

Mapping out the Potential of Chinese Cultural Tourism in Makassar: An Interesting to Visit

Fakhriawan Fathu Rahman¹, Rosmawati¹, Fadhillah Duli¹, Fakhreny Fathu Rahman¹

¹Hasanuddin University, Indonesia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2025.100900067>

Received: 18 Sep 2025; Accepted: 25 Sep 2025; Published: 17 October 2025

ABSTRACT

Chinese culture has contributed significantly to cultural diversity in Makassar, especially in the business spot area. The cultural contact between Chinese and Makassar also complements the unique cultural diversity, seen in various aspects of life. As a city that encourages tourism growth, Makassar presents various interesting tourist attractions to visit. The purpose of this study is to 1) map the potential of tourist attractions related to Chinese ethnicity in Makassar, and 2) analyze the potential for developing Makassar tourism related to China to strengthen cultural diversity and tolerance. The study was conducted using an exploratory survey method by utilizing the 5A theory (Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, and Activities). With a descriptive qualitative method, analyzing the potential of tourist attractions related to China that has the opportunity to be developed. Chinese tourist attractions in Makassar are growing and developing in line with the number of tourist visits from China. Tourist attractions can be divided into several parts; a) culinary, b) performances, c) historical sites, d) academic and business visits, e) places of worship, and f) visits to communities and villages. The Chinese settlement in Makassar is called “Paccinang”. Chinese cultural practices in Makassar contribute to enriching the cultural diversity within the community. The Chinese ethnic continue to maintain Chinese culture as a unique and compelling form of cultural identity.

Keywords: Chinese Culture, Tourism Destination, Makassar, Attraction, business spot area

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese ethnic group, another term for the Chinese people, is one of the many ethnic groups in Indonesia. The Chinese arrived as migrants who have long lived in Indonesia, originally coming to trade. Ancient Chinese history records that the Chinese began migrating to Indonesia at the end of the Tang Dynasty, around 907 CE (Christian, 2017; Kurniawan, 2020). According to Oey Tjin (1996), one of the destinations they visited was Palembang, which at the time was the trade center of the Sriwijaya kingdom. The Chinese also came to the island of Java to seek spices. Among those who arrived, many settled in port areas along Java’s northern coast such as Tuban, Surabaya, Gresik, Banten, and the Tangerang or Jakarta areas. The Chinese have been present in Jakarta since the 17th century, living in residential areas known as Chinatown (perkampungan Tionghoa).

Most Chinese Indonesians originated from the Hokkien subgroup and worked as entrepreneurs or traders. The term “Tionghok” refers to both people of Chinese descent and their ancestral country; however, today the term “Tionghoa” is more commonly used to refer to people of Chinese heritage because it is considered more polite (Ricklefs, 2008; Tan, 2008; Amalia J et al., 2024).

One region where Chinese cultural traditions are still preserved is the city of Makassar, the largest city in South Sulawesi Province. Makassar has a sizable Chinese community—by 2025 it is estimated to number about 25,000 people. According to data from the Makassar Statistics Office, around 60% of this population are peranakan (locally born of mixed Chinese–Indonesian ancestry). In Makassar, Chinese descendants are generally divided into two groups: totok, referring to Chinese who settled in Indonesia but were born in China, and peranakan, referring to those whose ancestors came from China and who have intermarried and integrated with the indigenous population (Burhan et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2023).

The Chinese community is distinct from other local communities and is a living example of cultural

acculturation in Indonesia (Karman et al., 2024; Nursaadah et al., 2025; Sahib et al., 2019). The cultural blending between the Chinese and the local population has produced a new culture while each side maintains its original identity (Rahman, 2019; Youngsun et al., 2024; Duli & Mulyadi, 2019). Naturally, the preservation of their traditions remains closely tied to their ancestral heritage and Chinese cultural history.

Chinese residents of Makassar continue to uphold ancestral traditions. This is evident in historic Chinese-style architecture and cultural performances that attract visitors and cultural tourists to the city. The Chinese community in Makassar was born and resides in Makassar itself. Some Chinese Makassar residents no longer speak Mandarin; in daily conversation, they use Indonesian mixed with a Makassar accent. Even so, they continue to preserve centuries-old ancestral customs and honor traditional Chinese culture.

