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Seafood Menus and Kelong Gastronomy in Bintan: Culinary Identity, Experience Quality, and Coastal Sustainability

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ABSTRACT

Kelong on Bintan represents a coastal gastronomy landscape where seafood ingredients, cooking practices, dining experiences, hospitality, and local identity intersect. This study aims to analyze seafood menu diversity in kelong restaurants, identify culinary techniques and flavor profiles, and explain how these menus represent culinary identity, experience quality, and coastal sustainability in Bintan. A descriptive qualitative case study was employed using menu analysis, field observation, and supporting documentation from kelong-based seafood restaurants. The menu data covered 26 kelong/seafood restaurants entries and were categorized based on ingredients, cooking techniques, flavor profiles, and gastronomic meaning. The findings show that shrimp, crab, gonggong, squid, fish, grouper, blue swimming crab, snapper, lobster, and shellfish are central to Bintan kelong menus. Dominant culinary techniques and flavor profiles include steaming, Hong Kong-style steaming, black pepper sauce, flour-fried preparation, salted egg, boiling, sour-spicy seasoning, sweet-sour sauce, sambal, nestum, butter, and tauco-based preparation. These patterns indicate interactions among Malay coastal foodways, local seafood culture, and broader Asian and Chinese culinary influences. Food safety practices, particularly cold-chain control, separation of raw and cooked ingredients, sanitation, and simple labeling, support the quality of the gastronomic experience. The study concludes that kelong can be conceptualized as a coastal gastronomy landscape that strengthens Bintan's culinary identity and supports sustainable seafood-based destination development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy is no longer understood merely as the act of consuming food. It has developed into an interdisciplinary approach for understanding the relationships among food, place, experience, culture, and destination development. In tourism studies, gastronomy tourism refers to travel experiences in which food, beverages, culinary practices, and food-related cultural narratives become important destination attractions. Food tourism literature has shown that food is not only a supporting component of travel, but also a medium through which destinations communicate authenticity, memory, identity, and cultural value (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Ellis, Park, Kim, & Yeoman, 2018; Henderson, 2009; Kivela & Crotts, 2006).

Recent research also emphasizes that gastronomic experiences are shaped by the interaction among tourists, host communities, material culture, and the physical environment of eating. Gastronomy tourism therefore cannot be reduced to menu consumption; it involves the ways in which ingredients, culinary techniques, service encounters, stories of origin, and local landscapes create meaning for visitors. From this perspective, food becomes part of destination branding and local development, especially when it is connected to distinctive local resources and community-based knowledge (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016; Sims, 2009).

Coastal regions offer a particularly strong context for gastronomy because they connect marine landscapes, local food resources, fishing livelihoods, and place-based dining experiences. Seafood is not only an edible commodity but also an ecological and cultural symbol of coastal communities. In marine destinations, seafood-based gastronomy can communicate freshness, proximity to the sea, and the social identity of coastal life. Studies on marine-based gastronomy ecotourism have highlighted that seafood can become a destination asset when developed through local wisdom, infrastructure support, stakeholder collaboration, and sustainability-oriented practices (Everett & Slocum, 2013; Hakim & Putra, 2023).

Bintan, located in Kepulauan Riau Province, Indonesia, has a strong coastal character and is widely associated with seafood-based dining. One distinctive culinary space found in Bintan is kelong, a water-based restaurant or floating seafood establishment that serves fresh marine dishes to tourists and local consumers. In tourism practice, kelong does not merely provide seafood menus. It offers a dining experience connected to the marine landscape, coastal atmosphere, ingredient selection, cooking methods, service practices, and communal eating patterns.

In this study, kelong is interpreted as a food landscape: a food-related space where ingredients, the physical setting, social practices, service encounters, and gastronomic meanings intersect. This concept is relevant because eating at a kelong does not occur in a neutral dining room. It is situated within a coastal environment that gives meaning to freshness, authenticity, and proximity to marine resources. In food tourism, local food and place-based experiences are important sources of destination attraction because they allow visitors to encounter culture through taste, setting, and interaction (Bessière, 1998; Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016; Quan & Wang, 2004; Sims, 2009).

Despite its potential as a coastal gastronomy attraction, kelong has often been discussed mainly from the perspectives of fisheries, the local economy, or food safety. These approaches are important, yet they do not fully explain how kelong shapes culinary identity and tourism experience through seafood menu diversity, culinary techniques, flavor profiles, and coastal atmosphere. A gastronomic reading of kelong is therefore needed to understand how seafood menus and cooking practices contribute to Bintan's culinary identity and to the

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development of sustainable seafood-based tourism.

