

Linubian: A Narrative of the “Poor Man’s Delicacy”

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ABSTRACT

Cassava is a root crop often associated with the stigma “a poor man’s crop” because of its abundance in most marginalized societies and their diet. Cassava is seen as having a potential for economic ventures in the Philippines, particularly in making delicacies such as *kakanin* (rice cake). *Kakanin* also serves as a cultural symbol in many municipalities and is considered part of their cultural heritage. Local Government Units (LGUs) are now initiating innovative ways of marketing and preserving delicacies. One particular delicacy made from cassava is *linubian* or *nilupak* meaning it is mashed. Rosario, La Union’s one town-one product. This study aims to explore the delicacy *linubian*, made from the “poor man’s crop” cassava, as unique symbol of a people’s identity. This qualitative study used a narrative method and was conducted through semi-structured interviews. This study aims to explore *linubian*’s historical and socio-cultural significance to the town of Rosario in La Union province in northern Philippines. The findings trace *linubian* being stigmatized as “a poor man’s crop” to eventually becoming the town’s symbol of identity as celebrated through town fiestas. Symbolisms of camaraderie and unity, cultural heritage as a means of preservation, and influences of geography in production, were the themes that evolved. Challenges persist the youth’s continuance of the practice and production of the delicacy. It is highly recommended that LGUs, barangays, and schools continually integrate the practice of *linubian*-making in different engagements.

Keywords: Linubian, Cassava, *Kakanin* (Rice Cake), Food, Culture, Cultural Heritage, Festival

Background of the Study

Cassava, a starchy root crop similar to yams and sweet potato, is often called “a poor man’s crop” because of its pervasive cultivation across different societies particularly in Asia and Africa. Marginalized farmers often benefit from the root crop due to its significant role in food security, poverty reduction, and income generation (Immanuel et al., 2024). For many Filipinos, cassava is considered a staple food and an alternative to rice (Nguyen et al., 2020). Makieu et al., (2025) in their study on cassava’s nutritional values claim that cassava is indeed widely grown in variety of soil conditions hence adaptable, and has helped sustained livelihoods during natural disasters and economic hardships and is even referred to as “hunger-crop.”

The “poor man’s food” stigma has been prevalent for quite some time, but initiatives such as the establishment of The Philippine Root Crop Research and Training Center (PhilRootcrops) through Presidential Decree 1107 paved the way to food programs leading to include cassava together with other root crops an opportunity to be processed as ingredients for improved native delicacies (Lina & Cagasan, 2019).

Delicacies such as *kakanin* (cakes traditionally made from rice and cassava flour) are usually *included* in the Philippine daily consumption as snacks. Aside from being a culinary product, *kakanins* uphold culinary heritage, and stories behind their production (De Villa et al., 2022). As a cultural symbol, *kakanin* and other delicacies are seen as a tool for cultural renewal strengthening traditions and as creative expressions of cultural heritage (Austria, 2023).

One particular type of *kakanin* that has socio-cultural symbolism is *linubian* or *nilupak*, literally ‘mashed’. For Ramones (2023), *Linubian* is made from mashing together cassava, butter, coconut flakes, coconut milk, and sugar using local “*al-o*” and “*al-song*” (mortar and pestle).

The town of Rosario, La Union, Philippines is an agricultural municipality. According to the Municipal Government of Rosario, La Union (2023), cassava is the leading root crop produced in the municipality. The abundance of cassava led to the town's valuing of the root crop as the town's identity and eventually its main ingredient in its one town, one product (OTOP).

Government agencies such as the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), Department of Agriculture (DA), Local Government of Rosario, La Union, Office of the Provincial Agriculturist in La Union, Philippine Rice Research Institute (Philrice) have encouraged young and youth farmers in Rosario in participating in civic activities and have assisted them in sustaining their organizations by providing trainings in expanding their ventures in agriculture mainly in marketing cassava.

Among these projects is the Adopt-A-Youth-Led Cassava Processing project launched by the Regional Agricultural and Fisheries Council (RAGC) in collaboration with the Corn Banner Program which aims to train members in acquiring skills in preparing cassava-based delicacies such as puto (steamed bun), cake, *polvoron* (powdered sweet candies), and bibingka (a variety of rice cake from the Ilocos Region) for product innovation and to create livelihood and business opportunities (Young Farmers in Rosario, La Union Explore Possible Agribusiness Ventures Through Product Innovations | DA Regional Field Office 1, 2022).

