

The Principle of Al-Tayyib in the Local Wisdom of Malay Community's Food Culture

Mohd Norahman Shah Mohd Salleh¹, Khairul Azhar Meerangani^{2*}, Mohammad Fahmi Abdul Hamid³,
Siti Nurul Izza Hashim⁴ & Nor Azlina Abd Wahab⁵

¹Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Politeknik Ibrahim Sultan

^{2,3,4,5}Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Melaka

*Corresponding Author: Email: azharmeerangani@uitm.edu.my

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.90400148>

Received: 25 March 2025; Accepted: 29 March 2025; Published: 03 May 2025

ABSTRACT

The spread of Islam to the Malay world not only transformed religious beliefs but also embedded Islamic principles into the daily practices of the Malay community. In the context of food culture, the Malay community places great emphasis on the principles of Halalan Tayyiban as a guideline in various aspects, such as the selection of raw ingredients, food preparation, and dining etiquette. The interaction between religious principles and local culture, also known as local wisdom, has fostered a harmonious relationship between religion and culture. The acceptance of local flavors (istitabah al-Malayuwiyyah) in food preparation, such as the inclusion of ulam (traditional raw vegetables) and various spices, reflects the principle of al-Tayyib, which emphasizes the selection of wholesome and nutritious food in the Malay dietary culture. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the application of the al-Tayyib principle in the local wisdom of the Malay community's food culture. This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature review to examine scholarly discussions on the al-Tayyib principle and local wisdom in Malay food culture. The findings are then analyzed using both inductive and deductive methods to conclude how this principle is applied in the context of the Malay community in Malaysia. The study concludes that the al-Tayyib principle is firmly upheld in food preparation among the Malay community. The consumption of ulam and the use of various spices in food highlight the value of local wisdom in cultivating a wholesome and healthy dietary culture. This reflects adherence to religious principles while simultaneously bringing numerous benefits to daily life.

Keywords: al-Tayyib, Local Wisdom, Culture, Food, Malay Community

INTRODUCTION

Islam has played a significant role in shaping the culture and way of life of the Malay community since its arrival in the Malay Archipelago. One of the key aspects that has been greatly influenced by Islamic teachings is food culture, which is not only related to physical needs but also encompasses spiritual values and ethical practices. The principle of Halalan Tayyiban, emphasized in Islam, serves as a fundamental guideline in the dietary practices of the Malay community, covering the selection of food ingredients, preparation methods, and dining etiquette. Within the context of local culture, the Malay community has integrated the principle of al-Tayyib, which advocates for the selection of good, clean, and nutritious food, into their local wisdom in food culture. The use of ulam (traditional raw vegetables), various spices, and food preparation methods that preserve the natural nutrients of ingredients demonstrates the harmony between Islamic values and local traditions. This unique integration reflects how the interaction between religion and culture has created a food system that not only adheres to Islamic law but also aligns with healthy dietary practices.

While incorporating traditional food practices into modern healthcare is promising, challenges remain, such as the difficulty of scaling small-scale traditional farming methods to meet the demands of industrialized food production systems. In rural villages, elders continue to use herbal remedies passed down through generations, such as turmeric for joint pain or ginger for digestive issues. These practices reflect a deep-rooted connection between food, health, and spirituality. Therefore, this article discusses the application of the al-Tayyib principle

in the food culture of the Malay community from the perspective of local wisdom. This study adopts a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach to explore the role of the al-Tayyib principle in shaping the dietary practices of the Malay community and its implications for health and well-being.

