

## Traditional Fishing Skills and Communities' Food Culture in Lingayen, Pangasinan (Philippines)

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Fisherfolk families live along a stretch of the Lingayen Gulf in Pangasinan, Philippines. The livelihood available in this coastal community has always been fishing and production of natural fish products. The fishermen and their able family members that mostly include their kin and nearby fisherfolk neighbors embark each day from dawn to undertake a traditional seine fishing technique locally called *kalukor*. Standard two-hundred-meter-long seine nets are deployed with a boat from the shore and pulled strategically by two groups holding ropes until seine reaches the shore with the fish catch. The duration of this process, with guidance of a boatman who signals a group when to pull increasingly to achieve balance, sometimes takes three hours to see nets with the fish catch reaching the shoreline. Presently, more than five beach seines line up the stretch of the gulf that make the first batch deployment in a day of fishing.

The volume of the catch influences activities of the fishing locality. When the catch is just enough for one *kalukor* sectional participant to divide, the section takes it home for consumption or for selling to interested buyers who wait on the side. If the volume is higher, the expanse of market for fish trade is wider. *Kalukor* participants can sell it to fish enterprise owners situated near the gulf. These enterprises prepare fermented fishery products like *patis* (fish sauce), *bagoong* (fish paste) and *bagoong alamang* (fermented shrimp paste) using certain fish and marine varieties. The procurement of households within the locality contribute to the catch total sale, the former administering *pagtitinapa* (smoking) and fermentation processes to be sold in the area and distributed in the marketplace.

It has been a tradition of households in the area to make fermented products like *bagoong* to go with rice and steamed leafy vegetables found in one's backyard for meal consumption as the one of the most basic preparations to make ends meet. The said products complement with fruits and vegetables like *singkamas* (turnips) and green mangoes. Other households have become accustomed to including *bagoong*, *bagoong alamang*, and *patis* in their simple cooked meals and prepared cuisines. Lingayen is a town known locally for its best fermented fishery products with some designated as export quality. The province of Pangasinan (where Lingayen is located) was made popular in the region due to attributions made by people to fermented fishery products as representation of Pangasinan.

A traditional maritime food system, as illustrated earlier, operates when fisherfolks can increase the volume of a catch while engaging in a *kalukor*. Pressing concerns are being met by coastal communities that provide limitations to achieving sustainability. *Kalukor* fisherfolks spend more time and effort, but they get the smaller slice of the pie in terms of financial viability in the fish trade. Furthermore, most participants work under operators who own the fishing infrastructure to be able to embark on fishing. The expansion of trade skills and availability of capital resource management for fisherfolks to venture into more lucrative enterprises such as manufacturing fishery products through fermentation, smoking, and drying have always been high possibilities to mitigate their

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financial incapacity. One significant factor that weakens safeguarding measures of the *kalukor* fishing technique involves the destruction of marine habitat and biodiversity that often leads to dwindling catches and slows the production of marine animals. Also, the plan to engage a private proponent to extract twenty-five million metric tons of dry black sand offshore in Lingayen Gulf per year must be stopped because it will contribute to the further destabilization of marine fishing and marine ecology.