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### The Arabi Spice Coffee as a Media of Culture: A Legacy of Social Cohesion and Generational Dynamics in Kampung Melayu, Semarang

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#### Abstract

*This paper explores the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee at Menara Layur Mosque in Kampung Melayu, Semarang, Indonesia, as a cultural practice rich in philosophical values that go beyond beverage consumption. The tradition, which takes place during Ramadan, symbolises brotherhood, togetherness and multicultural heritage in a region inhabited by Arabs, Chinese and Indians. Serving Arabian spice coffee with dates and snacks after breaking the fast strengthens social bonds within the Muslim community. From a spiritual perspective, Drinking Arabian spice coffee plays an important role in Islamic traditions, especially Sufi practices, to maintain consciousness during nightly worship. Using observation and critical history methods, this study found that this tradition embodies hospitality and respect in Arab and Islamic culture. However, preserving this tradition faces intergenerational challenges, with some younger members feeling less engaged or unfamiliar with the practice. This study aims to explore the symbolic meanings, cultural values, and preservation efforts of the Arabian spice coffee tradition at Layur Tower Mosque by using a qualitative approach and historical methods. The research findings highlight the harmonious blend of social, spiritual, and cultural values that make up the identity of the local community and the importance of maintaining this tradition as part of the local cultural heritage.*

**Keywords:** Arabian spice coffee; Cultural Identity; Kampung Melayu; Semarang.

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#### Introduction

Indonesia is known as a country rich in tradition, with cultural diversity spread across thousands of islands and ethnic groups. Tradition can be understood as a part of culture that includes norms, habits and practices that are continuously passed down from one generation to



another in a society (Huda, 2007). Tradition is not static, but there are always dynamics that encourage it to develop or adapt according to the needs of the times and the conditions of society. Amidst the trend of globalization and the rise of modern consumptive culture, local traditions and cultural values that are hereditary have begun to shift, including in terms of coffee drinking habits (Whittington, 2015). Coffee is a global beverage with a long history that has become deeply embedded in cultural and religious traditions (M. Bozzola, 2021). During the Dutch East Indies period, the high volume of coffee exports attracted investors from Batavia in Java (Furnivall, 2009; Baihaqi A. F., 2018).

In today's contemporary era, we are witnessing a fusion of coffee and the Arab culture of the north coast of Java (Jonge, 2019), namely Arab spice coffee. This coffee can be found in towns along the north coast of Java, such as Cirebon, Pekalongan and, in particular, Semarang. This is mixture of coffee, ginger and cardamom with added Javanese sugar as a result of the cultural influence of the Hadhrami diaspora. From the late 19th century to the early 20th century, Hadhrami immigrants established communities in Semarang, situated on the northern coast of Java. They primarily settled in Arab neighborhoods such as Kampung Melayu and Kampung Kauman (Shouk, 2009). However, during the 1970s and 1980s, ecological changes and economic challenges prompted some members of this community to relocate within Semarang (Rabith Jihan Amaruli, 2020). This migration facilitated increased cultural interactions between the Hadhrami and Javanese communities. Consequently, cultural exchanges among subsequent generations have resulted in the development of hybrid cultures, as reflected in language, clothing, and cuisine. This hybridity is attributed to Semarang's historical and cosmopolitan character as a coastal society (Berg, 2010; Jonge, 2019).

While the historical and cultural significance of Arabian spice coffee traditions, such as spice coffee, is often marginalized. In fact, the Arabian spice coffee tradition is not just a drink, part of cultural identity and a symbol of social respect that has been going on since the 15th century (Fikri Alamsyah, 2024). This condition raises concerns about the young generation's fading understanding of the roots of Arabian spice coffee drinking culture, especially those inherited by the Arab community in Indonesia. In some areas such as Cirebon, Semarang and Pekalongan, communities of Arab descent still preserve the tradition of serving Arabian spice coffee. For those who may already be familiar with the term "*kopi tahlil*" in Pekalongan, although it now only appears at certain moments. Thus, this practice is less visible in public spaces and more prevalent in family settings or religious events (Rahayu Prasetyani, 2023).

