tan, 2006).

**Instrumentation and Data Collection.** The exploratory research design was used to determine the various authentic gastronomic attractions that can only be found and originated in the wonder city of Vigan, as capital city in the Province of Ilocos Sur. Direct interview with the pioneer cook and makers of authentic Vigan foods and the local cultural researchers and experts as short-listed from the Office of the City Mayor. Further, a survey questionnaire intended for tourists and visitors to determine their level of awareness of the authentic foods found in the city, and ideas on how to preserve and maintain the authenticity of these dishes. Said questionnaire was adapted from the study of Yamongan-Viernes (2009). This study acquired information through interviews with experts and believed to give reliable and trustable information. Besides, the researcher gathered other facts from books, journals, and magazines.

Due to the global pandemic, the researcher utilized possible communication methods, the use of google form for the tourists' level of awareness, and interviewed respondents through phone calls and computer terminals.

**Statistical tools:** Level of awareness on culinary attractions of tourists. The weighted means were interpreted as follows:

<b>Range of Mean Values</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>
4.51 – 5.00	Very much aware (VMA)
3.51 – 4.50	Very aware (VA)
2.51 – 3.50	Aware (A)
1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Aware (SA)
1.00 – 1.50	Unaware (U)

**Ethical Consideration.** Respect for the integrity of participants in the research was prioritized. Prior to the study, full consent was obtained from the participants. Security of the privacy of research participants has been assured. Ensuring an acceptable degree of confidentiality of research results.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

**Problem 1. What are the authentic food attractions found in the Wonder City of Vigan along?**

- a. Vegetable dishes
- b. Meat dishes
- c. Snack/Desserts
- d. Native Delicacies

##### a. Meat Dishes

**Vigan Sinanglao.** A unique homespun soup of Vigan City, *Sinanglao* is eccentrically a dish out of beef offal tenderized by long cooking hours. It is flavored with garlic, ginger, onions, *kamias*, and bile. Several people have documented this dish as peculiar and appalling because of its looks, but the soup and the meat's tenderness stumbles the impression upside down. The ingredients are mostly anchored to what is readily available to the region. No components are challenging to gain access with,

and it is considered economical, and the price ranges from not less than 50 pesos to not more than a hundred. Further, Ilocano's are soup-lovers, and this dish is a culinary masterpiece for them to try not only once but several times.

**Vigan Longganissa.** Historically recognized as “*de recado*” *longganisa* or homemade sausages made from ground pork, pork fats, garlic, vinegar, soy sauce, and black pepper in hog casings. A local version of salami and believed to be in existence since the period of Spanish galleon trade. Not like any other sweet-tasting *longganisa* in the country. This *longganisa* has a salty, spicy and garlicky taste because of locally produced cane vinegar and Vigan grown garlic. The Vigan *longganisa* is best described as “roly-poly” because of the small-sized feature. This can be prepared anytime, but best served during breakfast paired with *morisqueta tostada* (fried rice). Favorable with *kamatis* (tomato), *bagoong* (fish paste), and *lasona* (onion). Diners leave not only with full stomachs but also with equally full smiles.

#### b. Vegetable Dish

**Poqui-poqui.** An obscenely resonating dish originated from the *Ilocos* region. Vigan's *poqui-poqui* is made of eggplant with Vigan *longganisa* or pork meat sautéed in onion, garlic, fish paste (*bagoong*), and tomatoes off with beaten eggs. This may seemingly suggest sexually-explicit connotation in *Tagalog*, but its significance to the *Bigueño* cuisine and culture is conspicuously healthy and appealing. The name is obtrusively vulgar because Ilocano's vocabulary is as rich and evocative as the food itself. Still, without a doubt, this comical dish has reached far and wide because of not only what it is called for but also because of how delicious it truly is. The way it looks after cooking is incredibly unappealing, but it is undoubtedly healthy and nutritious because it is composed of vegetables. Moreover, the ingredients are not difficult to find, and the preparation takes only about 30 minutes before it is served mostly for breakfast.

