Pedagogy Outside the Academy: Heritage Tourism
Experiential Learning- Culture and History through
Cuisine in Southeast Asia - The Cooking Class"

The Cooking Class as Cultural Teaching and Learning Experience?
Two passions, enhanced by technology.

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ABSTRACT:

Recent years have seen the meteoric rise of interest in all aspects of cuisine. In addition to interest in the “exotic” foods from all over the world, there is serious interest in “local” foods and healthy preparation techniques.

In addition, there is a rise in availability of travel opportunities for numbers of people in many income groups, unimaginable even a few years ago. Travel to Southeast Asia is growing exponentially as the once truly “exotic” becomes more practically attainable. Specific types of travel experiences and destinations are now referred to as “Heritage Tourism.” “Culinary tourism” fits neatly under this heading.

Enhancing both interest in food and travel, the internet allows everyone and anyone with access to the technology to plan even the smallest and most complex details of their own travel adventures, and taking a local “cooking class” has become a very popular option, even in newer international tourist destinations like Southeast Asia.

This paper considers the following questions in the specific context of Southeast Asia through interviews with 40 cooking class participants in 5 countries:

1. Can culture and history, specifically in South east Asia, be taught and learned by visitors, students, and tourists in a “Cooking Class”? Is this a valid way to teach “culture” and even “history”? Do participants actually learn about the local culture - more so than another form of Experiential Heritage Tourism experience- zoo, garden or historical site?
2. If yes, what are the advantages and challenges of providing and participating in such an experience? Are there benefits to the local population? What do local populations think about such tourist activities?

3. What conditions make learning possible and how can this educational experience best be exploited to the benefit of both locals and visitors? What are some "best practices" of this form of "Heritage Tourism experiential learning"?

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