In Semarang City itself, there is a village with a community of Arab descent that acculturates Malay, Javanese and Chinese cultures called Kampung Melayu on North Coast of Java (Baihaqi A. F., 2024). In history Semarang it's a big City with a Big Port in Colonial Era, and particularly in the North of Semarang at Kampung Melayu area has been inhabited by various multiethnic communities who live side by side, influencing each other in social, cultural and religious practices (Yuliati, 2009). The Layur Mosque is a central point for the Islamic community in carrying out religious activities as well as a social space to gather and strengthen relationships. One cultural heritage that is still preserved today is the tradition of serving Arabian spice coffee during the month of Ramadan. This practice has been carried out for generations, where mosque caretakers have a special responsibility in brewing and serving Arabic Arabian spice coffee (Fitriyani, 2022).

However, in the midst of changing times and modernization, the sustainability of this tradition has been challenged. Acculturation that was once dynamic is now facing a trend of social and cultural segmentation, especially among the younger generation. They are more interested in global popular culture and no longer digest the symbolic meaning of the Arabic Arabian spice coffee tradition. In addition, this tradition is only carried out in the

mosque space and is exclusive to men, so women's involvement is limited (Madiasworo, 2017). Based on a review of the literature, there is a gap in research on cultural hybridity in Kampung Melayu, Semarang, which forms the novelty of this paper. There is a lack of research on coffee as cultural heritage within hybrid communities. Several studies have discussed cultural hybridity in Semarang resulting from interactions between the Hadhrami and Javanese communities (Amaruli, 2021). However, the specific role of coffee (for example, Arabi spice coffee) in shaping or preserving this hybrid cultural identity has not been discussed. Furthermore, the potential of coffee as a symbolic cultural heritage that bridges the generational gap in hybrid communities such as Kampung Melayu is an area that has not been widely explored (Rahayu Prasetiani, 2023).

Research by Siti Maziyah, Alamsyah, and Sutejo Kuwat Widodo entitled "Indian Porridge at Jami' Pekojan Mosque Semarang: Culinary as a Means of Islamisation" explains that the tradition of serving Indian porridge during Ramadan has been going on for more than 100 years and is understood as a form of cultural engineering for the Muslim community of Indian descent in Semarang (Siti Maziyah, 2021). Second, in research from Mesy Maisara (2021) entitled "The Tradition of Drinking Arabian spice coffee as a Series of Wedding Events in Kenagarian, Kapelgam, Bayang District, Pesisir Selatan" explains that the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee has social functions such as strengthening friendship, strengthening the role of men in customs, and helping materially. This research also highlights the declining participation of the younger generation due to changing times and the influx of outside cultures (Maisara, 2021).

This study seeks to address the gap in the existing literature concerning the tradition of consuming Arabian spice coffee at Layur Mosque, Semarang. Previous research has predominantly concentrated on technical aspects, such as the practice during the breaking of the fast, and has been largely confined to superficial documentation. The tradition is often regarded merely as a hereditary custom, lacking a comprehensive exploration of its deeper meanings and values. Notably, the exclusivity of the breaking of the fast and prayer activities to male congregants at Layur Mosque has not been thoroughly investigated (Fitriyani, 2022) (Nurhidayah, 2019). This gender exclusivity is crucial for understanding the local social and cultural context, particularly given the mosque's location in Kampung Melayu, an area with a rich history of cultural diversity. The tradition encompasses not only the serving of Arabian spice coffee but also the use of a unique recipe passed down through generations by the mosque's marbot, thus constituting an integral component of the oral and cultural heritage of the Arab community in Kampung Melayu, Semarang. Unfortunately, the philosophical and social values of this tradition have not been studied in depth (Muh, 2025). There is limited research on how this tradition represents community identity and intergenerational challenges, especially concerning younger generations who are beginning to feel less involved or unfamiliar with traditional practices perceived as "old people's traditions." Therefore, further studies are necessary to understand and preserve this cultural heritage and bridge the gap between generations (Mahsun, 2025).