THE PRINCIPLE OF AL-TAYYIB FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Food is one of the necessities for human survival, serving as a medium for interaction and communication between people (Suhaini & Faizal, 2021). Moreover, food plays a significant role in human life from a cultural perspective, where each society has its unique classification methods. Upon closer examination, discussions about food are part of the field of gastronomy, which illustrates the selection of food within a particular culture. Therefore, the selection of food and its contents based on the principles of halalan tayyiban must be emphasized to ensure health preservation, quality of life, and significant benefits for both physical and spiritual well-being. Halalan tayyiban consists of two interrelated and synonymous concepts. Halal refers to anything permissible, while haram refers to anything prohibited by Islamic law. Between these two, there are ambiguous matters (syubhah) that should be avoided. Halal food specifically refers to food and beverages or their ingredients that comply with Islamic law and meet its requirements (Mohammad Aizat Jamaludin & Anuar Ramli, 2013). The Quran explicitly encourages individuals to choose food that is halalan tayyiban in terms of concept, importance, and relevant examples, as stated in the following verse:

"O mankind! Eat of that which is lawful and good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Indeed, he is to you a clear enemy." (Surah al-Baqarah 2:168)

Allah SWT reminds all of mankind to consume only food and beverages that are both halal and tayyib, sourced from the earth. Halal refers to what is permitted by Islamic law, while tayyib food refers to food that is clean, free from harm, and beneficial for both physical and spiritual health (Hashim, 2021). Furthermore, there is a Quranic verse that emphasizes how the conscious consumption of halal and tayyib food is a manifestation of gratitude towards Allah, reflecting appreciation for His blessings and a commitment to preserving the body as a divine trust. Allah SWT states:

"So, eat of what Allah has provided for you, lawful and good. And be grateful for the favor of Allah, if it is indeed Him that you worship." (Surah al-Nahl 16:114)

Thus, Muslims must take a holistic approach to food-related matters through the concept of halalan tayyiban. This concept stresses that food should not only be halal in legal terms but must also meet standards of safety, cleanliness, and quality (Sri Mulyati, Abubakar & Hasyim, 2023). Muslims should be inclined to choose food that is not only halal but also tayyib, aligning with Islam's guidance on the necessity of consuming lawful and wholesome food. Given the current landscape, the vast variety of food available in the market offers many choices to consumers. However, Muslims must remain vigilant about the halal status and the goodness of their food. Choosing food that meets the halalan tayyiban criteria ensures that it is safe, clean, and of high quality. This is essential not only for physical health but also for spiritual well-being. Using halal ingredients and following clean preparation processes ensure that the food consumed is beneficial to the body and brings blessings.

Additionally, modern trends show an increasing reliance on dietary supplements to enhance health. However, in this context, individuals must be cautious, as not all supplements meet the halalan tayyiban standards. Some products may contain harmful substances or fail to provide the promised health benefits (Hawwa, 'Azzah & Wahab, 2022). Moreover, the influence of foreign food cultures, such as fast food and processed foods, has impacted dietary habits and public health in Malaysia (Man et al., 2012). While there is a tendency to explore cuisines from other cultures, Muslims must still ensure that these foods adhere to halalan tayyiban standards. For a Muslim, selecting food that fulfills the halalan tayyiban criteria not only guarantees its permissibility in Islam but also ensures that it is wholesome, clean, and safe for both physical and spiritual well-being (Shafie, Nazri & Hussin, 2019). The principle of tayyib in food is defined as something pure, free from disease, and highly beneficial to both physical and spiritual health (Hashim, 2021). Therefore, people must adhere to the halalan tayyiban principle in food selection by ensuring that their choices fulfill both key criteria: halal and tayyib (Aemy & Arieff, n.d.). The consumption of halal and safe food is a fundamental obligation, particularly

for Muslims (Andriyani, 2019). The primary objective of consuming halal and tayyib food is to enable individuals to seek the truth, worship with sincerity, and maintain a pure heart (Ssuna & Syahrul, 2020).

