

Num Troam (Fried Rice Cake) in Svay Rieng province

Interviewees

1. 20 September: Chhin An, producer at Romeas Haek district
2. 22 September: Uk Phally, producer at Svay Chrum
3. 22 September: En Moeun, producer at Romdul
4. 26 September: Sellers on high way road and market in Svay Rieng town
5. 26 September: Buyers in Svay Rieng town
6. 27 November: Um Kim, producer at Mesang district, Prey Veng province
7. 27 November: Sellers at Prey Veng province

Introduction

Traditional Khmer people produced many kinds of cakes, such as Num Ansam, Num Chek, Num Thnot, Num Korm, etc. These cake recipes have been passed down from generation to generation. Num Troam (Fried rice cake) is another traditional cake, which is made by the mixture of rice flour with palm sugar and fry in the oil. Cambodians in rural areas make it in the family union, ceremony as well as in the wedding day. Currently, some young people living in the city do not know about this cake and how to make it. On the other hand, the production of Num Troam is mostly made by rural families for selling in their village.

Num Troam has different unique shape according to how it made. Normally, people make it by hands just round and flat.

Table 1: Feature and Shape of Num Troam

No	Feature	Description
1	Size	3.5cm for small size and 7.0cm for large size
2	Weight	59mg or small size and 125mg for large size
3	shape	depend on how we make it
4	color	Dark brown
5	taste	Sweet



History

There is not a specific source from where Num Troam is made. Making Num Troam has passed from one generation to another generation. Num Troam is named due to it needs to overcome the difficulties such as fire and oil spread out that can cause injury.

Traditionally, soon after wedding the new couple usually visited their relatives. So Num Troam was made by the couple as the present to their both relatives. In return, the relatives also have some gifts to the new couple like money, chicken, duck and some materials. The meaning of Num Troam expressed the struggle, patient of living together as new couple.

Geography for producing Num Troam in Svay Rieng

Svay Rieng is one of the 25 provinces locates on the southeast side of the Cambodia along national road number one. It is 60 kilometers from Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam and 125 kilometers from Phnom Penh. Administratively, the territory of Svay Rieng province is divided into six districts and two municipalities (Krong). Those districts are Chantrea, Kampong Ror, Rumduol, Romeas Haek, Svay Chrum, Svay Teab, Krong Bavet and Krong Svay Rieng.

Geographically, Svay Rieng is an agricultural province with prime economy basically depends on rice production. Approximately 68.5 percent of provincial total population have prime occupation as famers. Beside the main occupation, some farmers have produce different types of food product for additional income to support the family lives. The product of Num Troam is one of traditional food products that people produce and sell in wide area of the province include Svay Teap, Rom Dul, Romeas Hek, Chantrea, Svay Chrum and Svay Rieng town.

Map of Num Troam location in Svay Rieng province



How to make

Ingredients

Basically, the main unique recipe of Num Troam is made by rice flour, palm sugar, black sesame and oil. Some producers of different areas add coconut milk and milk to increase its favor because making only rice flour, palm sugar and black sesame is less taste and hard texture that cannot value at the market.

Rice flour

- Hard rice types such as Kasang Teap or MoMang are used to make good Num Troam. Soft rice cannot produce good Num Troam
- Producer soaks rice with clean water at least 4 hours in order to get soft grains
- Then, they dry rice grain about an hour and grind it to be flour using grind machine



Palm Sugar

Any type of palm sugar is collected to make Num Troam. Palm sugar is steamed in pan with warm heat and stir it together with black sesame until become bubble. Palm sugar must be pure in order to make Num Troam good smell. Some producers make palm sugar by their own and some order palm sugar from trusted suppliers at market. Num Troam cannot be made using white sugar because it causes Num Troam become hard.



Mixing

Steamed palm sugar and rice flour are mixed together until it become merging into one. Based on experience of producer, the mixture of palm sugar and rice are the same amount, 10 kilograms of rice with 10 kilograms of palm sugar. Some producers add coconut milk and milk to together with the mixture to get Num Troam good taste and have value at market.



Frying

The bean oil is used to fry Num Troam because it does not make Num Troam bad smell. Producers pour the oil into the pan with high heat to make the oil hotter. And then, they take the mixture one piece of thumb make it round and flatten and put it into the pan by usually turn it around from one side to another side and keep it not sticky with each other. When the fried cake looks red, they can extract from the pan and keep it cold for consumption.



The use of Num Troam

Traditionally, rural Cambodians like to produce Num Troam by their own because it spent less money, used own ingredients with the help from relatives for their event day. Num Troam was so popular for many occasions such as union meeting, engagement day, wedding day and so forth. The people usually held reception for the guest by Num Troam with tea during home visit or in pagoda. Currently, Num Troam is still used in those events in villages but they buy it from the market.

Keeping and Packaging

Num Troam is a kind of medium soft cake that able to keep longer period. Generally, it can keep for consumption up to two months.

Normally, Num Troam is packaged in plastic bag with no label and tight it using rubber band. The quantity of Num Troam in the plastics bag for sale can be 0.5 kilogram.

Market

There are not many supplies of Num Troam at the market because there is not widely demand of it. Most producers are villagers that produce Num Troam when there is an order from the consumers. Because Num Troam is an additional business for villagers, the market of Num Troam is so narrow for village consumers. Some producers have existing distributors that order Num Troam occasionally between 5 kilograms to 10 kilograms because the sale of Num Troam last few days.

Currently, the sale of Num Troam is declined because people do not eat it every day and there are many types of cake that more delicious and look healthier. The customers are villagers and passengers who buy Num Troam for their relations or neighbor. The selling price of Num Troam at the market is 10,000 Riels (2.5 US Dollar) per one kilogram.



Comparing of making Num Troam

Svay Rieng and Prey Veng are close provinces that Num Troam are produced. However, there are few different characteristics between the two productions.

- Prey Veng Num Troam is harder in texture than Svay Rieng
- Num Troam made in Prey Veng is bigger than Svay Rieng
- The ingredient of Prey Veng Num Troam are mostly used hard rice, palm sugar, black sesame and bean oil. While coconut milk and milk are additional ingredient to make Num Troam in Svay Rieng.

Num Troam made in Svay Rieng province



Num Troam made in Prey Veng province



Impact Analysis

Num Troam is not produced and protected by any company or other community, all production exists at rural family as a secondary occupation. Moreover, this production partly supports family lives beside the main agricultural occupation. Thus, it is positive impact on rural economic can be observed.

Conclusions

Strengths:

- It is still preferred by old people living in village
- Num Troam is one of traditional cake for villagers

Weakness:

- The package does not attraction
- All producers are in rural areas widely in Svay Rieng province
- There is different recipe from one producer to another
- Market for Num Troam is narrow as mostly consumers base in villages

Ongoing Activities

- Strengthen production of Num Troam regarding to having a unique recipe for identification of the product of Svay Rieng.
- Improve the quality of Num Troam production regarding to packaging.
- Market expansion of that product not only in Svay Rieng province but also other provinces in order to promote the product and the preservation of Khmer traditional cake.

Reference

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