### Theoretical Framework

To deepen theoretical engagement with frameworks such as Anthony Giddens' structuration theory, cultural identity theory, or gender studies in the context of the practice of drinking Arabian spice, performed, and regulated through cultural practices and media influences (Giddens, 1991). In summary, deepening theoretical engagement involves leveraging Giddens' notions of structuration and reflexivity to explore agency and tradition, combining cultural identity theory's attention to symbolic boundaries and meaning-making, and employing gender studies to critically examine masculinity and power in this all-male coffee

drinking practice. Such integrated analysis, grounded in the local Semarang context, can reveal rich insights into how social structures, identities, and cultural practices intersect and transform through everyday rituals (Whittington, 2015; Gauntlett, 2008).

Giddens' structuration theory offers a robust lens to explore how the practice of drinking Arabian spice functions simultaneously as a socially regulated tradition and a site of individual agency and reflexivity. The ritual embodies recurrent patterns of behavior (structure) while allowing participants reflexive awareness and possible transformation of these patterns through their embodied actions. This reflects the notion of *living cultural heritage*, which resists rigid dichotomies between tangible and intangible heritage by underscoring that cultural heritage is continuously remade through practice, incorporating embodied, spatial, temporal, and artefactual dimensions (Whittington, 2015; Iacono, 2016).

To enhance the theoretical foundation, it is essential to engage with both UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage framework and recent scholarship on heritage sustainability, social cohesion, cultural memory, and intergenerational transmission. The authors should consider recent studies, such as Zabuli (Zabulis, 2025), which examine Intangible Cultural Heritage as a catalyst for social cohesion and resilience. Additionally, emerging discussions on participatory heritage preservation and community-based safeguarding practices should be incorporated. These perspectives offer a contemporary framework for understanding the role of cultural traditions in identity formation, social integration, and generational continuity.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach to explore more deeply the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee at the Layur Mosque. This type of research is a type of field research, because the primary data source that the author gets is the result of data contained in the field (Lloyd, 1993), and the focus of the author's research is on religious traditions carried out from generation to generation by the perpetrators of the Layur Mosque, namely the takmir once a year welcoming the month of Ramadan for the congregation to drink during iftar before continuing tarawih prayer. This research uses the historical method as the main approach. This method is a systematic procedure that aims to trace, study, and interpret various relics and records of the past critically about the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee in Ramadan at the Layur Mosque. The research location is on Layur Street, Dadapsari, North Semarang District, Semarang City, Central Java (Mahsun, 2025).

The implementation of the historical method consists of four main stages, namely heuristics (source collection), criticism (source testing), interpretation (data analysis and synthesis), and historiography (historical writing). The first stage, heuristics, refers to the process of collecting various sources of information, both primary and secondary, that are relevant to the object of study (Lloyd, 1993; Kuntowijoyo, 2003). In the context of this research, primary sources consist of written and oral documents. Firstly, a literature study was used to find out more about Layur Mosque and its culinary heritage, its distinctive culinary culture. Literature searches are mostly done online, either tracing data through previous research or through *YouTube* which has a similar theme. Furthermore, direct observation was carried out to find out how it is made and direct interviews with the main informant, namely Mr Ali Mahsun, a 54-year-old Layur Mosque *takmīr*, currently involved in the practice of serving Arabian spice coffee, as well as people who are allowed to enjoy the culinary. In addition to Mr Ali, additional information was also obtained from another informant, Muhammad Zulfikar Effendi, a 15-year-old teenager who lives at 92 Layur Street (Effendi, 2025).

The analysis stage begins with source criticism, both external to test the authenticity and authority of the source, and internal to assess the reliability of the content through

comparison between written and oral sources. Next, interpretation is carried out to connect historical facts based on the principles of chronology and causality, and using relevant concepts. The final stage is historiography, which is the writing of history in a systematic narrative form (Kuntowijoyo, 2003). This writing presents the dynamics, continuity, and challenges of preserving the Arabic Arabian spice coffee tradition at Layur Mosque during Ramadan, as part of the local cultural heritage of Kampung Melayu (Izzah, 2026).