Experience quality is also central in kelong gastronomy. In a gastronomic setting, experience quality is not determined only by taste. It also includes ingredient freshness, consumer trust, cleanliness, service quality, spatial atmosphere, and confidence that food has been handled safely. For seafood restaurants, food safety is a supporting dimension of experience quality because seafood is highly perishable and requires proper control during receipt, storage, preparation, and serving (Commission, 2020; Organization, 2021). However, this article does not position food safety as a technical audit. It treats food safety as a supporting condition for gastronomic experience quality.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze seafood menu diversity in kelong and seafood restaurants on Bintan, identify patterns of seafood ingredients, cooking techniques, and flavor profiles that shape kelong gastronomic practices, explain how seafood menus represent Bintan's coastal culinary identity, and discuss the role of experience quality and coastal sustainability in developing kelong as a gastronomy tourism attraction.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gastronomy tourism has been widely discussed as a field that connects tourism, hospitality, culture, agriculture, food systems, and destination management. Early studies emphasized the role of food as an attraction and a possible impediment in tourism experiences, especially when tourists negotiate unfamiliar cuisines, hygiene expectations, and cultural boundaries (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). Later studies expanded this view by showing that food can influence how tourists experience destinations, remember places, and derive travel satisfaction (Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tsai, 2016). This development positions gastronomy as both a cultural resource and an experiential product.

Food tourism research further suggests that local food can strengthen destination attractiveness when it is connected to authenticity, storytelling, and place-based resources. Björk and Kauppinen-Räisänen (2016) argue that local food can function as a source of destination attraction because it allows tourists to experience a location through sensory and cultural dimensions. Sims (2009) similarly explains that local food contributes to sustainable tourism when it supports authenticity, local supply chains, and environmental responsibility. In coastal destinations, these ideas are particularly relevant because seafood offers a direct link between the landscape, local livelihoods, and culinary practice.

The concept of a foodscape or food landscape is useful for understanding kelong because it emphasizes that food is embedded in spatial, social, and cultural settings. Rather than treating food as an isolated product, a food landscape perspective considers how meals are shaped by physical environments, social interactions, production systems, and meanings attached to place. In this study, kelong is positioned as a coastal food landscape because the dining experience is shaped by the sea, the floating or water-based dining space, fresh seafood ingredients, the presence of service operators, and the cultural meanings of eating seafood in a coastal setting.

Culinary identity refers to how food represents local culture, history, community practices, and geographical resources. Traditional food and cuisine can contribute to local development when they are valued as heritage and destination resources (Bessière, 1998). However, culinary identity is not always static. It can also be hybrid, especially in port, coastal, and island regions where trade, migration, tourism, and cultural exchange shape food practices. Bintan kelong menus provide a relevant case because they combine Malay coastal flavors, local seafood ingredients, and Asian or Chinese-influenced sauces and cooking techniques.

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Experience quality in gastronomy tourism includes sensory, service, social, and environmental aspects. Tourists do not evaluate dining experiences only through flavor; they also respond to service encounters, perceived authenticity, cleanliness, atmosphere, and memorable interaction with the place (Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009; Richards, 2021; Tsai, 2016). In seafood restaurants, perceived freshness and food handling practices are particularly important because they influence consumer trust. Therefore, food safety can be discussed as a supporting element of experience quality without changing the article into a technical food safety audit.

Sustainability has become a major concern in gastronomy tourism research. Sustainable gastronomy emphasizes the use of local ingredients, responsible consumption, waste reduction, community participation, biodiversity protection, and local economic benefits (Bayram, 2023; Kumar, Talukder, & Bhatnagar, 2024; Sims, 2009). Circular gastronomy extends this discussion by encouraging the more efficient use of ingredients and the reduction of food waste within culinary systems (Yanthy, Hendriyani, Utama, & Sulaiman, 2025). For kelong, sustainability can be discussed through local seafood sourcing, short supply chains, utilization of seafood by-products, and collaboration among restaurant operators, fishers, local government, and tourism stakeholders.

3. METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative case study design. The design was selected because the research aims to interpret kelong as a coastal gastronomy phenomenon rather than to test statistical relationships among variables. A case study approach enables the researcher to analyze kelong as a place-based culinary setting that combines seafood menus, cooking practices, service encounters, the coastal atmosphere, and sustainability-related issues.