#### c. Snacks/Desserts

**Bolero.** This dessert heaven evokes the city's Spanish heritage with its bolero—a sweet bread sandwich with oozing dulce de leche filling. With an outstanding sweet taste with new exciting flavors, the *bolero* has become a very in-demand snack item among the locals and travelers, especially during the Lenten and summer season. The most interesting about this local delicacy is that it is a cone-shaped sponge cake heavily coated with melted sugar. This is only available in the heritage street during the Holy Week celebration.

**Canatillo.** Indulged with this classic delicacy in the old streets of Vigan. Characterized by a spiral tube-like shape into perfection stuffed with coconut sugar mixture. Locals also called this delicacy as *Canotillo*. A healthy and yummy biscuit with a winter melon filling (*kundol*) inside and traditionally prepared and cooked deep fried, perfect when paired with hot coffee.

**Goloria.** An instance mixing of flour, milk, water, and glutinous consistency, kneading to an oblong shaped soft dough. A classic oblong-shaped bread rolled in “*caramel*” syrup. Some would traditionally prepare a boiled melted sugar or purely

sprinkling refined sugar for coating, and with its tale presence, this sweet treat is traditionally prepared and served during the Catholics faithful event like the “*Sabado de Gloria*” as to the term implied “*Goloria*”

**Londres.** Experience the classic and indigenous delicacy of Vigan, the *Londres*. It is an irresistible thin sponge cake vastly coated with boiled melted sugar. It is a commendable gooey snack in the heritage site. In an earlier time, *Londres* got its name to "long dress," meaning heavily dressed with sugar. An incredibly charming Vigan snack, enjoyable and exciting during the summer break, makes you want to gobble it up.

**Masapodrida.** A local baked version of a cookie pastry with sweet fillings that has a dry, brittle texture. Travelers partake of these local baked goods during the Lenten season. It is said to predate during the Spanish colonization, which means "rotten flour" because of its friable and crisp quality. A flower-liked shape, medium size shortbread finished with butter on top as an added enticement. There are two preparations: mix flour with butter until it forms a dough, prepare the filling by mixing flour with milk or water and sugar, and be baked in an oven and imbibed with hot coffee and other creative juices. The cost of this sweet treat is very economical, and it ranges only from 15 to 20 pesos per piece, best for a surprise gift.

**Okoy.** Another fritter wonder that Vigan City has to offer is *Okoy*. Alongside with Vigan Empanada, this native delicacy is a pervasive street food all across the heritage city. This is authentically made up of unshelled small shrimps (*odang*) and ground rice batter deep fried to crisp and dipped in *Ilocos* native vinegar with onion and hot chili for an extra spike.

Travelers visiting Vigan would be incomplete without tasting this local delicacy. Variations of *okoy* all across *the Ilocos* region and neighboring localities, but Vigan *Okoy* is generally recognized as culturally authentic. This dish is not expensive, and it ranges only from 30 to 40 pesos, depending on the ingredients added. This delicacy can be found all across the borders of Vigan City, and locals rely on selling the delicacy for subsistence. However, the authentic version of the Vigan *okoy* is found to be vanishing due to the presence of commercialization. *Bigueños* have adapted ways to improve this dish from the conventional to the most contemporary schemes of making the dish a lovable yet culturally-enriched delicacy.

**Pipian.** Vigan's native dish remains unorthodox to other districts because of its quirky ingredients such as coarsely ground rice, *pasotes* (Ilocano herbs), and *kamias* or *pias* (local version). *Pipian* resembles the usual Philippine porridge but is peculiarly distinguishable because of its orange color, strong sour taste, and thickly rich texture. The taste of which ultimately defines the distinctive delight that the dish offers. *Pasotes* leaves are used to elevate the sour flavor, which is further intensified by augmenting *kamias*. Although uncommon to other nations, *Pipian* remains one of the most sought-after light meals or entrées for the *Bigueños* and even the *Ilocanos*. It is believed that Vigan *Pipian* is adapted from Mexico during the galleon trade between 1565 to 1815, but the primary ingredients were difficult to acquire by Ilocano locals; hence, they used native components to create an efficient yet reasonable dish to be proud of.