## Result and Discussion

### The Philosophical Value of Arabic Arabian spice coffee Drinking Tradition in Kampung Melayu

Arabian spice coffee, also known as *tahlil Arabian spice coffee*, has long been an integral part of the religious and social traditions of the Arab community in Kampung Melayu, Semarang. This tradition is believed to have originated from Arab migrants who settled in the area, mainly from Hadhramaut, Yemen. This drink is not just a dish, but also contains symbolic value as a form of respect for guests and an accompaniment to prayers in tahlilan activities (Amaruli R. J., 2021). The origin of Arabian spice coffee is indeed a reference to Yemeni traditions, both in terms of ingredients and the way it is served. This serving process is not just technical, but also full of meaning of respect and solemnity (Mahsun, 2025).



**Figure 1.** The congregation of Layur Mosque in Semarang breaks their fast with Arabian spice coffee (Diskominfo Jateng, 2024).

Arabian spice coffee is not only present in tahlilan, but is also a signature drink in larger religious activities (Rahayu Prasetiani, 2023). According to Mr Ali Mahsun, as the marbot at Layur Mosque, during the whole month of Rajab, before entering the month of Ramadan, the people of Kampung Melayu routinely hold a reading of the book of *Shahih al-Bukhari* every afternoon, starting at four o'clock until before *maghrib*. At the end of the event, Arabian spice coffee is served as a dessert, strengthening the atmosphere of togetherness and solemnity. However, not all houses serve this Arabian spice coffee, usually only certain houses that are having a dream or organising a major religious event (Mahsun, 2025).

Drinking Coffee tradition is not just about flavour, it is also believed to have health benefits. The blend of spices used is thought to cause no problems for the body, even providing a calming and warming effect. The mosque caretaker himself acknowledges the difference in taste and effect when not consuming the Arabian spice coffee, showing how it has become part of his spiritual and physical habits. This tradition also reflects the religious and cultural values of the people of Arab descent in Layur Village (Diskominfo Jateng, 2024). In the practice of worship, for example, women perform prayers exclusively at home, while congregational prayers at the mosque are reserved for men. Tarawih prayers in Ramadan also have their own peculiarities, although the *isya* prayer is still held at seven in the evening, tarawih only starts at around eight in the evening. This delay is done so that the congregation

has time to read tadarus first, a habit that reflects their love for the Qur'an (M. Azka Ulinnuha, 2026; Nurhidayah, 2019).

The tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee in Kampung Melayu, Semarang, is a cultural practice that is rich in philosophical values, beyond the mere activity of beverage consumption. One of the most prominent philosophical values is a symbol of brotherhood and togetherness. In the context of Ramadan, when breaking the fast, Arabian spice coffee is served along with dates and other snacks at the Layur Mosque as a medium to strengthen social relations between residents. This tradition is in line with the principle of *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, which prioritises brotherhood in building a harmonious and mutually supportive community (Suara Pena, 2022). Through the ritual, Arabian spice coffee functions as a social tool that connects individuals in an atmosphere of intimacy that strengthens the solidarity of the Muslim community in the region (Diskominfo Jateng, 2024).

Furthermore, this tradition reflects the multicultural cultural heritage of Kampung Melayu, which is the meeting point of various ethnicities, including Arabs, Chinese and Indians (Amaruli, 2021). Drinking Arabian spice coffee in this area not only maintains Arab identity, but also shows a harmonious process of cultural acculturation. This tradition symbolises social integration, reflecting how local cultures are able to dynamically accept and adapt foreign influences (M. Azka Ulinnuha, 2026). This indicates a strong sense of cultural pluralism, where Arabian spice coffee is a marker of community identity rooted in a long history of migration and trade (Rahayu Prasetiani, 2023).