The implementation of halalan tayyiban is not limited to daily practical aspects but also emphasizes spiritual engagement and mindfulness in its practice. More importantly, this concept profoundly influences an individual's mindset, mentality, and behavior. This means that adopting halalan tayyiban requires a holistic approach encompassing spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions, ensuring that every action aligns with comprehensive Islamic principles (Hamka, 1985). Food that is halal and tayyib brings blessings and spiritual purity. Prophet Muhammad SAW taught that consuming halal food softens the heart and makes supplications more likely to be accepted. Conversely, haram food can darken the heart and distance a person from Allah's mercy (Ssuna & Syahrul, 2020). Therefore, food that meets the halalan tayyiban criteria has profound implications on a person's spirituality, contributing to inner peace, spiritual purity, gratitude towards Allah, and the cultivation of patience (Syahadah et al., 2023). Thus, this study will focus on the principle of tayyib in Malay culinary culture, particularly regarding the use of herbs and spices.

The Local Wisdom of Malay Community's Food Culture

Malay society is rich in various elements of local wisdom. Local wisdom is defined as all forms of local intelligence imbued with values of goodness, courtesy, and intelligence, and practiced as part of the community's culture and traditions (Giska, 2013). According to Suhartini (2009), local wisdom is closely related to environmental wisdom that exists within each society, guided by communal values and behaviors. This is not only evident in daily life but also in human interactions and engagement with the environment. Meanwhile, Aslan (2017) states that local wisdom also encompasses inherited cultural and traditional practices that are upheld and observed by the community, whether in the form of religion, customs, ethics, or daily practices.

Nunung & Muslim (2016) describe local wisdom as a procedural manual developed by a community based on their observations of the environment, aimed at providing solutions to issues arising from human-nature interactions. This manual is then passed down from one generation to another as a guide and legacy for life. This unique knowledge is subsequently embedded in the culture and serves as a reference for decision-making in various areas, including agriculture, animal husbandry, traditional customs, health, and natural resource management (Flavier, 2003). Elements of local wisdom are also present in traditional knowledge, handicrafts, sculptures, social etiquette, and noble societal values (Miranita, 2017). Furthermore, local wisdom is associated with indigenous knowledge, referring to the skills and abilities of a society based on their life experiences and cultural character, which are shaped by their environment. It is developed through the critical and creative thinking of earlier generations and passed down to subsequent generations in accordance with their respective circumstances (Warren, 1996).

In this regard, Sillitoe (1998) categorizes local wisdom into two forms: tangible elements, which can be seen and touched, such as monuments, manuscripts, traditional houses, and cultural symbols; and intangible elements, which are abstract, such as proverbs, advice, and taboos. Thus, these elements of local wisdom not only reflect the excellence of a society's culture and traditions but, from an Islamic perspective, are closely related to the concept of Ulu al-Absar, which serves as a fundamental principle in human responsibility as stewards of the world. Moreover, the concept of Ulu al-Absar acts as a guiding framework for aligning elements of local wisdom with Islamic principles while preserving traditional values. According to Rahimin et al. (2013), Islam has reinforced elements of local wisdom in the Malay world through six approaches. The primary approach is the integration of the Islamic worldview within Malay society, emphasizing the meaning of life, its purpose, and the afterlife. This worldview provides a new paradigm for navigating two dimensions of existence: interactions with fellow beings (horizontal) and the relationship with the Creator (vertical). This perspective emerges when humans understand the reality of their own existence (microcosm), as well as the surrounding environment and the unseen realm (macrocosm) (Uthman El-Muhammady, 2001). Consequently, humans must acquire knowledge about both realms through legitimate and authentic sources, understanding the physical world through reason (*al-'aql*), while gaining insights into the unseen world through divine revelation (*al-naql*).

Additionally, Islam serves as a formula for human capital development, which is central to the elements of local wisdom within Malay society. Islam defines human creation as comprising three key components: the soul, the

body, and the intellect. These three elements must be nurtured in an integrated manner to establish a civilized society with strong identity and adherence to tradition (Rahimin, 2005). Hence, the application of the al-Tayyib concept does not solely focus on intellectual aspects but also incorporates the spiritual and physical dimensions. To ensure balance in the physical and spiritual development of Malay society, family institutions have played a crucial role in education. The term budiman (a person of wisdom), which highlights the best human qualities (*qudwah hasanah*), is based on the traditional values and cultural refinement of the Malay people. This is manifested through the internalization of moral values, courteous speech, thoughtful deliberation, wisdom, and exemplary conduct (Hashim, 2001). The cultivation of these values ensures that local wisdom within Malay society is not merely an empty external practice but carries profound internal strength, giving meaning to life both in this world and the hereafter. Moreover, it extends beyond human relationships and environmental interactions, ultimately reinforcing the essence of servitude to Allah SWT through the foundation of faith and piety.