***Pancit Luzon/Canton Luzon.*** Food was one reason the Chinese started coming to the Philippines long before the Spaniards' arrival. The *pancit Luzon or canton Luzon* believed to be originated from the Cantonese people in Macau, China.

It was during the 1940s when *Pancit Luzon* was introduced to the locals. A well-loved by the people of Vigan because of the unique taste, ingredients, and preparation. Entrepreneurs introduced various contemporary variations of this dish in the city. Still, the *Canton Luzon* remains original, authentic, and freshly served by the pioneer makers at Luzon Inn and Restaurant in Vigan. A very authentic way of preparing the noodles from manual mixing of ingredients to the rolling and kneading of dough using indigenous apparatus passed through to a noodle cutter machine. Canton noodles are preliminarily cooked in boiling water to frying in a large pan using *pugon* (traditional kitchen stove), adding to its smoky flavor.

***Puto de Vigan.*** Witness the classic and indigenous version of *puto de Vigan*, combined with ground ordinary rice and yeast. This *puto* has a soft, steamed rice cake texture that makes you want to take eagerly. The ingredients are most readily available in the locality. No components are challenging to gain access to. An adorable and kid-friendly Vigan snack perfect for sharing. They were made in mini muffin molds, covered with "katsa" cloth while cooking.

***Royal Bibingka.*** A scrumptious treat of Vigan City that resembles far from the customary *bibingka* version. This is primarily made out of glutinous rice baked to perfection with delightfully crusty sides and succulently cheesy toppings. *Royal bibingka* is a luscious delicacy of the town that leaves all discriminating taste in absolute awe. It a must-try dessert for everyone who wishes to experience Vigan in a delectable heritage way. Vigan *Royal Bibingka* stands out amongst the rest for its richly dense and thick texture on the bottom plus a translucently sweet toothsome taste. The smell of this delicacy is tempting that one would devour on eating more than one.

***Sweet Okilas.*** A lip-smacking round shape fine thin layer of sweet cracklings made of flour and sweetened by a cooked candy-liked *muscovado*. It is an energetic, sweet treat on a vicissitude weather paired with creative and cool beverages during the blessed day celebration of catholic believers. Further, a made to order snack or a dessert with a price-friendly amount ranging from 15 to 20 pesos.

***Joma's Tower Barbeque.*** A well-known classic food attraction in town. *Batang's 90s* locals can relate and are well experienced with its taste and texture of this heirloom recipe of the 25-year-old heritage. It is a childhood favorite grilled barbeque because of the distinct classic flavor. A twenty-peso light meal available for outdoor dining or even consumed away from its place of sale and best paired with *sukang iloko* (a local vinegar). A trip or visit to Vigan is incomplete without experiencing this attraction's pleasurability, prepared, and served into perfection.

***Vigan Empanada.*** A highly Spanish-inspired, deep-fried delicacy that is exquisitely emblematic to Vigan, Ilocos Sur. It is a ubiquitous street food of the city typically made up of yellowish-colored rice flour dough filled with fresh egg and various vegetables such as grated green papaya or shredded cabbage carrots. *Vigan longganisa* is a primary meat filling that makes the delicacy a definite cut above the rest.

Local and foreign tourists' vacation would be incomplete without tasting this local delicacy. There have been wide versions of empanadas all across *the Ilocos* region and neighboring localities, but *Vigan Empanada* is dubbed as culturally original. This dish's cost is not expensive, and it ranges only from 35 to 70 pesos, depending on the size and ingredients added. This delicacy can be found all across the borders of Vigan City, and locals rely on selling the delicacy for subsistence. *Bigueños* have adapted ways to improve this dish from the conventional to the most contemporary schemes of making the dish a lovable yet culturally enriched delicacy.

