

August 31, 2023

# FPHP BULLETIN HOT & TOUR

THE CROSSROADS;  
UNVEILING FOOD, TRENDS, & CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

NEWSLETTER VOL. 1/2023

*"Embracing & Escalating FPHP Creativity & Passion in Writing"*



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**HOT & TOUR NEWSLETTER  
VOL. 1/2023**

<https://anyflip.com/homepage/oistf>

ISSN 2231-7422 [https://is.gd/fphpnewsletter\\_penanguitm](https://is.gd/fphpnewsletter_penanguitm)



# FPHP Bulletin Hot & Tour Newsletter

## THE CROSSROADS; FOOD, TRENDS, & CULTURAL EXPERIENCES



### **NASI AMBENG: THE IRONY OF MALAYSIAN JAVANESE COMFORT FOOD THAT'S A PAIN TO PREP**

**BY NADIA LIANA MOHD KARIM, ARNIEYANTIE ABD HADI (DR.), NOOR SALIZA SALMI & PUTRI DAHLIA AB RASHID**

Two things you'll miss once you move out of your hometown: your parents and your comfort food. Period. At your new place, you can't recreate your parents, obviously. But food, that's replicable. Even as our palates have broadened, we continue to gravitate towards local delicacies. Comfort foods as we call them, are those foods that could nourish you not just physically, but more importantly...sentimentally. You would think I'd say 'spiritually' just for the jingle of the phrase, but we know it's beyond that.

Comfort foods bring back memories and all the good feelings you had as a child, and if you are still in the same country, recreating comfort food should be easy. Nasi ambeng is one of the items on my long list of Southern-flair comfort foods. As the dish is known and enjoyed across the country,

nasi ambeng has several varieties. Most prominently the Johor and Selangor versions. The components are the same, but each with its own twist. The better version is, of course, none. Both are best in their own ways. Nasi ambeng is a rice dish that is popular in Malaysian Javanese cuisine.

The main feature of nasi ambeng is it's a rice dish that is served together with a set of staple sides eaten together all at once. Sounds gluttony? Well, yes borderline gluttony, but there are graceful ways to go around it, I promise. This set of staple sides, or we can call them components, consist of serunding kelapa, sambal goreng jawa, a chicken dish (normally masak kicap), fried dried fish (normally ikan kering bulu ayam), and a fried noodle dish (could be yellow noodle or vermicelli). Some would go extra with beef dishes such as rendang, but the OGs remained as the aforementioned.

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The sensation of scoffing a mouthful of everything nasi ambeng is a humbling experience. Not only are each of the components delicious on its own, but the combination of everything is like a perfect marriage that comes with everyone's blessings and a generous salam keruk on top of it. That's what it tastes like.

The beauty of nasi ambeng lies in its components which tell a story of how the Javanese people created the meal dish. They are a depiction of where the Javanese commonly reside which is far from the coastline.

The Javanese community normally settles in lush rural areas where they don't have easy access to fish and other seafood. As a result, dishes like nasi ambeng exist.



*The sensation of scoffing a mouthful of everything nasi ambeng is a humbling experience.*

BY NADIA LIANA MOHD KARIM, ARNIEYANTIE ABD HADI (DR.), NOOR SALIZA SALMI & PUTRI DAHLIA AB RASHID

But the road to comfort is rarely paved with shortcuts. The same is true for the preparation of nasi ambeng. It takes a lot of work to make a whole nasi ambeng because each component is a dish unto itself. To make one complete set of nasi ambeng, you must prepare at least four dishes. The painful part is the amount of preparation and time taken to get it done. The beautiful part though is not only is the complete set of nasi ambeng itself, but you will also have leftovers for other mealtimes the next day.

Indulging in comfort food is like wrapping oneself in a warm embrace of culinary nostalgia. From savouring a steaming bowl of homemade chicken soup to relishing the gooey delight of mac and cheese, these cherished dishes have an uncanny ability to soothe the soul. With each comforting bite, the worries and stress melts away.

Replaced by a sense of contentment and tranquility. Comfort food is a gentle reminder of simpler times that brings us back to cherished memories and creates new ones. Whether it's a rainy day, a long week, or that distance between you and your hometown, comfort food is perhaps the faithful companion offering solace and bliss in every delectable mouthful.

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