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# THE PORRIDGES OF INDONESIA: BEHIND THE DELICACIES

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# PORRIDGE

is one famous type of dish in the world. With its smooth texture and simplicity, porridge holds a special bond with people around the world. Indonesia and other Asian countries are no strangers to the dish. With its history dating back hundreds of years ago through the Chinese who first introduced it, porridge or *bubur* in Indonesia developed into various kinds with different ingredients, tastes, and cultures behind it spread across the country.



@sannysusanto via Instagram

Bubur Pengkolan via Instagram

# A BRIEF HISTORY

Porridge, also known as congee and *bubur* in Indonesian, holds an important position to warm a sick body, as it was known as a comfort food in China. The Chinese who migrated to various regions around the globe and were not in a wealthy condition rely on porridge to survive. Hayatinufus Tobing, a culinary expert, explained that with their limited food resource, rice can be cooked as rice porridge to increase its quantity.

Reference: Seri Femina - Wisata Kuliner Indonesia: Cerita Bubur Nusantara / published by Aspirasi Pemuda, 2020



The strong porridge-eating tradition in several regions in Indonesia was enriched by the Chinese community who settled in the region. Tobing also explained that the more Chinese in the region settled, the higher the possibility of one variation of porridge to develop in the region.



### **Festival Jenang Solo 2016**

(Kompas/Erwin Adhi Prasetya)

Additionally, J.J. Rizal, a historian, stated that the porridge-eating tradition was a result of agrarian society's dietary style, particularly in Southeast Asia. Therefore, porridge is placed as the second staple food after rice. He added that the island of Java was once called "Jawa Diva" which means the island of rice. Due to this familiarity, Javanese people revere porridge at many traditional events.

Indonesia's diversity of culture and natural resources create various kinds of porridge in various regions in Indonesia. There are many kinds of porridges in Indonesia, from sweet to savory flavor. These porridges have different tastes and ingredients, as well as the cultural aspect behind it. The following 3 porridges are some of the most popular porridges in Indonesia.

Reference: Seri Femina - Wisata Kuliner Indonesia: Cerita Bubur Nusantara / published by Aspirasi Pemuda, 2020



dok. Sajian Sedap

SHUTTERSTOCK/DANDY BINTARFANO DWINANDA



# BUBUR SURO

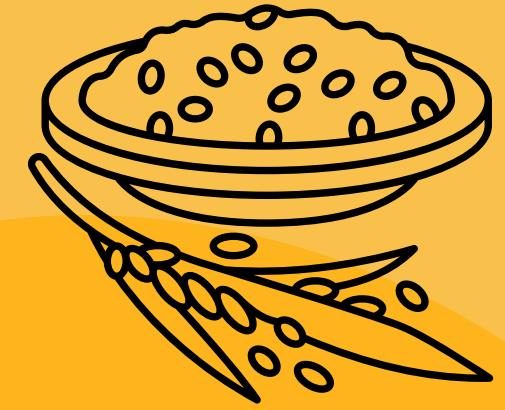
## SURO PORRIDGE

📍 **JAVA ISLAND**

Suro Porridge, also known as Bubur Suro or Bubur Sura, is a traditional porridge widely consumed by people on Java Island as a part of the tradition of welcoming the Islamic new year. The porridge can have different flavors and toppings based on different parts of the island, but generally, the porridge consists of rice, coconut milk, chicken broth, topped with fried soybeans, potato fritter, fried tofu, and fried shallot.

## SURO PORRIDGE

📍 JAVA ISLAND



The Suro Porridge Tradition is practiced by people from several parts of Java Island, namely West Java, Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java as the majority of the population is Muslim and their main source of income depends on agricultural production, especially rice. One of the groups of people in Java who maintain the tradition is the people of Cijere Village of Sumedang, West Java. They hold the tradition to show gratitude to Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* for his blessings and the fruitfulness of their agricultural production. The series of tradition includes *ijab* as a form of gratitude to God, cooking the porridge, spreading the *sesajen* (offerings) by the local leader, and sharing the porridge with the people of the village. The tradition is also held with a traditional music performance called Tarawangsa.

The tradition is full of cultural symbols, morals, and local values. The values such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), togetherness, the harmony between human beings and nature as well as the harmony between the human being, and the harmony of them in their relationship with God.