In Rosario, the "poor man's crop" is being reinvented through its celebration of the *Linubian* Festival. The LGU encourages the inclusion of cassava and other root crops in livelihood ventures, opening new opportunities such as the creation and innovation of new flavors. Furthermore, the *Linubian* Festival not only emphasizes agricultural, economic, and culinary aspects of cassava production, but also revisits its historical and socio-cultural significance to the town (Bautista, 2024). This study aims to explore *Linubian*, the poor man's crop and delicacy as unique symbolism of a people's identity. Specifically, it aims to answer the question, "How is *Linubian* a manifestation of a people's unique identity at Rosario, La Union, Philippines?"

Food as Symbolism of People's Unique identity

Food is one unique element of a group's culture. It is an expression and a manifestation of a people's unique identity because of its varying ways of production, consumption and use in a society. The unique features are passed from one generation to another symbolizing the people's history, heritage, values and beliefs.

The Philippines is one country where from one region to another, you get to see varied products produced by the people. The way people prepare, cook and process them to be consumed for sustenance is a reminder of their ancestors' traditions thus, connecting them to their historic and cultural roots. According to Mintz and Du Bois (2002), food studies reveal broad societal processes, including the political-economic and symbolic value of food. The regional diversity in the Philippines reflects the adaptation of food production to local environments, cultural practices, and economic systems.

Dirks and Hunter (2013) highlight that food anthropologists, such as Levi-Strauss and Mary Douglas, have explored how food represents cultural identity and historical consciousness. The preparation and consumption of food in the Philippines can be seen as a means of preserving history and expressing shared cultural values.

Mohan (2023) discusses how food is both a biological and social need, shaping societies through production, consumption, and distribution. The persistence of traditional food practices in the Philippines aligns with Malinowski's theory (1944) that food customs are central to societal organization and identity formation.

The cassava is a famous crop of Rosario, La Union that tells about the rich culture of its people. From its cultivation to its preparation as *linubian*, it defines and perpetuates the culture of the people in the community.

Festival Theory

Such delicacy like *linubian* is a one-town-one-product (OTOP) of Rosario, La Union and is being celebrated through the *linubian* festival. Festivals serve as a bridge in having a deep knowledge on the interconnection of

people, livelihood, history, and unique culture of a community (Udtuhan, 2025). As a communal celebration, festivals gather people to instill social and cultural values through performances and identity experiencing (Bhattacharyya, 2024). Festivals also function as engines of economic contribution to the community particularly on aspects of tourism and marketing (Ilieva et al., 2024).

Research Design and Methods

The study made use of **narrative research** which involves collecting stories and making meaning from them through collaboration between the researcher and participant (Creswell, 2013). The stories of people derived from their direct experiences and observations provide a significant role in further understanding the occurrence or presence of situations, events, practices, beliefs as well as products.

Participants of the Study. The participants for this study are composed of 6 respondents from Rosario, La Union who were purposively selected because of their rich knowledge, experiences and exposure to the production of *linubian*. They expressed their willingness to take part in the study.

Data Generation. The study utilized a semi-structured interview method complemented with field notes. The questions asked aimed to capture the historical background of *linubian*, its process, materials, and ingredients, symbolism and significance, and the challenges and ways of preserving the practice. The interview was audio-recorded and the responses were transcribed. They were interviewed in the place of their choice. Each interview lasted for 30-45 minutes. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the interview anytime they wanted to if they decided to retract their participation.

Data Analysis. This study utilized Riessman's (2002) thematic analysis strategy to analyze the narrative data obtained from the respondents. Themes were derived in light of the gathered data, the research question, and prior theories. A priori codes were developed to cluster the respondents' experiences, values, ideas as well as attitudes on the subject of the study.

Researcher Positionality Statement

The researcher in this study is a local resident of Rosario, La Union and had experience celebrating the *Linubian* Festival. As a result, familiarity of the socio-cultural experience inspired him to write an insightful study through his Socio-Cultural Anthropology major course. In my observation during the data gathering process, insights coming from educational and cultural themes of the respondents allowed me to reflect the significance of this paper to my profession as a Social Studies teacher and might influence me on how to localize content and pedagogy.

Presentation of Narratives

P1

Growing up in my hometown, I had always known about *linubian*. It has long been a staple in our community, cherished as a beloved cake-like dish for many years. It holds a special place in the hearts of our people, symbolizing the enduring culture and traditions of our town.