The study was conducted in Bintan, Kepulauan Riau, Indonesia, with kelong and seafood restaurants as the main objects of analysis. The primary data consisted of menu information from 26 kelong or seafood restaurant entries identified in the menu analysis worksheet. The menu data included restaurant or kelong names, general information, seafood ingredient types, and preparation variations. Supporting data were obtained from field observations of kelong-based culinary practices in Bintan. The observations were used to understand general handling and serving practices related to experience quality, including ingredient freshness, seafood handling, separation of raw and cooked materials, cleanliness, simple record-keeping, and packaging. These observations were not used as technical food safety audit data but as contextual information for interpreting gastronomic experience quality.

Menu analysis was conducted by classifying the data into ingredient categories, cooking technique, flavor profiles, and gastronomic meanings. Seafood ingredients were grouped into shrimp, crab, gonggong, squid, fish, grouper, blue swimming crab, snapper, lobster, shellfish, scallops, pomfret, sembilang fish, red grouper, and other marine products. Cooking techniques and culinary variations were grouped into boiling, steaming, Hong Kong-style steaming, black pepper sauce, flour-fried preparation, salted egg, sour-spicy seasoning, sweet-sour sauce, sambal, spicy sauce, nestum, black sauce, butter, tauco or tau cio, ginger sauce, and other seafood sauce preparations. Each technique was interpreted according to its flavor character, possible cultural influence, and implication for dining experience.

Thematic interpretation was conducted using three main analytical themes: culinary identity, experience quality, and coastal sustainability. Culinary identity was used to analyze how seafood menus represent Bintan's coastal food culture. Experience quality was used to interpret the relationship among menus, freshness, atmosphere, cleanliness, service, and

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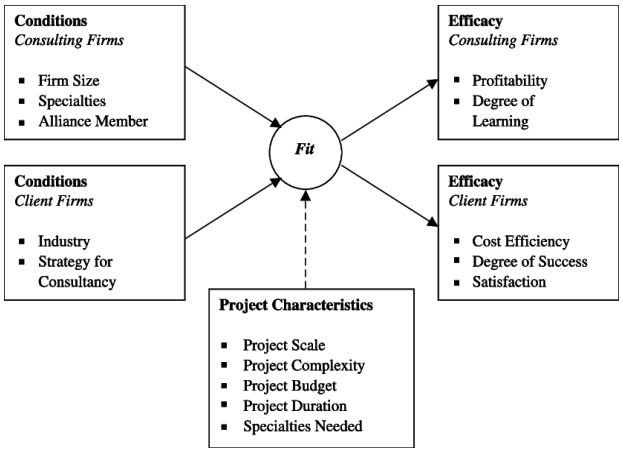
consumer trust. Coastal sustainability was used to examine the potential of kelong gastronomy to support the use of local ingredients, short supply chains, waste reduction, and coastal economic development. The analysis was descriptive and interpretive, and the findings were presented in narrative form supported by analytical tables.



Figures 1. Research Model

Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/An-example-of-a-research-model_fig3_235283820

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Kelong as a Coastal Gastronomy Landscape in Bintan

Kelong in Bintan Island can be understood as a coastal gastronomy landscape because the dining experience offered is not based only on dishes, but also on the relationship among food, sea, dining space, fresh ingredients, and service practices. Consumers do not simply come to purchase ready-to-eat food. They experience the coastal atmosphere, perceived proximity to marine resources, and communal eating practices commonly associated with seafood restaurants.

Within the food landscape perspective, kelong has a distinctive character because the dining space is situated close to the marine environment. The sea becomes part of the gastronomic experience. Views of the water, the smell of the coast, the sound of the marine environment, and the impression of ingredient freshness shape consumer perceptions of authenticity and place. This is consistent with gastronomy tourism literature, which positions food as a place-based experience rather than merely a consumable product (de Jong et al., 2018; Richards, 2021; Sims, 2009).

Kelong is also closely related to hospitality practices. Service is not limited to food delivery. It includes how operators explain menus, recommend ingredients, suggest cooking methods, and create a comfortable dining atmosphere. In a destination context, this kind of experience can become a gastronomic attraction because it combines food, place, service, and local narratives. Such a combination is particularly important for coastal destinations that need to differentiate themselves through experiential and cultural resources rather than relying on scenery alone.

The water-based location of kelong also strengthens the symbolic meaning of seafood consumption. Seafood eaten in kelong is perceived as closer to its source, even when the supply chain may involve fishers, suppliers, or markets. This perception contributes to the image of freshness and authenticity. In gastronomy tourism, such symbolic proximity can enhance the value of local food because visitors experience a direct connection between the dish, the landscape, and destination identity (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2016; Quan & Wang, 2004).