Based on the background of this research, the study aims to map potential tourist attractions related to the Chinese ethnic community in Makassar and to analyze the potential development of Makassar tourism connected to Chinese culture in order to strengthen cultural diversity and tolerance. Specifically, it seeks to examine Chinese-related tourist attractions that have opportunities for further development. Chinese tourism sites in Makassar have expanded in line with the increasing number of visitors from China. The findings of this research are expected to provide readers with comprehensive information about the potential of Chinese ethnic-related tourist attractions in Makassar. Moreover, the study is intended to offer input and encouragement for stakeholders to preserve and develop Chinese-related tourism in Makassar as a means of reinforcing cultural diversity and tolerance, thereby fostering strong potential for cultural tourism attractions that appeal to both domestic and international visitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several previous studies relate to this research topic: Anindya Novita Sari & Istijabatul Aliyah (2024) – The Appeal of Ketandan Village in Yogyakarta as Cultural Tourism for Millennials. This study discusses the unique acculturation of Chinese and Javanese culture, reflected in Instagram-worthy architecture, authentic culinary centers, as well as festivals and traditional shops. The area offers an authentic and distinctive cultural tourism experience and is popular for photography and souvenir shopping.

Jenny & Rianto (2024) – The Potential Development of the Glodok Petak Sembilan Chinatown Area as Chinese Cultural Tourism in Jakarta. This research highlights the strong potential of the Glodok area as a Chinese cultural tourism destination because it serves as a center of Chinese history, culture, cuisine, and shopping. Festivals such as Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh are frequently held there, and the area is characterized by ancient buildings, places of worship, and various art performances. Tourist facilities emphasize distinctive Chinese cultural elements.

Rizki Amelia & Sri Fajar Ayuningsih (2024) – Analysis of Cultural Tourism Attractions in the Cina Benteng Area of Tangerang City. This study illustrates how cultural tourism in Cina Benteng showcases the unique acculturation of Chinese and local cultures, as seen in traditional arts like Gambang Kromong music and Coket dance. The Old Market area retains a strong Chinese ambiance, and local community celebrations such as the Arak-Arakan Toapekong parade add to the charm. Historic architecture, distinctive culinary offerings, and temples further enhance its appeal.

Sefiani et al. (2024) – Analysis of the Cultural Tourism Potential of Besani Tourism Village, the Gateway of Javanese-Chinese Acculturation in Batang Regency. This report finds that Besani Tourism Village has unique and attractive Javanese-Chinese cultural acculturation, offering attractions such as traditional dances (lengger, kuntulan, and tea dances), local cuisine (such as opak, teh sangan, and cobek dishes), and religious sites like the Tomb of Sheikh Maulana Maghribi Wonobodro, along with various nature-based attractions. Skilled local human resources and recognition through awards demonstrate the village's strong potential to become a sustainable tourism destination that benefits the local economy.

METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method focused on understanding the phenomena of tourist attractions

associated with the Chinese ethnic community and their cultural practices through in-depth data interpretation. The study utilizes several techniques: observation, which involves direct examination of tourist attractions and visitor interactions; interviews, conducted to gather information from managers, tourists, and local residents; and case studies, which provide a detailed analysis of the management of specific tourist attractions. These combined methods allow for a comprehensive exploration of how Chinese cultural heritage is preserved and presented as a tourism asset in Makassar. The approach also helps identify challenges and opportunities that can inform future strategies for sustainable cultural tourism development.

RESULTS

With cultural heritage that has been preserved and maintained across generations, the potential of Chinese cultural tourism in Makassar can be realized. This cultural richness has become one of the city's attractions for tourists. Chinese cultural heritage that falls under the category of tourist attractions in Makassar includes, among others:

Table 1. Names and Key Attractions of Chinese Cultural Tourism Sites in Makassar

No	Name of Attraction	Main Highlights	Location
1	Cheng Hoo Mosque	Cheng Hoo Mosque in Makassar features architectural designs blending Chinese, Middle Eastern, and Bugis-Makassar cultures. The dominant red color, pagoda-shaped dome, and ornaments and symbols such as the Pat Kwa create a unique and iconic appearance, making it both a meaningful religious tourism destination and a place of worship rich in cultural acculturation.	Jalan Tun Abdul Razak, Makassar
2	Xian Ma Temple	The main appeal of Xian Ma Temple lies in its historical and cultural value, its Chinese architecture rich with dragon motifs and carvings, and its role as one of the most complete places of worship displaying statues of various deities. It is among the oldest temples in Makassar and serves as a center for the social and cultural activities of the Chinese community.	Jalan Sulawesi, Makassar
3	Kwan Kong Temple	Visit Kwan Kong Temple, one of the oldest in Makassar, to discover its beauty and history. This temple, also known as Kwan Sing Bio, serves as a place of worship for followers of Tri Dharma—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism—with the main deity honored being Kwan Kong.	Jalan Sulawesi, Makassar
4	Chinatown (Kampung China)	The main attraction of Makassar's Chinatown lies in its authentic Chinese cultural ambiance and strong oriental atmosphere, surrounded by historic buildings, including Makassar's oldest	Jalan Jampea, Makassar

		temple (Xian Ma Temple). The area is also a hub for diverse Chinese cuisine, lively Lunar New Year celebrations, and specialty Chinese souvenir shopping.	
5	Barongsai (Lion Dance) Performance	The Barongsai performances in Makassar feature energetic acrobatic displays, symbolism of good fortune and the expulsion of evil spirits, and a blend of cultural acculturation with martial arts and entertainment that enlivens Lunar New Year celebrations and other events.	Jalan Sulawesi, Makassar
6	Chinese Cemetery	The main attraction of the Chinese Cemetery (known as “Bong Pay”) in Makassar is its archaeological and historical significance, with ancient tombstones providing insights into the migration and lives of the Chinese community in Makassar since the 14th century. It also holds cultural and spiritual value for those observing traditions such as the Qing Ming ritual. Additionally, the complex offers an interesting educational tourism experience.	Antang Area and Bolangi Area

In addition to the distinctive Chinese tourist attractions in Makassar mentioned above, there are several types of traditional Chinese foods and snacks that enhance the appeal of these attractions and provide a unique draw for visitors. Some of the notable Chinese culinary specialties include the following:

Table 2. Traditional Chinese Culinary Delicacies in Makassar

No.	Name	Description
1	Lumpia Cake	Makassar’s Lumpia Cake is a traditional Chinese savory pastry filled with flavorful ingredients such as chicken, shrimp, and bamboo shoots, served with a signature sauce made with tauco (fermented soybean paste) that creates a delicious blend of spicy, sweet, and savory tastes.
2	Mie Titi	Mie Titi is a dish featuring crispy noodles with a thick, savory broth and a unique spice-rich flavor, topped with a variety of ingredients such as chicken, shrimp, and vegetables. Its distinctiveness lies in its special preparation process and its history as a Chinese-influenced culinary adaptation in Makassar.
3	Wonton Noodles(Mie Pangsit)	Wonton noodles served in a rich broth with a chewy texture and generous pieces of chicken, making it an iconic dish that remains popular amid modern Chinese culinary trends.

4	Rori Pawa	Rori Pawa is a soft and fluffy traditional Chinese bread with a sweet-salty filling of mung beans mixed with palm sugar and white sugar. Its unique flat, round shape and presentation on banana leaves make it a beloved snack.
5	Mantou	A traditional Chinese steamed or fried bun often enjoyed with a cup of hot coffee.
6	Cakwe (Chinese Cruller)	A classic Chinese fried snack that is easy to find throughout Makassar.
7	Bakpao (Steamed Bun)	Steamed buns with chicken or beef fillings available in several places across the city.

Several attractions that draw visitors and tourists to the city of Makassar include Cheng Hoo Mosque, Xianma Temple, Kwan Kong Temple, and the Chinese Village or Chinatown, all of which showcase traditional Chinese architectural styles. For Chinese cuisine in Makassar, popular dishes include noodles, steamed buns (bakpao), lumpia, and more. These tourist sites create a distinct Chinese atmosphere that serves as a unique cultural attraction. Traditional arts that remain popular among the community include the Barongsai (lion dance), Wushu, and Shaolin martial arts.

The mapping of cultural tourism potential in this study was conducted using an exploratory survey method based on the 5A theory: Attraction, Accessibility, Amenities, Accommodation, and Activities.

