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Vivienne



also fry it with sambal chilli or chili pounded with garlic and onion. If you don't like it raw, you can boil it briefly before consumption.

The Jantung Pisang or banana flower is another choice. It is eaten as vegetable. This vegetable is borne at the end of the stem of banana fruits. The long and slender male flowers emanate a faint aroma and at times you may see wasps flying around it.

The deep purplish-crimson-coloured flower can be cooked in various ways. The most common way of cooking this food is by cutting them and cooking them with coconut extract and anchovies. You can also fry it with chilli, onion and salt fish. Or you can cook it in a rich beef stew.

Personally I boil the banana flower, cut it open and scoop the tender pith out. I then dip it into sambal belacan before eating it.

Walk to Bamboo grooves and you will find bamboo shoots. It can be cooked in coconut extract, chilli and chicken. Actually there are many species of bamboo and not all of them have edible shoots. The shoots are always harvested when they are about a foot high as these are the best, more succulent types.

Usually, the shoots are scooped out of the ground so that the sweet lower stems are taken out. Then the outer layer or sheath are taken out until the white pith inside is exposed. This is then taken and cut into strips and soaked into rice-water for several hours before cooking. Rice water means the water used to wash rice.

Some people do not like it soaked in rice water. They prefer to boil the bamboo shoot strips for ten minutes before cooking it properly. This is to remove toxic believed to be contained in bamboo shoots.

If you are cooking bamboo shoots for the first time, you should remember to clean it thoroughly and then boil it for a while. You then throw away the water and let the shoots stand for a while.

You then cook it fried with salt fish, chicken or any meat of your choice.

These three food items can be added on to your menu. This way, tourists will have a wider choice of food and it can be a pleasant change from their normal greens, especially for vegetarians.

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WINING and dining guests are just natural even in homes involved in homestay programs. It is commendable and encouraged because the tourists will have first hand experiences and knowledge about local food.

I believe therefore that the locals, such as the Kadazandusuns, stick to local food and do not cook or serve food that can be enjoyed in restaurants and eateries outside.

I have vilocated homestay homes and sampled their offerings and some actually served very tasty traditional food. the word 'traditional food' may be moot to some, but it is quite simple really. Hinava is Kadazan, Panjaram is Bajau Kota Belud and so forth. However, the harmonious existence among the various ethnic groups have led to the 'bleeding' of culture and tradition, including food recipes among them. There will definitely be similarities, but they are local. I mean definitely not fish and chips or Caesar salads!

For those of us involved in the Homestay programs, we may scratch our heads and think how many times more will we serve young ferns, wild mushrooms, yam stalks and palm pith. There are other food items that can be served, if they are cooked like our grandparents did.

There is the Kacang Botol or winged beans for instance. This humble creeping plant will grow anywhere, including along fences and where the soil is fertile. Just throw the seeds and you will see a winged bean plant tomorrow.

This plant has been called by many names, such as four-angled bean frilly bean and manila bean. I have seen this plant grow behind our paddy shed in the past and even along the fence of our paddy nursery.

The winged bean pod is about six inches long. Its flowers are usually pearl white and light purple. The pods are quite interesting with four curly edges with tiny seeds contained within the central rib.

It can be eat raw with sambal belacan or shrimp paste pounded with chili. You can