The Principle of Al-Tayyib In the Malay Community's Food Culture

The Malay community has its own uniqueness in selecting and utilizing herbal plants and spices in cooking. Indirectly, the use of herbs and spices enhances the aroma and flavor of dishes. Moreover, herbs and spices are not only natural flavor enhancers in cooking but are also rich in various benefits and are applied in the fields of medicine and beauty. However, the implementation of the al-tayyib principle should be a priority for maintaining human health and quality of life. This is because food does not only stimulate pleasure but also influences and stimulates human thoughts and emotions. The benefits of herbs and spices discussed in this study are as follows:

Ginger

Ginger plants are highly synonymous with Malay culture, being used as herbs, flavor enhancers in cooking, edible greens (ulam), ornamental plants in home gardens, and in ethnopharmacology. Scientific studies have proven that the ginger plant (*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe) has been used worldwide as a spice in cooking, a flavoring agent, and a herbal remedy. Historically, the Chinese have been using ginger for over 2,500 years to aid digestion and treat nausea. In Malaysia, ginger is commonly used as a seasoning in cooking, beverages, and as an edible green. Ginger contains water, carbohydrates, fiber, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, energy, protein, niacin, amino acids, gingerols, oleoresin, essential oils, vitamins A, B, and C, fats, organic acids, and aromatic oils such as zingerol, zingiberol, zingiberene, borneol, cineole, and feladrene. This composition makes ginger highly effective in expelling gas from the body. Additionally, ginger is used to treat intestinal diseases, heartburn, and headaches (Sumaiyah, 2015). Rita Nursuhaila et al. (2018) explains that ginger possesses anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, and anti-ulcer properties, protects the liver, prevents skin tumors, lowers blood pressure, reduces cholesterol, shrinks liver tumors, and alleviates nausea. Ginger oil has antibacterial and antifungal properties, while camphene acts as an antioxidant, and citral functions as antihistamine and antiseptic. Therefore, ginger is seen as a potential source of nutrients, supplying high levels of carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, and magnesium. Moreover, ginger also holds potential as a medicinal plant due to its chemical compounds.

Ginger is applied in the field of ethnopharmacology in the Malay world as an ingredient in traditional medicine. This is evident in several classical Malay medical manuscripts, which mention the use of ginger as follows:

No.	Manuscript	Method of Treatment
1.	MS 1653	Apply ginger to enhance male sexual stimulation.
2.	MS 2502	Treat fever by taking a handful of ginger leaves, cooking them, and drinking the decoction three times in the morning. Finely crush a slice of raw ginger, mix it with pepper and lime juice, and drink it three mornings in a row to relieve women's pain.
3.	MS 33	For postpartum treatment, apply a mixture of finely ground ginger, chili, and coriander all over the body.

		To relieve menstrual cramps, take temu sirap, langkuas, blackened isi akar hutan, ginger, keladi sambung, and various spices such as pepper seeds. Pound all the ingredients together.
4.	MS 1754	For treating vaginal coldness in women: Take one ginger root, rice, a bit of lime, fresh ginger, air bunga lalam, basil leaves, cekur, and rose water. Finely grind everything and apply it to the affected area.