Table 3. Mapping Survey Results

No	Aspect	Mapping Results		
		Not yet sufficient	Needs improvement	Satisfactory
1	Attraction,	√		
2	Accessibility,			√
3	Amenities,		√	
4	Accommodation,			√
5	Activities		√	

In recent years, Chinese-themed tourist attractions in Makassar have increasingly drawn the interest of international travelers, as evidenced by a steadily rising number of visits over time. Among these international tourists, a significant portion comes from China. See the table below:

Table 4. Makassar Tourist Visits in the Last Five Years

No	Year	Number of Tourists	Remarks
		Domestic	International
1	2020	1,841	311

2	2021	4,247	353
3	2022	3,741,026	1,530
4	2023	4,414,465	1,535
5	2024	5,524,000	1,532

Processed from source: <https://sulsel.bps.go.id/id/pressrelease/2025/02/03/864/pada-bulan-desember-2024>

Based on data from the Makassar City Tourism Office, tourist visits to Makassar in 2024 showed a positive trend. This reflects a significant increase in both domestic and international tourist arrivals. The table shows that the number of domestic tourists visiting Makassar reached 5,524,000 people, an increase of about 25.13% compared to the previous year's total of 4,414,465. Meanwhile, international tourist visits also rose by 10.44%, reaching 95,596 visitors compared to only 85,614 in 2023. This visitor survey was conducted by the Makassar City Tourism Office in collaboration with Kokek Consulting, using data from Angkasa Pura, Pelindo, the Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association (PHRI), and PD Terminal (Mas'ud Edwin, 2025).

The increase in visits occurred for various reasons, including improved tourist facilities such as the Kayu Bangkoa Pier and the Phinisi Pier at Losari Beach Pavilion. Specifically, for the Phinisi Pier, continuous promotional programs—such as the Makassar Travel Fair and Makassar Direct Sale—remain a priority. Likewise, efforts to improve the competence of tourism and creative economy entrepreneurs continue to strengthen human resources in the industry sector (Mas'ud Edwin, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The Chinese community in Makassar largely descends from the Hokkien ethnic group and is primarily engaged in business or trade. The term “Tiongkok” is still often used to refer to people of Chinese descent and their ancestral homeland. However, today people generally prefer the term “Tionghoa” to refer to Chinese people, as it is considered more polite. In daily life, the Chinese community differs from other local communities. Chinese culture represents a tangible form of cultural acculturation in Indonesia. This cultural blending between the Chinese and local people has created a new culture while each group maintains its authenticity. Naturally, the preservation of their culture remains closely tied to the ancestral history of Chinese traditions.

From a sociological perspective, the Chinese community also stands apart in its everyday cultural practices. The present-day Chinese culture in Makassar continues to embody this acculturation process, creating a unique hybrid culture while maintaining its original roots. Cultural preservation among the Chinese community remains inseparable from their ancestral heritage, which continues to hold deep historical significance.

Based on the discussion above, this article concludes that the potential of Chinese cultural tourism in Makassar is highly promising for development because of the community's success in preserving its cultural heritage for generations, making it an attractive tourist asset. The improvement of tourism facilities, such as the Kayu Bangkoa Pier and the Phinisi Pier at Losari Beach Pavilion, along with promotional programs like the Makassar Travel Fair and Makassar Direct Sale, continues to play an important role in supporting this potential. Sustainable tourism services and continuous promotion can be strengthened through the use of information technology and collaboration with tourism promotion agencies at both national and international levels, particularly in China. Furthermore, tourism boards are encouraged to design cultural heritage tours that highlight Chinese temples, traditional architecture, and historical sites, while the local government can support heritage conservation programs to protect cultural landmarks and artifacts. Culinary festivals showcasing Chinese-Indonesian dishes would enrich the cultural tourism experience and support local entrepreneurs, while cross-cultural promotional campaigns in the form of exchange programs, art exhibitions, and joint

performances would help foster inclusivity and tolerance in society.

The results of this research are expected to provide readers with deeper insights into the potential tourist attractions related to the Chinese ethnic community in Makassar. Moreover, this study can serve as motivation for stakeholders to continue preserving and developing Chinese-related tourism in Makassar. The development of Chinese-themed tourism not only has the potential to strengthen cultural diversity and promote social harmony but also to serve as a sustainable driver of local economic growth.