From a spiritual perspective, Arabian spice coffee plays an important role in the Islamic tradition, particularly in Sufi religious practices. Arabian spice coffee is used to help maintain wakefulness and concentration when performing nightly acts of worship such as *dhikr* and *tahajud* prayer. Therefore, Arabian spice coffee is seen as not just a beverage, but a spiritual tool to get closer to God and improve the quality of worship (Madiasworo, 2017). The use of Arabian spice coffee in this context illustrates a philosophy that everyday objects can acquire a transcendent meaning if used with the right intention and spiritual understanding (Nurhidayah, 2019). In addition, this tradition is also laden with the values of hospitality and respect in Arabic and Islamic culture (Effendi, 2025; Mahsun, 2025). Culturally and artistically, Arabian spice coffee also has symbolic meaning in Arabic literature as a symbol of wisdom, inspiration, and spiritual reflection. In Arabic poetry and prose, Arabian spice coffee is often depicted as a faithful companion in the journey of searching for the meaning of life and inner contemplation. This symbolic aspect adds a philosophical dimension to the Arabian spice coffee tradition in Kampung Melayu, making it a bridge between the material and spiritual worlds, as well as a link between sensory experience and reflective thought (Muh, 2025).

The value of manners and ethics is also highly upheld in this tradition. The activity of drinking Arabian spice coffee is accompanied by procedures according to Islamic teachings, such as reading *Bismillāh*, using the right hand, and avoiding blowing hot drinks. This ethic shows that daily activities can become worship if done with full awareness and the right intention. Thus, the Arabian spice coffee tradition teaches that spirituality can be present in every aspect of life. Overall, the Arabic Arabian spice coffee tradition in Kampung Melayu is a reflection of the harmonious blend of social, spiritual and cultural values that form the identity of the local community. This tradition proves how a cup of Arabian spice coffee is not only a taste, but also a deep philosophical meaning of togetherness, spirituality, and respect between people (Nurhidayah, 2019).

### Intergenerational Preservation Challenges

The tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee, which is routinely conducted during Ramadan at Layur Mosque in Semarang, has become an integral part of breaking the fast together. This tradition not only serves as a complement to religious rituals, but also represents social relations and cultural values that are unique to the local community of Kampung Melayu, Semarang. Amidst the enthusiasm of the implementation of this Arabian spice coffee tradition, five challenges were found, especially in inter-generational sustainability. One of the main factors is the low participation of the younger generation in consuming Arabian spice coffee itself. Although the younger generation is present in the iftar activities at the mosque, their involvement is generally limited to the aspect of eating together, without involving themselves in the symbolic practice of drinking Arabian spice coffee (Mahsun, 2025). Many of the children and teenagers prefer to bring their own drinks from home or buy modern snacks that are considered more suitable for their tastes. This phenomenon shows the symbolic distance between the younger generation and the cultural meaning inherent in the Arabian spice coffee tradition children's congregation breaking the fast at Layur Mosque (Rabith Jihan Amaruli, 2020; Nurhidayah, 2019).

The second challenge lies in the exclusivity of the Arabian spice coffee-making process. The recipe and serving techniques have been passed down from generation to generation, limited to the mosque's marbot or takmir. This specificity makes Arabian spice coffee a cultural symbol of Layur Mosque, but at the same time creates participatory barriers, especially for younger generations who are not directly involved in the compounding or distribution process. This limited access to knowledge and skills makes Arabian spice coffee increasingly appear as something that 'belongs to the old people', rather than a heritage that can be claimed jointly by the next generation (Diskominfo Jateng, 2024; Mahsun, 2025). The third barrier relates to the absence of an educative inheritance mechanism. The older generation tends to let the tradition run its natural course without any coercion or encouragement for young people to become actively involved. Although this approach demonstrates an attitude of openness and respect for individual choice, in cultural preservation, the absence of systematic efforts to introduce and familiarise with the values and symbolism of this tradition increases the likelihood of cultural dislocation (Effendi, 2025) (Muh, 2025).