#### d. Native Delicacies

***Salapusop.*** This refers to a steamed Vigan delicacy traditionally cooked through steaming on wood-fired clay stoves, clay pots, and shaped on clay molders then wrapped in banana leaves when cooked. A luscious rice delicacy made from ground “*diket*” or crushed coconut meat and *iloko* sugar (*kuya-koya*) or *muscovado*. It is a starchy and sticky with a sweet sugar topping. Best consumed after being cooked, tempting to gobble on eating more than one. Food attractions today are highly prepared in a high-class technological apparatus but this one is prepared and baked on a clay pot, which traditionally have long been irreplaceable in the process. *Bigueños* are traditionally inclined with food preparations; this is undoubtedly one of those distinctive and merely to Vigan's extinct delicacy, which shall remain resilient and significant to future generations.

***Bibingka Pascua.*** Another classic attraction in Vigan City that captures the hearts of many because of its exquisite toothsome and impression coupled with its delicately creative sense of baking is *Bibingka Pascua*. This delicacy is heated on a culturally significant item of heritage-the-clay-pot (*damili*) by a lump of coal placed on top. It comprises glutinous rice (*nabilla-ay nga diket*), and coconut milk brushed with sugar, butter, and grated coconut on top served mostly during the yuletide season. The soft yet thick texture of which is a perfect escape from all the bitterness in the world. The toppings of which makes the entire delicacy worth consuming at a very reasonable price. People say that the pot and the traditional process perfect the cake. *Bigueños* are not only food lovers but also traditionally inclined. This is undoubtedly one of Vigan's distinctive delicacies, which shall remain resilient and relevant from this generation to the next.

#### **Tourists' Level of Awareness on the Authentic Food Attractions in the City of Vigan**

The study respondents involved 105 domestic tourists and visitors and three (3) foreign tourists/visitors who visited the city.

Table 1 present the level of awareness of tourists/visitors on the authentic food attractions available in the city.

**Vegetable Dish.** As indicated by the composite mean of responses, tourists/visitors are *very aware*, or 4.32 mean rating of the authentic Vigan *poqui-poqui* vegetable dish prepared in the city. The dish is attributed to the fact that many of them have already come to the city repeatedly and undoubtedly have had a taste of it. Also, those who have tried the dish have recommended it to others. The *poqui-poqui* vegetable dish is usually served within households and not so during special occasions.

**Meat Dishes.** Consistently, *Vigan Longganisa* is the most popular main dish for tourists/visitors. Those interviewed like its garlic flavor and somewhat salty taste, making it different from the sweet *longganisa* of other provinces in the country. Moreover, the tourists/visitors are *Very aware* of the *sinanglao* with a mean rating of 4.46.

**Table 1. Tourists' Level of Awareness on the Authentic Food Attractions in the City of Vigan**

Authentic Food Attractions in the City	Tourists/Visitors (N=108)	
	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	DR
<b>VEGETABLE DISH</b>		
1. Poqui-poqui	4.32	VA
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.32</b>	<b>VA</b>
<b>MEAT DISHES</b>		
1. Sinanglao	4.46	VA
2. Vigan Longganisa	4.84	VMA
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>4.65</b>	<b>VMA</b>
<b>SNACKS/DESSERTS</b>		
1. Vigan Empanada	4.88	VMA
2. Royal Bibingka	3.95	VA
3. Pipian	3.13	A
4. Vigan Okoy	4.05	VA
5. Goloria	2.18	SA
6. Bolero	3.36	A
7. Pancit Luzon	2.74	A
8. Masapodrida	1.94	SA
9. Sweet Okilas	2.50	SA
10. Londres	1.84	SA
11. Canatillo	1.94	SA
12. Jomas Tower Barbeque	2.80	A
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>NATIVE DELICACIES</b>		
1. Salapusop	2.06	SA
2. Bibingka Pascua	2.56	A
3. Puto de Vigan	2.62	A
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.41</b>	<b>SA</b>
<b>OVERALL MEAN RATING</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>VA</b>

**Legend:**

<i>Range of Mean Values</i>	<i>Verbal Interpretation</i>	<i>2.51 – 3.50</i>	<i>Aware (A)</i>
4.51 – 5.00	Very much aware (VMA)	1.51 – 2.50	Slightly Aware (SA)
3.51 – 4.50	Very aware (VA)	1.00 – 1.50	Unaware (U)

As seen in Table 1, meat dishes have a composite mean of 4.65; that is, the tourists/visitors are very aware of these dishes. These meat dishes are usually prepared and served to locals and travelers in famous restaurants in Vigan.