When asked about the significance of *linubian*, I would say that it's deeply intertwined our identity as a community. Socially, it's a staple food, enjoyed by many during gatherings and shared as snacks or treats for guests. Economically, it is affordable to produce, making it accessible to all. This accessibility means it also supports local livelihoods, as many barangays cultivate cassava, the primary ingredient. Geographically, cassava thrives in our region, abundant in supply and supporting the community's way of life. Culturally and religiously, *linubian* is more than just food; it's often associated with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception as a thanksgiving symbol for bountiful harvests. It embodies the essence of how our community lives — close-knit families, hard work, and gratitude.

I learned how to make *linubian* from my grandparents. It's a skill passed down through **generations**; one I am proud to carry forward. The process begins with peeling and boiling the cassava. Once softened, it is pounded with sugar and margarine until it achieves a sticky, smooth consistency. Coconut is often added, enhancing its taste and aroma. The ingredients — cassava, sugar (either white or brown), coconut, and margarine — are simple yet wholesome, producing a dish that is delicious, fragrant, and satisfying. The texture is sticky but soft, and the color is a warm, inviting shade that reflects its homemade essence. While *linubian* can be made year-round, production can be challenging during rainy days when harvesting cassava becomes difficult.

One of the challenges faced with *linubian* is that some people, especially children, are hesitant to eat it due to its sticky texture. It's disheartening, as this dish is a part of our heritage. However, I am hopeful that through education and creative presentations, they can inspire appreciation for it. For instance, *linubian* is often showcased during fiestas and competitions, which not only highlight its cultural significance but also encourage younger generations to engage with its production. Schools also play a role, integrating *linubian* into activities, like assignments where children prepare it at home. Although it's not part of the formal curriculum, these practices help keep the tradition alive.

To preserve and sustain *linubian* production, I recommend incorporating it more prominently into community events and festivals. Competitions and presentations can spark interest and pride in this local delicacy. Girl Scouts, for instance, have been instrumental in livelihood activities centered around *linubian*, showcasing how youth can play a role in preserving traditions. It's also essential to foster an appreciation for *linubian* among children. Encouraging them to see it not just as food but as a symbol of our heritage can help them connect with our culture. By teaching them at home and during community gatherings, we ensure this cherished tradition continues for generations to come.

P2

I have some knowledge of the history of *linubian* in our hometown. *Linubian* became popular through its integration into traditional fiestas and celebrations. The tradition of *inaruban*, where palay is gathered before it hardens, contributed to its prominence. Additionally, the practice of *barkadahan* (camaraderie) in various barangays played a vital role. Adults in these groups upheld the tradition of making *linubian*, particularly during special occasions when families from the city returned home. *Linubian* became a staple served during these gatherings, fostering a sense of community.

The significance of *linubian* to their our place is deeply rooted in our cultural and communal identity. Socially and culturally, it symbolizes unity and camaraderie, as its production involves collective effort. From harvesting to preparation, it requires a group working together, reflecting the harmony within our community. Geographically, the hilly topography is ideal for planting cassava, which is abundant in upland barangays, while lowlands provide bananas and coastal areas contribute coconuts. This geographical diversity ensures the continued availability of the necessary ingredients. Economically, *linubian* helps people augment their income, while socially, it fosters camaraderie through the shared experience of its preparation.

I have the skills to produce *linubian*, having learned it from my sisters and aunts. The process can be simple but becomes more intricate and complicated with the addition of ingredients to cater to taste preferences and create variations, such as adding banana, *inaruban*, or coconut. The basic procedure involves boiling cassava, preparing fried (*kirog*) coconut flakes, and grinding the ingredients using a mortar and pestle, known locally as **al-o** and **al-song**, which are traditionally made from stone or wood. *Linubian* has a white-yellowish color, a sticky texture, and is typically produced after the planting season concludes. The ingredients include cassava, banana, coconut, and milk, and its preparation is closely tied to the resources provided by the geography, with upland barangays supplying the cassava.

Challenges in the continuous production of *linubian* arise mainly from changing preferences. While claiming that the total disappearance of practicing *linubian* is impractical, it ultimately depends on the farmers' willingness to continue planting cassava. The tradition's survival hinges on maintaining interest and demand among the community.