In modern societies, traditions are no longer carried out automatically, but rather become something that must be consciously chosen by individuals (Giddens, 1991). If in pre-modern societies or the older generation, cultural values are passed on naturally and considered mandatory, then in modern societies (younger generation) the role of traditional institutions such as family or community becomes weaker and no longer has a strong influence. Therefore, when the older generation does not actively pass on traditions to the younger generation, this reflects a process of *disembedding*, where cultural practices are uprooted from everyday social routines and can only be maintained through deliberate reconstruction efforts (Madiasworo, 2017).

As a result, the younger generation grows up without a contextualised understanding of the importance of Arabian spice coffee as part of their community identity. The fourth factor that reinforces generational segmentation is the exclusive nature of the exercise Arabian spice coffee drinking tradition. The practice of drinking Arabian spice coffee at Layur Mosque specifically done inside the mosque and reserved for male worshippers (Muh, 2025). Although women are not technically prohibited from attending, prevailing neighbourhood norms encourage them to break their fast at home, making women's involvement in this tradition very limited, if not invisible. This gender-based restriction of participation creates unequal access to cultural space, minimising opportunities for inclusive regeneration of cultural values (Gauntlett, 2008).

Finally, there is the influence of modernisation and the changing lifestyle of the younger generation. Popular culture, the globalisation of information, and the emergence of modern *Arabian spice coffee shops* that offer a more aesthetically pleasing contemporary Arabian spice coffee experience have diverted the interest of the younger generation away from simpler but more meaningful forms of tradition (Izzah, 2026). Arabian spice coffee, which lacks the visual aspect or style of contemporary consumption, has become less appealing to young people. In this case, modernisation not only creates a change in taste, but also breaks the emotional and historical continuity between the younger generation and the local culture (Madiasworo, 2017).

### **Efforts to Preserve the Tradition of Drinking Arabic Arabian spice coffee**

The custom of drinking Arabian spice coffee at Layur Mosque has become a cultural as well as religious symbol for the people of Kampung Melayu. The continuity of this tradition is influenced by practices that are carried out repeatedly every year, forming a routine that is finally passed down from generation to generation, especially to mosque administrators. The form of preservation can be seen from the use of special spices in Arabian spice coffee concoctions and the way of making it that is still maintained according to the methods of previous generations (Fitriyani, 2022).

Layur Mosque's speciality Arabian spice coffee remains an attraction for locals and out-of-towners who want to experience the unique flavour of spiced Arabian spice coffee. As it is only served during Ramadan, this tradition has an exclusive value and is an important part of the local religious and cultural atmosphere. More than just a drink, this tradition contains noble values such as a sense of family, and a space for interaction that strengthens relationships between residents and fellow worshippers. These values become the foundation of solidarity amidst the diversity of society. Through inheritance to the younger generation, this tradition is not only preserved, but also introduced as an important part of the heritage of local cultural identity (Amaruli, 2021) (Mahsun, 2025).

Layur Mosque's Arabian spice coffee is made from a mixture of seven main spices that not only enrich the flavour, but are also believed to be healthy for the body. According to Ali Mahsun, the mosque's caretaker, the ingredients include ginger, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, lemongrass, pandan leaves, and black Arabian spice coffee grounds (Mahsun, 2025). Granulated sugar is added later, according to the taste of the connoisseurs. The process of blending this Arabian spice coffee follows the customs of generations of Arabs, particularly from Yemen, which is known as the origin of this spiced Arabian spice coffee (Maisara, 2021). This tradition, howing the continuity of culture passed down through food and drink, a phenomenon is part of "*gastropolitics*" where food becomes a medium to express identity, social values, and power relations in society (Shouk, 2009).