Financing

The authors did not receive financing for the development of this research.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Amalia J, Y., Bin, W. W., & Rahman, F. F. (2024). Vocabulary Mastering of Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi Level 3 Students of Chinese Language and Culture Study Program Hasanuddin University. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 7(3), 410-417.
2. Anindya Novita Sari, & Istijabatul Aliyah. (2024). Daya tarik Kampung Ketandan Yogyakarta sebagai wisata budaya bagi generasi milenial. *Jurnal Pariwisata Budaya Indonesia*, 12(2), 55–70.
3. Burhan, F., Rahman, F., & Armin, M. A. (2025, May). Fragmentation of Indonesian and Chinese Women's Identity in the Novel Putri Cina by Sindhunata. In *The 5th International Conference on Linguistics and Cultural Studies 5 (ICLC-5 2024)* (pp. 82-88). Atlantis Press.
4. Christian, N. (2017). *Sejarah migrasi Tionghoa ke Indonesia*. Jakarta: Pustaka Nusantara.
5. Duli, A., & Mulyadi, Y. (2019, May). The mapping Out of Maros-Pangkep Karst Forest as a cultural heritage conservation. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 270, No. 1, p. 012014). IOP Publishing.
6. Jenny, & Rianto. (2024). Potensi pengembangan kawasan Pecinan Glodok Petak Sembilan sebagai pariwisata budaya Tionghoa di Jakarta. *Jurnal Pariwisata dan Budaya*, 15(1), 22–38.
7. Karman, Ardiyanti, H., Laksmo, B. S., Mudjiyanto, B., & Walujo, D. (2024). Shifting biculturalism to monoculturalism: the acculturation among Chinese Peranakans in Serui Regency of Papua, Indonesia. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 10(1), 2359012.
8. Kurniawan, A. (2020). *Jalur rempah dan diaspora Tionghoa di Nusantara*. Yogyakarta: Ombak.
9. Makassar City Tourism Office. (2025). *Annual tourism statistics 2024: Domestic and international visitor arrivals in Makassar*. Makassar City Government.
10. Mas'ud, E. (2025). *Makassar City tourism visitor survey report 2024*. Makassar City Tourism Office in collaboration with Kokek Consulting.
11. Nursaadah, S., Rahman, F., Hasyim, M., & Arsyad, D. (2025). Cultural Identity and the To Lotang Belief System in Sajak Rindu: Lontara Cinta dari Sidenreng: A Literary Anthropology Perspective. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(5), 1626-1634.
12. Oey Tjin. (1996). *Sejarah peranakan Tionghoa di Palembang*. Palembang: Pustaka Sumatera.
13. Rahman, F. (2019, February). Save the world versus man-made disaster: A cultural perspective. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 235, No. 1, p. 012071). IOP Publishing.
14. Rahman, F. F., Ahmad, T. W. B., Badaruddin, S., & Andini, C. (2023). Moral Values in the Film *Not One Less*《一个都不能少》张艺谋对《一个都不能少》电影道德价值分析. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 6(2), 376-390.
15. Ricklefs, M. C. (2008). *A history of modern Indonesia since c.1200* (4th ed.). Stanford University Press.
16. Rizki Amelia, & Sri Fajar Ayuningsih. (2024). Analisis unsur daya tarik wisata budaya di wilayah Cina Benteng Kota Tangerang. *Jurnal Destinasi Wisata*, 9(3), 101–118.

17. Sahib, H., Rahman, F., Duli, A., & Asba, A. R. (2019, May). Customary Forest Conservation through Informal Knowledge System of Ammatowa Community. In IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science (Vol. 270, No. 1, p. 012042). IOP Publishing.
18. Sefiani, A., Putri, L., & Handoko, B. (2024). Analisis potensi wisata budaya Desa Wisata Besani, gerbang akulturasi Jawa–Tionggok di Kabupaten Batang. *Jurnal Kepariwisata Nusantara*, 7(1), 45–63.
19. Tan, M. G. (2008). *Etnis Tionghoa di Indonesia: Kumpulan tulisan*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia.
20. Youngsun, K., Sosrohadi, S., Andini, C., Jung, S., Yookyung, K., & Jae, P. K. (2024). Cultivating Gratitude: Essential Korean Thankfulness Phrases for Indonesian Learners. *ELS Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, 7(2), 248-253.