

Enhancing Mangosteen Products through Local Wisdom in Nakhon Si Thammarat

Mangosteen preserve has a long history and significant cultural importance in Nakhon Si Thammarat province, a region renowned for its rich cultural heritage and agricultural prowess. Dating back to the 1980s, it was mentioned that mangosteen had existed since the time when governors ruled the southern region, continuing to the present day. This illustrates the deep-rooted nature of this fruit in the lifestyle of Nakhon Si Thammarat residents, showcasing how agricultural practices and culinary traditions have been passed down through generations.

The mangosteen, often referred to as the "queen of fruits" due to its delicate flavor and numerous health benefits, has been cultivated in the region for centuries. The tropical climate and fertile soil of Nakhon Si Thammarat provide ideal conditions for mangosteen trees to thrive, resulting in fruits of exceptional quality and taste.

In the 1990s, stories circulated about the origin of mangosteen preserve, crediting it to the wisdom of household in the Nakhon Si Thammarat railway community. This showcases the local people's initiative in transforming local fruits into unique products, demonstrating the ingenuity and resourcefulness of the community. The creation of mangosteen preserve was likely born out of a need to preserve the fruit's short harvest season and reduce waste, turning a seasonal delicacy into a year-round treat.

The 2000s saw mangosteen preserve widely recognized as local wisdom and a signature product of Nakhon Si Thammarat. It was said that locals had consumed mangosteen preserve for hundreds of years, and during this period, it became a renowned product of the province. The preserve's popularity grew beyond local markets, attracting tourists and food enthusiasts from other parts of Thailand and even internationally. Numerous documents and newspaper articles mentioned Nakhon Si Thammarat's mangosteen preserve, including interviews with producers, reflecting public interest in this product and its cultural significance.

The importance of mangosteen preserve was officially confirmed when it was registered as part of the National Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2014, recognizing its value and significance at the national level. This registration not only highlighted the cultural importance of the product but also provided a framework for its preservation and promotion as a vital part of Thailand's culinary heritage.

In the 2010s, the story of mangosteen preserve spread to the online world through various channels such as news pages and social media platforms like TikTok, helping the product gain wider recognition, especially among younger generations. Food bloggers and influencers began featuring mangosteen preserve in their content, introducing it to a broader audience and sparking interest in its unique flavor and cultural background.

To ensure the sustainability of this local product, the development and promotion of mangosteen preserve extend beyond production and sales to involve

sustainable community and local economic development. Assistant Professor Dr. Taweeluck Pollachom and a team from Walailak University aim to use local wisdom to enhance mangosteen products in Nakhon Si Thammarat province. They help farmers in the community behind the Nakhon Si Thammarat railway station, an old local community engaged in selling mangosteen preserve, by providing technical support and market access strategies.

In 2024, a comprehensive study was conducted on the knowledge of producing mangosteen preserve as local wisdom of Nakhon Si Thammarat province, aiming to promote and develop local resources for protection under appropriate legal frameworks. This research not only documented traditional methods but also explored ways to innovate while respecting cultural heritage. The knowledge gained from interviewing local wisdom holders in mangosteen preserve production will be used to assist farmers, support business groups and startups, encourage new entrepreneurs to develop products from mangosteen preserve, create innovation, and add value to mangosteen preserve products.

Additionally, there are projects to support mangosteen farmers in cultivation techniques and marketing, promote community involvement in the production and sale of mangosteen preserve, generate income, and strengthen the local economy. These initiatives focus on sustainable farming practices, organic cultivation methods, and fair trade principles to ensure long-term viability and environmental stewardship. Consulting projects are provided for entrepreneurs and farmers in various aspects related to mangosteen preserve by experts, as well as practical training activities to transfer knowledge and skills in producing high-quality mangosteen preserve.

For further sustainability, in 2025, Walailak University will facilitate the use of space to utilize resources and expertise in researching and developing products from mangosteen preserve. This collaboration between academia and local producers aims to create innovative products such as mangosteen based cosmetics, health supplements, and gourmet food items, diversifying the market and increasing economic opportunities for the community.

In summary, the development of mangosteen preserve from local wisdom to a product of economic and cultural value not only promotes the conservation of cultural heritage but also aligns with several sustainable development goals, covering economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The various initiatives related to mangosteen preserve serve as a good example of sustainable development at the local level, which can be a model for the development of other local products in the future. By balancing tradition with innovation, and economic growth with cultural preservation, the mangosteen preserve industry in Nakhon Si Thammarat exemplifies how local products can contribute to sustainable development and community empowerment.