The mosque administration undertakes the preparation of Arabian spice coffee in substantial quantities. Initially, all spices, excluding the Arabian spice coffee and sugar, are boiled to release their potent aroma and flavor. Subsequently, Arabian spice coffee powder is incorporated into the mixture and allowed to steep, facilitating the blending of flavors. The mixture is then strained to remove the grounds, transferred to a large kettle, and sugar is added and thoroughly mixed. This coffee is served in special small cups to mark the breaking of the fast before tarawih prayers. The act of serving transcends mere technicality, embodying a ritual of communal togetherness that fortifies relationships among worshippers. For each serving, a minimum of 50 cups of Arabian spice coffee is prepared, with larger quantities for larger congregations (Effendi, 2025; Muh, 2025). This tradition is not confined to a single event but may occur daily throughout the month, contingent on the religious occasion, reflecting the community's commitment to preserving the tradition. Notably, at the Layur

mosque, only men are permitted to worship and partake in the tradition of consuming Arabian spice coffee. However, provisions have been made for female travelers to worship, enabling broader participation in the tradition, albeit constrained by Yemeni traditional norms that emphasize women's worship and activities at home. This highlights the significance of examining women's roles in the Arabian spice coffee culture, particularly their involvement in its preservation and consumption, albeit in distinct spaces. Ultimately, Arabian spice coffee at Layur Mosque represents more than a mere blend of spices in a small cup; it is a dynamic symbol of how communities preserve their cultural heritage, foster unity, and remain pertinent amidst evolving times (M. Azka Ulinuha, 2026).



**Figure 2.** Seven Spices of Arabic Arabian spice coffee Ingredients (a); Serving Arabian spice coffee in Kettles with Dates (b) (Diskominfo Jateng, 2024)

The values in this tradition are not only enjoyed by adult men, but also by children and the elderly from all walks of life, despite the spatial arrangement that separates men and women. The Semarang city government also recognized the importance of this tradition by issuing Semarang Mayor Decree Number 646/50/Tahun 1992, dated 4 February 1992, which designated Layur Mosque as a cultural heritage building. One of the reasons for the designation is that the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee has been going on since 1802, making it a part of people's lives for more than two centuries. This tradition has not only survived out of habit, but also because of the social and spiritual values that the community has kept alive. In every cup of Arabian spice coffee served, there is history, flavour, and social bonds that keep Kampung Melayu warm and alive amidst the changing times (Fitriyani, 2022).

However, although traditions and cultural values are still strongly guarded by the older generation, the regeneration of cultural preservationists in Kampung Melayu has not run optimally. Many young people tend to migrate or have more activities outside the village, so they are no longer actively involved in maintaining local traditions. If this condition is allowed, it is not impossible that the typical culture of Kampung Melayu will be eroded by time. Therefore, preservation efforts need to be focused on the younger generation by providing education from an early age, organising cultural festivals, and holding traditional events regularly so that cultural values and practices remain alive and relevant (Muh, 2025).

The younger generation has a central role as the nation's successor in maintaining the culinary culture of Kampung Melayu, including the tradition of drinking Arabic Arabian spice coffee. They need to cultivate a sense of interest and responsibility to understand the values contained in the tradition, so that they not only enjoy it, but are also able to pass it on to the next generation. So, Today's in digital age, there are many creative ways to help conservation. One of them is by creating visual content in the form of videos or images that

illustrate the unique process of making Arabian spice coffee which is only carried out by the mosque *takmir*, as well as the fact that this tradition is served exclusively during the month of Ramadan, before breaking the fast and before Tarawih prayers. It also includes unique socio-cultural aspects, such as the rule that only men are allowed to drink Arabian spice coffee in the mosque, but for women who really want to enjoy it, a special place is provided. If this content is shared widely on social media, it is hoped that it will create a sense of pride and interest in the community, especially the younger generation, that this traditional Arabian spice coffee is no less interesting or delicious than contemporary fast-food Arabian spice coffee. Instead, it has a depth of value and history that modern Arabian spice coffee lacks (Ali, 2025; Effendi, 2025).

Moreover, young people can also start practising making Arabian spice coffee independently. Although this Arabian spice coffee is traditionally served during Ramadan, because the ingredients are spices that are friendly to the stomach and healthy for consumption, there is nothing wrong if the younger generation tries to make it outside the fasting month. They can also help the *takmir* in the process of serving during Ramadan, because of course it is not fair if only the *takmir* continue to carry the burden of maintaining this tradition. The presence of the younger generation in the process of making and serving Arabian spice coffee will symbolise the continuation of a natural and deep-rooted culture. There are no barriers preventing them from getting involved, all it takes is curiosity, a willingness to learn, and an awareness of the importance of maintaining local identity. With determination and effort, the younger generation can not only preserve, but also revive Kampung Melayu's Arabian spice coffee drinking tradition as a legacy that continues to flow to their children and grandchildren (Mahsun, 2025; Ali, 2025).