To preserve, maintain, and sustain *linubian* production, I recommend prioritizing it as a primary product of the hometown. Projects and programs should promote its production by allocating spaces specifically for planting cassava. Encouraging the younger generation to take up agriculture as a career is crucial, as cassava farming underpins the production of *linubian*. Additionally, integrating *linubian* into festivities serves as a legacy that enriches the town's cultural heritage and reinforces the values of camaraderie and unity among community members.

P3

The practice of *linubian* started with the abundance of cassava in the barangays of the municipality, which paved to its widespread production. The *linubian* festival was formally introduced way back in 2008 when then Vice Mayor Bellarmin A. Flores II recognized cassava as a product of Rosario. Since then, the festival has been celebrated annually in April.

Cassava holds significant meaning for the town, serving as both an economic resource and a cultural symbol. Economically, cassava production provides income for local residents, with small and medium enterprises contributing through taxes when *linubian* is sold in the market. Culturally, consuming *linubian* has become a staple tradition, and it is a common item in school canteens whenever cassava is available. Geographically, the hilly and remote areas of Rosario are ideal for cassava cultivation, while the flatlands are better suited for growing palay. This geographical distribution underpins the town's identity and emphasizes cassava's role in uniting various barangays.

I learned about *linubian* production through observing elders during the rainy season, particularly from June to August when cassava is harvested. The process involves boiling cassava, pounding it using traditional tools such as the "*al-o*" and "*al-song*," and adding flavorings to enhance the final product, though some people now opt for grinders and machines. I see some of the innovative ways of making *linubian*, as showcased during festivals and the so-called "101 ways to make *linubian*", where creative variations are celebrated. The sticky texture and adaptability of *linubian* make it a versatile and cherished dish.

Challenges in *linubian* production primarily stem from the seasonal nature of cassava, which is not available year-round. There is also concern about the younger generation's diminishing interest in the tradition due to the advent of technology. Imee emphasized the importance of keeping the tradition alive by integrating it into educational and cultural programs.

To preserve and sustain *linubian* production, Imee recommended year-round cassava planting to ensure continuous availability. There is a big and significant role of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) in cultural preservation by integrating *linubian* into heritage programs. Educational initiatives could also play a vital role; for example, Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) and *Araling Panlipunan* (AP) or Social Studies teachers could incorporate *linubian*-making into their lessons, with cookery classes including it as a performance task. Additionally, she suggested that local government units (LGUs) encourage all 33 barangays to participate in *linubian*-making contests during festivals and provide direct support to farmers to ensure sustainable production.

Through these efforts, *linubian* can continue to be a unifying and culturally significant product for Rosario, preserving its legacy for future generations.

P4

Growing up, I was curious about the large mortar and pestle in our household. My grandparents explained that these tools were traditionally used to make *linubian*, a delicacy deeply rooted in the history and culture of our hometown. While the exact origins of *linubian* remain unclear, I know that it has been a longstanding practice in our family, dating back to our childhood.

Linubian holds immense social, cultural, and geographical importance for the people of Rosario. It symbolizes unity within families, as the labor-intensive process of making it often brings family members together, fostering conversations and strengthening bonds. I recall that, male family members harvest the cassava through digging, then they clean and cure them until they are ready for use. Then, usually the female family members will prepare the cassava mixture. This is followed by the physically straining mashing of the mixture until it becomes the delicacy. Additionally, *linubian* is associated with love and courtship, often linked to weddings and romantic traditions in the region.

Economically, cassava—the primary ingredient of *linubian*—has historically been considered the "poor man's food," serving as a substitute for rice or corn. Over time, however, innovation in its preparation has elevated *linubian* to a delicacy enjoyed by the masses. Geographically, Rosario's hilly and flat terrains provide an ideal environment for cassava to thrive, often doubling as a natural fence in farming communities.

Linubian is typically enjoyed in breakfasts paired with coffee. It is also enjoyed as a snack. Typical *linubian* vendors sell them early in the local town market, and usually, by noon there is already a shortage of the delicacy in their stalls signifying that they only prepare it in the morning.

I learned about how to make *linubian* through observation. I **describe** the process as laborious, requiring strength and patience. The process begins by boiling cassava and removing its hard core. The cassava is then chopped into smaller pieces and mixed with coconut milk, sugar, margarine, and sometimes milk in a traditional mortar (*al-o*) and pestle (*al-song*). The mixture is pounded until it reaches the desired sticky consistency, with ingredient measurements varying depending on the maker's preference. Initially, pounding cassava is straightforward, but as it thickens and becomes sticky, the effort intensifies.