Reference: Julaeha, N., Saripudin, D., Supriatna, N., & Yulifar, L. (2019). ECOLOGICAL WISDOM IN BUBUR SURO TRADITION IN RANCAKALONG, SUMEDANG REGENCY. *Patanjala*, 11(3).  
<https://doi.org/10.30959/patanjala.v11i3.538>





# BUBUR PEDAS

## SPICY PORRIDGE

### 📍 SUMATRA ISLAND & WEST KALIMANTAN

Bubur pedas is a traditional porridge that is usually consumed during Ramadan month, traditional events, or other special occasions in West Kalimantan, Sumatra, or Aceh. The porridge can have different ingredients depending on which region it is served. The main ingredients of the porridge consist of nuts, fish, spices, and various kinds of leaves. The porridge is savory and has a strong flavor from the spices. This porridge is associated with Malay (Melayu people) and can also be found in Sarawak, Malaysia.

## SPICY PORRIDGE

 SUMATRA ISLAND &  
WEST KALIMANTAN

The history of bubur pedas can be derived from the time of the coronation of Sultan Deli. The king made a contest for the people to create a dish that is worthy of being served to the royal guests. The people then made many kinds of dish in which one of it was bubur pedas. Until now, bubur pedas is still widely consumed by Malay people in many regions.

The people of Melayu Tamiang in Aceh have different kinds of bubur pedas in terms of the ingredients used. The porridge is made of rice and has a spicy and unique flavor. Although Melayu Tamiang and other Melayu in different regions, such as Langkat, Tanjung Pura, Medan, and Riau, share a similar dish, the level of spiciness of the porridge is different depending on the ingredients used and the culture of each region. Melayu Tamiang people made the porridge with shrimp, fresh fish, and topped with fried shallots. They also use anyang that is made of vegetables with shredded coconut to eat with the porridge.

Reference: Emelia, T. W., & Ramadhani, S. (2021). KEKAYAYAN REMPAH DALAM TRADISI BUBUR PEDAS MELAYU TAMIANG: KAJIAN TRADISI LISAN. *Bahterasia: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia*, 2(2), 22-29.





kuemamijo via Instagram



# BUBUR ASE

## ASE PORRIDGE

### 📍 JAKARTA

Bubur Ase is a traditional porridge of the Betawi people in Jakarta. The porridge is made of rice, with Ase broth and pickled vegetables, topped with crackers, fried peanuts, fried soybeans, anchovy, chives, and fried shallots. According to Hj. Cucu Sulaicha, one of the members of Betawi Cultural Institution, Ase is a term in the Betawi language to refer to thin stew broth. The porridge is usually served during traditional ceremonies, such as Bebaritan/Baritan Ceremony or also known as Sedekah Bumi (earth's alms). The porridge is increasingly harder to find due to modernization and the increase in fast-food trends.

Reference: Muliani, L. (2019). Potensi Bubur Ase Sebagai Daya Tarik Wisata Kuliner Jakarta. Destinesia: Jurnal Hospitaliti dan Pariwisata, 1(1), 50-56.

Back in the day, Bubur Ase was widely consumed by the majority of Betawi people known as Betawi Tengah people (Central/Urban Betawi people). High numbers of acculturation of cultures took place in Central Betawi as it was the center of the VOC government. Central Betawi was also known as Weltevreden. Weltevreden developed rapidly and instantly became an elite area with a high level of modernity. As a result, the culture and food in Central Betawi had distinctive characteristics compared to other Betawi areas.

## ASE PORRIDGE 📍 JAKARTA



Based on the ingredients used, Bubur Ase reflects the multicultural aspect of the Betawi people. There are at least 3 cultures combined in one bowl of Bubur Ase, namely Chinese, Middle Eastern, and European. Bean sprouts, tofu, and sweet soy sauce represent Chinese culture. Various spices used in the porridge represent Middle Eastern culture. The thin stew broth known as semur comes from the Dutch term, *Smoor* which represents European culture.

Reference: Muliani, L. (2019). Potensi Bubur Ase Sebagai Daya Tarik Wisata Kuliner Jakarta. *Destinesia: Jurnal Hospitaliti dan Pariwisata*, 1(1), 50-56.



Kartika Pamujiningtyas/Kumparan