The preservation of the Arabian spice coffee tradition in Kampung Melayu can no longer rely entirely on the old authoritative or normative approach. In this era of globalisation and modernisation, the younger generation has a different perspective on tradition. They do not want to be forced to follow in the footsteps of the past, but rather want to be actively and voluntarily involved. Therefore, a participatory and inclusive preservation strategy is key to keeping this tradition alive and relevant. A participatory approach places the younger generation not only as inheritors, but also as active cultural actors capable of giving new meaning to the tradition. The younger generation is part of a society that continues to grow, create and adapt and as such, they have a strategic role to play in maintaining and renewing traditions (Maisara, 2021). In the context of Arabian spice coffee preservation, this effort can be realised through various fun and meaningful ways, such as cultural mentoring through relaxed and open forum sessions. In this kind of forum, the older generation who have knowledge about the serving method and philosophy of Arabian spice coffee can share their stories and experiences with the younger generation in a non-doctrinal manner. This approach is not a one-way lecture, but a space for dialogue where the younger generation can ask questions, discuss and reflect on the meaning of tradition in the context of their lives today. The importance of dialogue as the foundation in a true learning process where knowledge is co-constructed, not simply being passed on (Rahayu Prasetyani, 2023).

In addition to mentoring, another form of participation that can be developed is a creative workshop on blending Arabian spice coffee with a contemporary approach. In this activity, the younger generation is not only taught basic techniques, but also given the space to experiment with ingredients, flavours, and even presentation. They can create new variants of Arabic Arabian spice coffee that still retain the traditional spice elements, but are packaged in a more modern and attractive way, for example in aesthetic packaging or visual concepts that are relevant to the tastes of today's youth. This is not a form of betrayal of tradition, but a form of reinterpretation that can actually keep tradition alive. Many great

traditions have survived because they were able to adapt and reinvent themselves to respond to the context of the times (Izzah, 2026).

Thus, the process of cultural mentoring and active participation is not merely about passing on recipes or serving techniques, but also about instilling a sense of belonging, pride and emotional attachment to the Arabic Arabian spice coffee tradition. It is the bridge between the past and the future that ensures that the preservation of traditions not only survives, but also grows and flourishes with the new generation ready to nurture them.

### Conclusion

This research found that the tradition of drinking Arabian spice coffee at Layur Mosque not only functions as a complement to the ritual of breaking the fast, but is also a cultural symbol that represents the collective identity of the Arab community in Kampung Melayu, Semarang. This tradition contains deep philosophical values, ranging from ukhuwah Islamiyah, respect for guests, to spiritual meaning in religious practices. Furthermore, it reflects the harmonious process of cultural acculturation between the Arab, Malay and Javanese communities that has taken place since the 19th century.

However, an important finding of this research is the entrenched gender exclusivity in the implementation of the tradition, which limits women's participation, as well as the challenge of regenerating cultural values in the midst of modernisation. The tradition has not been optimally transformed into an inclusive and participatory cultural space for the younger generation. This reveals an intergenerational gap in the process of cultural inheritance, where the values and meanings of traditions are no longer automatically accepted, but require interpretative and adaptive efforts by new generations.

Dialectically, this research emphasises the importance of seeing tradition not as a static entity, but as a discursive arena where negotiations between old values and new needs occur. Through a critical historical approach and cultural ethnography, this research contributes to expanding the framework of cultural history and identity studies, as well as highlighting the urgency of participatory approaches in preserving intangible cultural heritage. The Arabic Arabian spice coffee tradition at the Layur Mosque is a clear example of how local practices can mirror social dynamics, between continuity and change, between preservation and renewal new generation.

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