Several personal touches in the recipe, such as adding vanilla for fragrance and condensed milk for sweetness. While the traditional method uses *al-o* and *al-song*, commercialized production often relies on grinders for efficiency. *Linubian* is best enjoyed fresh, with its coconut aroma enhanced by additional ingredients, and has a soft, chewy texture. Its color varies from pale white to yellow or purple, depending on the cassava and added flavorings.

Despite its cultural significance, *linubian* production faces several challenges. Few farmers plant cassava, and not everyone owns the traditional *al-o* and *al-song*, needed for preparation. The labor-intensive process also discourages many from making *linubian* at home. Only those who sell the product commercially or have access to mortar and pestle equipment continue the practice regularly.

To preserve and sustain *linubian* production, I recommend promoting cassava planting programs and incorporating *linubian* -making into family traditions and celebrations. I suggest using modern tools, such as grinders, to make production less labor-intensive, while maintaining the essence of traditional methods. Educational programs can also play a role in preserving the tradition. For instance, *linubian* -making can be integrated into Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) lessons as a contextualized, output-based activity.

Local government units (LGUs) can support this heritage through cassava planting initiatives led by youth groups like the ***Sangguniang Kabataan*** (Youth Council). I also advocate for a vibrant *Linubian* Festival featuring street dancing that accurately shows the process and story of *linubian*-making, as well as competitions that celebrate the innovation and cultural significance of this beloved delicacy.

In summary, *linubian* embodies Rosario's identity and heritage, symbolizing unity, love, and resilience. By combining tradition with innovation and involving both the youth and community leaders, its legacy can endure for generations.

P5

Rosario has long been recognized for its root crop production, including ube, taro, cassava, and ***kamote*** (sweet potato) *Linubian*, in particular, became a popular product in the early 1990s, though its production predates this

period. The Local Government Units (LGUs) began highlighting *linubian* as they identified its potential for enterprise development. Historically, cassava was prepared simply by boiling, but over time, innovative methods were introduced to enhance its appeal.

Linubian carries deep social, cultural, economic, and geographical significance for Rosario. It has evolved from a simple root crop dish into a symbol of the town's uniqueness and unity. The process of making *linubian*—mixing and pounding ingredients into a homogenous blend—represents the oneness of the community, where many individuals come together for a single purpose.

The preparation and consumption of *linubian* embody values such as perseverance, teamwork, dedication, love, and care. Economically, *linubian* contributes to local businesses and boosts income, as cassava farmers as well as vendors who are typically small-medium size business owners have to pay their taxes in engaging entrepreneurship in this delicacy which boosts Rosario's economy. Culturally, it fosters creativity through the personalization of flavors and promotes cultural immersion. Geographically, the hilly barangays of Rosario, with their fertile soil, are ideal for cassava cultivation.

I am very much aware of how *linubian* is made, having learned it from her my mother and observed the process as it became a prominent delicacy in Rosario. Curiosity about traditional tools like the *al-o* and *al-song* sparked my interest in the craft, and LGU initiatives further honed my skills by promoting *linubian* production.

The production process includes peeling, boiling, and pounding cassava, followed by the addition of flavors like margarine, coconut, sugar, or even peanut butter. The process is described as laborious yet exciting. *Linubian* is rich in carbohydrates, with a texture and flavor that reflect its careful preparation.

Several challenges affect the continuous production of *linubian*, including resource availability, the willingness of people to undertake its labor-intensive process, and natural calamities that impact cassava supply. The scarcity of raw materials and fluctuating consumer demand also pose obstacles.

To sustain *linubian* production, I suggest encouraging farmers to grow more cassava, which takes 6-8 months to harvest. Continuous cassava planting and incorporating creative varieties —such as using sweet potato, purple yam, or taro—are seen as ways to innovate while maintaining tradition.

LGUs are urged to promote *linubian* through competitions and provide tools like *al-o* and *al-song* to barangays. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), and schools are encouraged to play a role in preserving the practice by organizing symposiums and integrating *linubian* into cultural heritage programs. Agri-tourism, where visitors can learn about *linubian* production, is another promising avenue.

The annual town fiestas serve as a crucial platform for sustaining *linubian*, as they inspire farmers to continue planting cassava. While modern machinery and grinders have made mass production more efficient, I see the importance of preserving the authenticity of traditional preparation methods.