**Snacks/Desserts.** *Vigan Empanada* is the most popular authentic snack attraction among the tourists/visitors with a mean rating of 4.88 or *Very much aware*, followed by *Vigan Okoy* and *Royal Bibingka* with a mean rating of 4.05 and 3.95 or *Very aware*, respectively. These are readily available in the city and popularly known by the locals and travelers.

It can also be seen from the table that the tourists/visitors are *aware* of the attractions of the other authentic snacks/desserts. They are aware of the *bolero* ( $\bar{x}=3.36$ ), *Pipian* ( $\bar{x}=3.13$ ), *Jomas Tower Barbeque* ( $\bar{x}=2.80$ ), and *Pancit Luzon* ( $\bar{x}=2.74$ ).

Due to the limited production of the *Sweet Okilas* ( $\bar{x}=2.50$ ), *Goloria* ( $\bar{x}=2.18$ ), *Masapodrida*, and *Canatillo* with a mean rating of 1.94, *Londres* ( $\bar{x}=1.84$ ), these authentic snacks/desserts attractions in the city are not famous or *slightly aware* by the tourists/visitors.

Moreover, tourists/visitors are *Aware*, as revealed by their composite mean of 2.94; this is because these gastronomical treasures are seldom seen in the markets, neither in restaurants where tourists usually eat. According to most food makers, for snacks and desserts, tourists/visitors usually go and patronize available products in the famous street in the city, the *Callé Crisologo*.

**Native Delicacies.** As seen in Table 1, *Puto de Vigan* ( $\bar{x}=2.62$ ), *Bibingka Pascua* ( $\bar{x}=2.56$ ), and *Salapusop* ( $\bar{x}=2.06$ ) are available only in limited places, and these are made to order delicacies, hence the low level of awareness of the tourists/visitors on these native treasures.

As to the overall mean rating of 3.58, as revealed in Table 1, these gastronomical treasures in the city got a descriptive rating of *Very Aware*. This is a certain lead for the promotion of gastronomic tourism in the city.

### Ways to Preserve Authentic Vigan food attractions

**Intermingle food culture with technology.** People live in a new era where the digital age has been tremendously beneficial in life and living, particularly in cuisine traditions. The same way follows when these food attractions are kept proliferating and visible to everyone through social media platforms. Without a second thought, online geography is the most obtainable and convenient place to introduce products. People will never become alienated from these foods' history and their cultural implications when their value is technologically preserved and set-in motion.

**Establishment of dynamic cultural cuisine activities.** Events and festivities are remarkable maneuvers to spread awareness about a culture or a local attraction. These, consequently, become avenues to ignite attention in multitude. Local and

foreign visitors of all ages can get acquainted with these food attractions; and awareness to such diffuse and disperse easily. Society's participation in these events is enlightening in the context of traditional food preservation.

**Provision of learnings on proper cultural preservation.** Education is the ultimate key to keeping food attraction alive and vibrant. When locals are oriented to the importance and principles of preservation and conservation, they develop knowledge on keeping these food attractions existent and tolerance to embracing social dynamism. People vary in behaviors and perceptions despite unified demography. Still, when these behaviors and idealisms are tolerated healthily, society generates a collective effort to sustain values, norms, and practices anchored from both heritage and culture.