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4.2. Seafood Menu Diversity in Kelong Restaurants

The menu data show that kelong and seafood restaurants in Bintan have a broad diversity of marine ingredients. The most commonly represented ingredients include shrimp, crab, gonggong, squid, fish, grouper, blue swimming crab, snapper, lobster, shellfish, scallops, pomfret, sembilang fish, red grouper, and other marine products. Based on the 26 menu entries analyzed, shrimp appeared in 20 entries, crab in 17 entries, gonggong and squid in 13 entries each, fish in 12 entries, grouper in 11 entries, and blue swimming crab in 10 entries. This diversity demonstrates that kelong does not rely on a single fish-based identity, but creates dining experiences through a wide spectrum of marine ingredients.

Shrimp and crab emerged as highly prominent ingredients. Both have strong gastronomic value because they can be developed into various preparations, including with black pepper sauce, spicy sauce, salted egg, sweet-sour sauce, butter, and steaming. Their flexibility allows restaurants to accommodate different consumer preferences while maintaining a seafood-centered identity. In menu terms, shrimp and crab function as familiar yet high-value ingredients that can appeal to local consumers and tourists.

Gonggong occupies a distinct position because it is closely associated with the culinary identity of Kepulauan Riau. In the Bintan context, gonggong is not only a food ingredient but also a marker of locality and archipelagic eating experience. Its presence in kelong menus differentiates Bintan from other seafood destinations. Gonggong also supports the heritage dimension of the menu because it connects culinary practice with regional memory, local taste, and coastal identity.

Grouper, snapper, fish, and squid indicate the character of kelong as a seafood restaurant that emphasizes freshness. These ingredients are suitable for cooking techniques that highlight their natural flavor, such as steaming, boiling, sour-spicy seasoning, or light sauces. Meanwhile, lobster, blue swimming crab, shellfish, scallops, and other premium marine ingredients enrich the range of dining experiences, especially for visitors who seek variety and a sense of culinary abundance.

Table 1. Seafood Ingredient Categories and Their Gastronomic Meanings

Seafood Category	Examples of Ingredients	Gastronomic Meaning	Relevance to Bintan's Culinary Identity
Crustaceans	Shrimp, crab, blue swimming crab, lobster	High-value ingredients that are flexible for various sauces and cooking techniques	Strengthen the image of kelong as a fresh seafood destination
Mollusks	Gonggong, shellfish, scallops, squid	Indicate local marine richness and textural diversity	Gonggong becomes a distinctive marker of Kepulauan Riau culinary identity
Finfish	Grouper, snapper, fish, pomfret, sembilang fish, red grouper	Suitable for steaming, boiling, sour-spicy seasoning, and sauce-based preparation	Represent the connection between kelong and coastal marine resources
Premium Marine Ingredients	Lobster, scallop, red grouper	Add value to the tourist dining experience	Support kelong positioning as a marine-

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Seafood Category	Examples of Ingredients	Gastronomic Meaning	Relevance to Bintan's Culinary Identity
			based tourism restaurant

Source: Researcher analysis, 2026.

4.3. Culinary Techniques and Flavor Profiles

The cooking techniques and preparation styles found in kelong menus reveal a combination of simple techniques that highlight the natural characteristics of seafood and sauce-based preparations that respond to consumer preferences. The menu data show frequent use of steaming, black pepper sauce, flour-based frying, salted egg, boiling, sour-spicy seasoning, sweet-sour sauce, sambal, spicy sauce, Hong Kong-style steaming, nestum, black sauce, butter, tauco or tau cio, ginger sauce, and other sauce-based seafood preparations.

Boiling and steaming indicate an orientation toward highlighting the natural qualities of seafood. For ingredients such as gonggong, shellfish, fish, and grouper, these techniques allow their natural flavor and texture to remain prominent. In coastal gastronomy, simple cooking methods often become a way to demonstrate ingredient quality because the main flavor is expected to come from seafood freshness. This pattern is consistent with the broader idea that local food experiences are closely connected to authenticity and the sensory experience of place (Sims, 2009; Tsai, 2016).