Street dancing during festivals is proposed to narrate the story of *linubian*, from planting and harvesting to cooking and preparing. Organizations like the Girl Scouts of the Philippines can involve children in observing and learning about *linubian*-making, thereby fostering appreciation among younger generations. I envision *linubian* not just as a historical product but as a continuously evolving tradition that remains deeply rooted in Rosario's identity.

P6

I only know a brief historical background of *linubian* through readings, classroom lessons, stories from family members, and whenever they feature the history during *linubian* festival celebrations. The importance of *linubian* in our place is that it serves as a symbol of identity, compared to other municipalities in La Union, we could be distinguished through our product, and it also does the same with the other places through their respective

products. Since *linubian* is a staple delicacy, it symbolizes how Ilocanos have a good dietary and culinary background. The ingredients might be simple but they **make** use out of it, symbolizing creativity as well.

I tried making *linubian* during a simple training workshop organized by the Chief Girl Scouts of the Philippines during their local barangay project initiatives. Through these projects I was able to experience how to prepare, cook, process, and serve *linubian*. Specifically, the preparation of *linubian* is very simple, all you need is to gather the ingredients which are cassava, margarine, coconut milk, sugar, and roasted coconut, this is the classic version but because of changing taste and preferences and innovation, other yams like ube, and flavorings are now integrated.

First, you need to boil the cassava until it is cooked and is good for mashing, then, using the big *al-o* and *al-song*, you mash it together with the other ingredients, except the roasted coconut until it becomes sticky in consistency, it requires muscle work to achieve this. Then, you serve and top it with the roasted coconut. All I can say is, it is simple but tedious.

An imposing challenge that I can see for its production is if the local government unit or the community itself stops commemorating the celebration of it. The youth also **play** a big part in preserving this food culture as they will take on the next generation of *linubian* making and production in the future.

In terms of preservation, *linubian* can be sustained if the available ingredients like cassava will be promoted by the local government through subsidizing farmers in order to plant them all year round. I believe that education is a powerful tool for the sustainability of *linubian* through lesson integration. Based on my experience, the *linubian* festival was once part of our performance task in Physical Education and Health in which we showcased to historical development and procedure of the *linubian* making process through a dance. Reflecting from this, I can still retell the process as the weeks of practicing the dance made it automatic for me to retell the process and history through anecdote.

The younger generation is crucial for the maintenance of *linubian* as a tradition in Rosario. They hold the future for it, and I believe constant promotion by the local government unit through festival celebrations. production of *linubian* makers in the market, parents and family members constantly introducing the delicacy as a staple part of the diet, school cafeteria selling them, lesson integration in schools and in the curriculum through authentic assessments, one that are meaningful like *linubian* making, cassava plantation, problem solving, project-based, or performance-based tasks. Reminiscing from the Girl Scouts of the Philippines partnership with the barangay also must be sustained, for it involved the children in the community in the experience of *linubian* making.

DISCUSSION

The exhausted responses from the **six** respondents have featured narratives of the historical development of the *linubian* delicacy, its significance and symbolism, a detailed procedure of how to make *linubian*, the needed ingredients and materials, and the challenges and opportunities of preserving the practice through the younger generation. The following themes are discussed below:

Preparation of Linubian

Through the responses of the six respondents, the preparation of *linubian* can be summarized through this graphical presentation.

The Linubian Making Process



Step 1. Gather the Ingredients

Chopped and peeled cassava, brown sugar, margarine, coconut milk, and toasted coconut.



Step 2. Cook the Cassava

Boil the cassava until it is soft and ideal for mashing, typically within 25-35 minutes.



Step 3. Mash the Cassava

Place the cooked cassava in the al-o and begin mashing uniformly.



Step 4. Incorporate the Other Ingredients

Mix the brown sugar, coconut milk, and margarine until homogenous.



Step 5. Transfer to Bilao

After the mixture is thick and sticky (like a rice-cake consistency), stop and do not overmash, then transfer to bilao.



Step 6. Serve and Enjoy

Top the linubian with toasted coconut and serve.

Photo Courtesy: Rhodolito Estacio

Figure 1. The Linubian Making Process

Theme 1: Cultural Heritage as a Means for Cultural Preservation

The practice of *linubian* is something that needs to be taken care of as it carries the heritage of Rosario. Being a heritage means it is something that is valued and cherished that is passed down from generations (Han, 2001). Fortunately, cultural heritage programs are being actuated by aspiring Chief Girl Scouts of the Philippines as their project. These heritage activities require the involvement of the youth, particularly children in observing and practicing the making of *linubian* as demonstrated by those who make the delicacy. This is a big step in preserving the practice and the associated identity to Rosario.