Table 1: Ginger and It's Treatment Method (Source: Rita Nursuhaila et. al, 2018)

Turmeric

Turmeric is a traditional spice and medicinal herb well known in Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It contains various chemical compositions, including proteins, fats, minerals, carbohydrates, and water content. Upon closer examination, not all turmeric species share the same phytochemical composition, as different species of turmeric exist. For example, the phytochemical compounds found in local turmeric samples and those from India vary due to environmental factors such as climate, soil quality, and farm location (Ravindran, Nirmal & Sivaraman, 2007). Generally, turmeric is commonly found in kitchen spices. However, it is also used in medical treatments in healthcare clinics (Gupta et al., 2013). According to Zulmuhshar et al. (2016), turmeric has been found effective against major human diseases, including cancer, diabetes, and irritable bowel syndrome. At the molecular level, this herb can regulate various cellular signaling pathways.

Furthermore, turmeric has the potential to aid in weight loss and reduce the incidence of obesity-related diseases. This is because turmeric can regulate metabolism, which plays a key role in the development of obesity and its complications (Bradford, 2013). Additionally, turmeric is a natural herb-based ingredient that offers an alternative healing approach for conditions such as diabetes mellitus, neurodegenerative diseases, and dementia. Research has shown that turmeric, commonly used in Malay cooking, contains curcumin, which has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties (Smith et al., 2019). Moreover, the application of turmeric as a safe food ingredient has also been scientifically proven in the fields of medicine and beauty.

Shallot

Shallots, scientifically known as *Allium cepa* L., belong to the Liliaceae family and grow in Europe, Asia, North America, and Africa. Historically, shallots have been used by humans as early as 3,200 BCE, with ancient Egyptians believed to be among the earliest civilizations to utilize this vegetable. Moreover, shallots are mentioned in the Quran, specifically in Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 61, where it is stated that the Israelites consumed them as one of their staple foods around 1,500 BCE (Harun, 2019). Generally, there are two types of shallots; red or purple shallots – these have a mild and sweet taste; and yellow or white shallots – these are more suitable for cooking, enhancing the aroma and flavor of dishes. However, to obtain the maximum health benefits, shallots should be eaten raw. When cooked, the chemical compounds in shallots undergo changes, potentially reducing their effectiveness.

According to Mohammad Amir Wan Harun (2019), shallots have been widely used as a natural remedy for various ailments. Among the health benefits are:

Reducing Cardiovascular Risk: Shallots are considered a tonic for internal organs. Studies have shown that organosulfur compounds in shallots act as antiplatelet agents. Antiplatelets prevent blood clot formation when injuries occur. Consuming shallots can inhibit platelet aggregation, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Anti-Fat Formation Agent: Shallot oil extract helps break down fat caused by increased serum cholesterol. This is due to the presence of an organosulfur compound known as allyl propyl disulfide, which acts as an anti-fat formation agent in the body.

Lowering Blood Sugar Levels: The quercetin content, a type of phytochemical found in the skin of shallots, helps reduce hyperglycemia (high blood sugar levels after meals). To benefit from this property, consuming raw shallots as part of a diet can be effective.

Alleviating Depression: Shallot skins contain quercetin, which can act as an anti-stress or anti-depressant agent. Thus, consuming shallots may help in overcoming depression.

Anti-Asthma Agent: Sulfur compounds like thiosulfates found in shallots can relieve asthma symptoms. These compounds function as agents to reduce wheezing and breathing difficulties in asthma patients.

In the ancient manuscript MS 174, the medicinal benefits of shallots were discussed, particularly their use in treating bad breath. The manuscript states:

"This remedy is for bad breath when speaking, caused by excessive moisture and internal diseases. The cure is to take garlic and shallots, grind them finely, mix with honey, and consume them in the morning before eating anything or before bedtime for better health." (MS 174: 28)

This excerpt explains that bad breath can be treated by finely grinding garlic and shallots, mixing them with honey, and consuming the mixture before breakfast. This practice aligns with the traditional Malay use of shallots as a remedy for bad breath (Siti Fatimah & Yusmilayati, 2019).