### **Ways to Maintain the Authenticity of Vigan Food Attractions**

**Acknowledge multiculturalism.** Acknowledging multiculturalism to maintain food authenticity may sound absurd or ironic because people are accustomed to "authentic" food based on a known geographical location or food origin point. Authenticity, as a term, transcend beyond land boundaries. To keep food authentic, a harmonious perception of different cultures' coexistence within that land boundary is indispensable to consider and eventually be integrated into that "authentic" food. Food has been fraught territory, but beyond its material sense, the food that people choose to eat is firmly based on their emotions, personalities, and values. As a denouement, food is authentic as long as it is highly appreciated by most, the quality is preserved, the history of which is evident, and innovation is accepted.

**Regard spontaneity.** Cooking should coincide with adapting to affordable, seasonal, and what equipment or ingredient is readily accessible. Vigan's food's authenticity has been evidently and relentlessly innovated to catch up with the ever-changing demand of consumers. *Bigueño* cuisines take unexpected turns along the way; hence, spontaneity in one's cooking method should be regarded and appreciated the way it is to the conventional ones.

**Retain quality and originality.** Despite the innovation and continuous elevation of food in plating, taste, and context, its quality and originality should be kept intact. The same major ingredients should dominate despite the twists and turns. By so doing, people retain the historical influence and the heritage aspect of the food, leaving it palatably relevant and timely to the modern age.

**Packaging techniques.** Clearly, packaging design is a vital part of a product. Given the importance of packaging in determining the shelf life of a product, the correct approach enables the production of the product and its packaging method to be taken into consideration at the same level of importance. Selection of materials and designs that best address the conflicting demands of product features, marketing requirements such as distribution and customer needs, environmental and waste management problems, and costs are the key to effective packaging. Other processing and preservation activities such as freezing, irradiation, pulsed electric fields, high pressure processing, and pulsed light also include integration with food packaging technologies. Because of the variety of product characteristics and basic demands and applications for food packaging, any packaging technology promising to provide more economic and diverse product and quality control will be accepted favorably.

Food packaging training should be conducted for various types of food products. Consumers are knowledgeable now and are no longer easily impressed, hence the need for packaging and promotional campaigns that are more appealing and persuasive.

## CONCLUSION

The classic and authentic foods in the city of Vigan and even those undiscovered are highly distinguishable marks as they pertain to the uniqueness of the place's rich cultural presence. The city has high potentials to be regarded as a gastronomic destination as evident that food is worth significant in structuring a distinct local identity. Tourists and visitors are very aware of most of the gastronomical treasures in the city. This is a positive lead for the promotion of gastronomic tourism in Vigan City. However, a more intensive action for development and promotions should be done for some gastronomical treasures which are not so known to locals and travelers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The concerned government and other line agencies to accentuate people's awareness of the programs and assistance they offer, especially to the local food makers, should execute intensive dissemination. Likewise, a strong approach to promotional movement of native and authentic products through multimedia broadcast conducted by the local government and food establishments. Unify producers and makers of food products to elevate food tourism in the city further. Added to this, business owners and makers of food attractions in the city undergo developmental activities to enhance food preparations and packaging and be conducted by the local government and other food-related agencies. Availability and accessibility of these dishes during city festivals, trade fairs, conventions, and other mass gatherings and activities. Likewise, a need to put up a standard display in the city's heart for all culinary products. Local food researchers and writers to articulate and devise a cookbook attributed to the authentic and classic foods available in the city. The *Kankanen* Village of the city should be adequately managed and further enhance existing facilities to entice more customers to patronize city food products.

Furthermore, with Vigan's local government, concerned agencies can adequately document and publish authentic food attractions in the city. This will serve as a revelation for the local and national government to start performing services upon hunting and displaying Philippine food heritage. Also, the local government could arrange and organize a food-package tour offered to domestic and international visitors. Existing official website of the city to include these authentic foods as striking means of information dissemination. Moreover, the city government should initiate and organize food and drink activities and competitions for students, restaurants, and the locals. Besides, educational institutions to include and highlight in their culinary programs and courses the availability of these dishes to become aware and knowledgeable of the city's rich culinary culture.

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