Theme 2: Innovation as Means of Deviating the “Poor Man’s Food” Narrative

Cassava is known to be a “poor man’s food” because of its abundance in developing nations particularly in Asia and Africa, its availability also contributes as to why these societies tend to consume cassava as a substitute to rice and corn or even as a staple food (Immanuel et al, 2024). As discussed in the narratives, the creative minds of locals that innovate the preparation of cassava paved the way for *linubian* to exist as not just a “poor man’s food” but as a delicacy for the masses.

Theme 3: Festivals and Street Dance as Means of Promotion

As part of the preservation of the practice of *linubian* as the town’s identity, the Local Government Unit of Rosario has introduced the annual *Linubian* Festival, to be celebrated during the months of April. Celebrating festivals associated with a product of a town contributes to reinforcing cherishment. It brings the community

together both locally and externally (tourists) which fosters cultural **exchange** (Udtuhan, 2025). Festivals, like that of *Linubian* Festival, are more than mere cultural expressions but windows identities (Blanza and Paborada, 2024) and experiencing of identities (Bhattacharyya, 2024). These historical, economic, socio-cultural, and spiritual identified are being manifested particularly the honoring of the Immaculate **Conception**. This further enriches that idea that festivals build identities and also mirrors their spiritual honor of patron and saints (Udtuhan, 2025). *Linubian* is further commemorated through street dances presented during the town's fiesta. Contingents execute a dance that presents a story of how *linubian* is done, from planting, preparation, cooking, and assembling. As emphasized by Misil and Wee (2019) dances in fiestas often resemble the town's story and identity.

Linubian Story and Process Presented Through Street Dance



Figure 2. Street dancers showcasing the planting and harvesting of cassava.



Figure 3. Dance presentation featuring the cooking of cassava and preparation phase.



Figure 4. Incorporated in the festival dance is the symbolic honoring and thanksgiving to the Immaculate Conception, the town’s patron.

Theme 4: Geography and Environment as Parameters for Production

Geography and environment play an important role in the continuance of *linubian*. Rosario’s strategic location characterized by hilly formation is ideal for growing cassava, the main ingredient of *linubian*, the abundance thereof contributes to its availability emphasizing as the main opportunity for the Local Government Unit to promote this delicacy. According to the Town Library of Rosario (n.d.), the *Linubian* Festival was initiated by the then Sangguniang Bayan Member, Honorable Bellarmin C. Flores III. Through his biking and hiking adventures in the different barangays in the municipality, he observed the abundance of cassava either planted in the backyard of residents or in the idle fields or hills. A dialogue followed with the OIC-Municipal Agricultural Officer, Rudy P. Sanchez to promote and market the planting of cassava and production of the delicacy. The implication of geography and a place’s environment shapes foods in different and unique ways such as how it is grown, prepared, and consumed (Goodman, Kneafsey, & Maye, 2021).

Theme 5: Camaraderie and Unity as Symbolisms

The process of making *linubian* is laborious, it requires a series of preparation and collective effort to be able to assemble the delicacy. Much is emphasized through the *barkadahan* who served the delicacy for guests, emphasizing community engagement brought out by food (Ahn, Kang, Kiatkawsin, & Zielinski, 2023). The process of combining the different ingredients into creating a homogenous product symbolizes unity. While associated family and social values such as bond formation while making *linubian* symbolizes harmony within the community. Filipinos are fond of gathering around food and tend to strengthen their relationships (Mangompit, 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The narratives surrounding *linubian* collectively highlight its deep cultural, historical, and economic significance in the community. As a food that started out as a “poor man’s crop” rooted in tradition turned into delicacy through innovation is now celebrated through festivals, *linubian* symbolizes unity, camaraderie, and creativity, fostering bonds among families and communities. Despite its cherished status, challenges such as labor-intensive production, resource scarcity, and waning interest among younger generations threaten its continuity. To sustain this cultural heritage, stakeholders advocate for educational integration, community engagement, agricultural programs, and innovative approaches to *linubian* production. By addressing these challenges and leveraging the

shared commitment of individuals, families, LGUs, and NGOs. *Linubian* can remain a vibrant symbol of cultural identity and community spirit for future generations.

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