Cinnamon

Spices are not just for enhancing flavor, but also for their health benefits (Saari, 2019). According to Putri Adila Saari (2019), cinnamon bark has several benefits:

Weight Management: Cinnamon has properties that help in weight loss. A study by the University of Michigan Life Sciences Institute found that cinnamon bark contains a compound called cinnamaldehyde, which aids in burning fat stored in the body. To achieve this benefit, cinnamon should be boiled, and the infused water should be consumed with honey.

Facial Skin Treatment: Cinnamon is also beneficial for skin health, particularly facial care. This is due to its antibiotic and antimicrobial properties, which protect the skin from rashes, allergic reactions, and infections. To use cinnamon as a facial treatment, apply essential cinnamon oil to inflamed or red skin. Additionally, a mixture of cinnamon powder and honey can help prevent acne and other skin issues.

Improving Hearing: Cinnamon bark also contributes to hearing health. To maintain good hearing, cinnamon-infused water should be consumed daily, as it contains natural compounds that enhance auditory sharpness.

Relieving Toothache: Cinnamon bark is effective in treating toothaches and gum swelling. This can be done by drinking cinnamon-infused water.

Garlic

Garlic, scientifically known as *Allium sativum*, is a bulbous plant consisting of cloves, each wrapped in thin skin. The chemical compounds found in garlic include sativine and allicin. Sativine promotes cell growth, while allicin has antibiotic properties. Garlic acts as a natural antibiotic, effectively eliminating bacteria, viruses, amoebas, and other harmful microorganisms. In fact, its medicinal properties are so potent that garlic can destroy certain organisms that even the strongest medications fail to eliminate. Unlike conventional medicine, garlic does not cause harmful side effects. Thus, for individuals suffering from colds, flu, dysentery, cholera, or other infectious diseases, garlic serves as an effective remedy. Moreover, for ear infections, garlic oil is considered a beneficial treatment when applied directly into the ear (Siti Fatimah & Yusmilayati, 2019). The benefits of garlic are also mentioned in Kitab Tib MS 174:

"This is a remedy for fever. Take black cumin, garlic, red onion, kaffir lime, and jumpa kurun leaves. Then squeeze them into the nostrils for relief."

"For fever and skin ailments, take betel leaves that meet at the veins, inscribe them with iron, recite Ayat Kursi three times without breathing, and blow on the leaves before consuming them." (MS 174: 23)

"Bad breath while speaking is caused by excess moisture and internal illness. The remedy is to finely grind garlic and red onion, mix with honey, and consume it early in the morning before eating anything else." (MS 174: 28)

These traditional remedies suggest that garlic can treat fever and bad breath, like practices used by the Malay community in the past. One effective method is to inhale and consume garlic with honey every morning before breakfast. Additionally, garlic is known for its ability to purify the blood and remove toxins, including heavy metals, from the body (Siti Fatimah & Yusmilayati, 2019).

Black Pepper

Black pepper (*Piper nigrum*) has been used in homeopathic medicine since the early 19th century. However, it is not considered a primary homeopathic remedy. According to a report in Utusan Malaysia (April 9, 2002), one of black pepper's benefits is its ability to relieve headaches. While this claim aligns with common medicinal traditions, black pepper is more widely known as a culinary spice that enhances flavor. Beyond its culinary use, black pepper offers various health benefits. It contains dietary fiber, small amounts of protein and carbohydrates, and is rich in minerals such as calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and sodium (Hayin, 2020). Moreover, traditional medicine practitioners use black pepper to cleanse and remove impurities from the scalp, particularly for conditions such as head sores. It is also used in spiritual cleansing. Specifically, black pepper is known for its ability to treat skin infections and urinary tract infections (Zul Amirul, 2023). In MS 174, a black pepper-based remedy for sinusitis is mentioned:

"For daytime remedies, take mantera api root, its leaves, flowers, bark, along with black pepper, red onion, garlic, and cumin, then apply the mixture to the stomach for relief." (MS 174: 28)

This excerpt describes a remedy for stomach pain, where black pepper is mixed with medicinal herbs and applied to the abdomen (Siti Fatimah & Yusmilayati, 2019). According to the USDA National Nutrient Database, black pepper also contains vitamins B6, E, K, folate, niacin, riboflavin, and thiamine. Some of its key benefits include (Hayin, 2020):

Enhancing Digestion: Black pepper stimulates the digestive system, including the salivary glands and intestines, and promotes the secretion of digestive juices such as bile and stomach acid. It is especially beneficial for those with ulcers or individuals on a restricted diet.