At the same time, variations such as black pepper sauce, salted egg, sour-spicy seasoning, sweet-sour sauce, sambal, spicy sauce, butter, nestum, tauco or tau cio, ginger sauce, and Hong Kong-style steaming reflect the convergence of different culinary influences. Sour-spicy seasoning, boiling, sambal, and black sauce can be interpreted as expressions close to Malay coastal flavor traditions. In contrast, Hong Kong-style steaming, black pepper sauce, salted egg, tauco or tau cio, and ginger sauce indicate Chinese and broader Asian influences that are common in archipelagic seafood restaurants.

This pattern shows that kelong gastronomy is not singular. It is shaped by local ingredients, simple cooking techniques, tourist preferences, and cross-cultural culinary adaptation. From the perspective of culinary identity, such culinary mixing does not diminish local identity. Instead, it shows Bintan's as an island destination that has historically been open to cultural mobility, trade, tourism, and culinary exchange. This hybridity is important because it allows kelong menus to remain locally rooted while being adaptable to a diverse market.

Tabel 2. Cooking Techniques and Flavor Profiles of Kelong Menus

Cooking technique/variation	Flavor profile	Culinary influence	Implication for dining experience
Boiling	Light, fresh, and ingredient-centered	Local coastal foodways	Strengthens perception of seafood freshness
Steaming	Soft, clean, and natural	Asian/Chinese seafood practice	Displays ingredient quality and texture
Hong Kong-style steaming	Light savory, aromatic, and sauce-based	Chinese/Asian influence	Creates a modern seafood restaurant impression

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Cooking technique/variation	Flavor profile	Culinary influence	Implication for dining experience
Black pepper sauce	Warm, spicy, strong, and aromatic	Modern Asian seafood cuisine	Increases appeal for tourist consumers
Flour-fried preparation	Crispy, savory, and familiar	Popular commercial seafood style	Suitable for family-style sharing
Salted egg	Savory, creamy, and intense	Contemporary Asian cuisine	Adds flavor and textural value
Sour-spicy seasoning	Fresh, spicy, and sour	Malay coastal foodways	Strengthens local flavor character
Sweet-sour sauce	Balanced sweet and sour	Popular seafood restaurant style	Accepted by broad consumer segments
Sambal/spicy sauce	Hot, sharp, and appetizing	Indonesian culinary influence	Strengthens local taste experience
Tauco/tau cio	Fermented, salty, savory, and complex	Chinese-Peranakan influence	Reflects cross-cultural influence
Butter/nestum	Savory, creamy, and contemporary	Popular Asian style	Offers contemporary variation

Source: Researcher analysis, 2026.

4.4. Culinary Identity and Cross-Cultural Influence

Bintan's culinary identity in kelong menus is shaped by three main elements: fresh marine ingredients, the specificity of local seafood resources, and cooking variations that reflect cultural interaction. Gonggong is one of the most distinctive representing Kepulauan Riau's culinary identity. Its presence in kelong menus provides a local marker that differentiates Bintan from other seafood destinations and strengthens the food heritage dimension of kelong gastronomy.

In addition to gonggong, grouper, crab, squid, and shrimp reinforce Bintan's image as a seafood destination. These ingredients contribute to dining experiences that rely on freshness and Bintan's geographical proximity to the sea. From a gastronomic perspective, freshness is not only a quality attribute but also part of the sense of place. Consumers associate kelong with the sea, and therefore fresh seafood becomes an important element of an authentic dining experience.

Cross-cultural influence are reflected in cooking techniques and sauces such as Hong Kong-style steaming, black pepper sauce, salted egg, tauco or tau cio, and ginger sauce. These variations reflect the location of Kepulauan Riau within Malay, Chinese, and Southeast Asian cultural networks. Kelong culinary identity can therefore be described as hybrid: rooted in local marine resources, but open to broader culinary adaptation.

In the context of food heritage, hybridity should be regarded and managed as a strength. Kelong does not need to be treated as a static tradition. It can be developed as an adaptive gastronomic practice that preserves local ingredients and culinary narratives while allowing for menu innovation. This is consistent with the view that culinary heritage can become a sustainable tourism product when managed through the preservation of cultural value,

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support for the local economy, and community participation (Bessière, 1998; Kavitha & Ravi, 2024).

4.5. Experience Quality: Food Safety as a Supporting Dimension

The quality of kelong gastronomic experience is not determined only by menu diversity and flavor. Dining experience is also influenced by ingredient freshness, cleanliness, consumer trust, service, and a sense of safety when consuming seafood. Therefore, food safety should be positioned as a supporting dimension of experience quality, rather than the main focus of a technical audit.