Encouraging Perspiration: Sweating is beneficial for detoxification, as it helps eliminate toxins from the body. Black pepper promotes sweating and increases urine production, which helps remove excess fat and uric acid.

Aiding Weight Loss: Black pepper enhances metabolic functions, including fat breakdown. The outer layer of black peppercorns aids in breaking down fat cells, making weight loss more efficient.

Supporting Brain Function: Black pepper stimulates chemical pathways in the brain that enhance memory and cognitive function. Research suggests that it may help prevent Alzheimer's disease by repairing nerve damage in the hippocampus.

Anti-Inflammatory Properties: The anti-inflammatory properties of black pepper help reduce cell damage and prevent conditions such as Parkinson's disease.

Fighting Infections: Black pepper is commonly used in Ayurveda to combat infections, including insect bites. It also acts as a fiber-like substance, helping to remove excess cholesterol from arterial walls and reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Lemongrass

Lemongrass (*Andropogon citratus* DC), belonging to the Poaceae (Gramineae) family, is an aromatic herb

believed to have originated from Sri Lanka before spreading to tropical regions, including Malaysia. Its strong fragrance makes it a popular flavor enhancer in cooking, adding a unique taste and increasing appetite. In some countries, lemongrass is cultivated specifically for essential oil extraction, which is used in various products such as soaps, detergents, and shampoos (Zul Amirul, 2023). Additionally, lemongrass is commonly used to remove unpleasant odors from meat, fish, and poultry. When crushed and boiled, or steeped in hot beverages, it produces a refreshing aroma that promotes relaxation and warmth. Lemongrass also enhances the flavor of drinks, making them more enjoyable (Kirana, 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the deep-rooted integration of the principle of al-Tayyib within the local wisdom of the Malay community's food culture. The study shows that traditional Malay food is not just for nourishment; it also holds spiritual, ethical, and health meanings. The use of natural ingredients such as ginger, lemongrass, blackpepper, and turmeric in traditional remedies exemplifies the community's intuitive understanding of food as medicine (*al-Tibb*), reflecting a holistic approach to well-being. However, despite the cultural and religious significance of al-Tayyib principles in traditional food preparation and medicinal practices, contemporary challenges, such as industrialized food production, synthetic additives, and declining traditional knowledge, threaten its sustainability. The rise of fast-food chains in urban areas has led to a decline in the consumption of traditional Malay dishes such as nasi lemak and rendang, which are made with fresh, locally sourced ingredients. While many Malay communities continue to uphold traditional food practices, urbanization and exposure to global diets have led to changes in eating habits, with some younger generations favoring convenience foods over traditional meals. The lack of scientific validation and standardization further hinders the integration of traditional wisdom into modern dietary guidelines and healthcare systems. Moving forward, there is a pressing need for interdisciplinary research that bridges ethnobotany, Islamic dietary ethics, and nutritional science to further substantiate the benefits of traditional Malay food practices. Scientific studies on traditional ingredients like lemongrass could involve clinical trials to assess their antimicrobial properties, or ethnobotanical research to document traditional uses that could inform modern medicine. Additionally, policies should encourage the revival and preservation of knowledge of traditional food through education and sustainable agricultural practices. In conclusion, the principle of al-Tayyib within the Malay community's food culture represents an invaluable heritage that aligns faith, health, and local wisdom. To uphold its relevance in the modern era, a collaborative effort is required to scientifically validate, document, and integrate this tradition into contemporary food and health policies, ensuring its sustainability for future generations.

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