Field observations indicated that several practices still require further improvement and consistenc, particularly seafood cooling, separation of raw and cooked ingredients, temperature and production date recording, hand and equipment sanitation, and simple packaging and labeling. These observations are not presented as technical audit findings. They are interpreted as evidence that gastronomic experience quality requires reliable food-handling practices.

In seafood restaurants, cold-chain control is important because seafood is more perishable than many other food products. The freshness that becomes a gastronomic appeal may decline if storage, handling, and serving practices are not properly managed. General food hygiene principles emphasize the prevention of contamination, time and temperature control, cleanliness of food-contact surfaces, and hygienic behavior of food handlers (Organization, 2021).

In destination development, kelong restaurants that can maintain freshness, cleanliness, and service consistency may achieve greater competitiveness. Consumers evaluate not only taste but also comfort, visible cleanliness, transparency of handling, and trust in the ingredients served. Simple practices such as separating raw and cooked ingredients, using sufficient ice, maintaining basic records, and providing handwashing facilities can strengthen the gastronomic experience quality without reducing the local character of kelong.

4.6. Coastal Sustainability and Gastronomy Destination Potential

Kelong has the potential to become a sustainable coastal gastronomy model because it is directly connected to local ingredients, short supply chains, the coastal economy, and tourism experiences. The use of local seafood can strengthen relationships among restaurants, fishers, suppliers, and consumers. From the perspective of sustainable gastronomy, local ingredients can reduce transportation distances, support local economic circulation, and maintain the authenticity of the destination's culinary narrative (Bayram, 2023; Kumar et al., 2024; Yubianto & Putra, 2024).

Sustainability is also related to waste management and efficient use of ingredients. Seafood-based kelong menus may generate organic waste such as shells, shrimp heads, fish bones, and other ingredient trimmings. With better menu planning, some by-products can be used to prepare stocks, sauce bases, or simple derivative products. This approach is consistent with circular gastronomy, which considers ingredient cycles, waste reduction, and sustainability within food systems (Yanthy et al., 2025).

From the destination development perspective, kelong can be developed as a gastronomy tourism product of Bintan. This development can be supported through local menu narratives, the presentation of ingredient origins, service standards, hygiene practices, and integration with coastal tourism experiences. Menus such as boiled gonggong, steamed grouper, black pepper crab, flour-fried squid, and salted egg shrimp can be presented not merely as food items but as representations of Bintan's seafood culture and gastronomic

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identity.

Such development requires collaboration. Business operators, local government, academics, coastal communities, and the tourism sector should participate in strengthening the capacity of kelong businesses. Local government can support promotion and service standards, academics can assist with menu documentation and training, and operators can maintain consistency in food quality, cleanliness, and hospitality. Collaborative models are important in marine-based gastronomy because they connect conservation, economic diversification, cultural identity, and community empowerment (Hakim & Putra, 2023; Karim, Apriyanto, Zulkifali, & Gozali, 2025).

Therefore, kelong should not be understood merely as a floating seafood restaurant. It is a gastronomic node that connects seafood, local identity, tourism experience, food safety, and coastal sustainability. This potential is important for Bintan because coastal destinations require differentiation not only through their natural landscapes but also through culinary experiences that are authentic, safe, memorable, and sustainable.

5. CONCLUSION

Kelong in Bintan can be understood as a coastal gastronomy landscape that brings together local seafood ingredients, cooking techniques, dining experiences, service practices, and coastal atmosphere. Menu analysis shows that kelong and seafood restaurants in Bintan use diverse ingredients, including shrimp, crab, gonggong, squid, fish, grouper, blue swimming crab, snapper, lobster, shellfish, and other marine products. This diversity is reflected in preparations such as boiling, steaming, black pepper sauce, flour-based frying, salted egg, sour-spicy seasoning, sweet-sour sauce, sambal, tauco or tau cio, butter, and Hong Kong-style steaming. These patterns indicate that kelong gastronomy is shaped by the interaction among Malay coastal identity, Kepulauan Riau seafood culture, and Asian or Chinese culinary influences.

This article emphasizes that gastronomic experience quality is not determined only by taste and menu variety, but also by freshness, cleanliness, consumer trust, service consistency, and safe food-handling practices. Food safety should therefore be positioned as a prerequisite for experience quality, while coastal sustainability provides a foundation for developing kelong as a gastronomy tourism attraction. By strengthening local menu narratives, service standards, ingredient management, waste reduction, and stakeholder collaboration, kelong has the potential to become an authentic, safe, and sustainable coastal gastronomy model for Bintan.

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