

Duman (green gold) festival and santa rita delicacies



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Santa Rita is the home of Duman and Ocampo-Lansang Delicacies (Turones de Casuy, Sansrival, Uraro and other sweets that sell in SM City Malls nationwide). Duman is made of malagkit rice (lakatan malutu) that is beaten from its husks and toasted in a clay oven. To the rest of the country, it may just be plain green rice or even un-popped pinipig. But it is a prized seasonal food that can be found during the Christmas season, after the rice harvest in November. The younger kernels of rice that don't fall off the husks are colored green. These husks are beaten against a hard surface until they fall off.

They are then soaked in water, cooked for 30 minutes and then pounded. This rigorous process helps release the sweet oils and nuttiness of the rice. Families who produce duman rice are called Magduruman. They pass their methods from generation to generation and have kept to the manual production process. If you're travelling through Pampanga, you may spot street vendors selling green rice in bilaos or flat baskets. These vendors often sell duman near churches or marketplaces. It can be eaten plain and munched on like popcorn. It can also be snacked on in spoonfuls with sugar, or made into rice cakes.

Kapampangans also like adding duman to other dishes like fresh carabao's milk or hot chocolate as a breakfast cereal, or even ice cream. Sta. Rita, Pampanga is known as the best producer of duman. In fact, the region holds a yearly festival dedicated to this simple-looking treat. The festival started when the community found themselves gathered in the streets, pounding away the duman with their large wood mortars at two o'clock in the morning. To the local folk, duman can be bought at PhP 40 by the glass. However, it is

amazing to learn that duman is actually exported to other parts of the country and the world at around \$35 a kilo.

To get a taste of this green gold, visit the Sta. Rita Duman festival on the first Saturday of December. There are also establishments in Angeles City and in San Juan, Pampanga that serve duman rice. Susie's Cuisine in Angeles and Butchie's Recipes in La Moderna in San Juan serve small amounts of plain duman and duman suman (green rice cakes). Harvested and processed through the end of December, duman is usually eaten with fresh carabao (water buffalo) milk for breakfast or stirred into tsokolate (drinking chocolate made with Philippine cacao).

In Santa Rita, a Pampangan municipality and the epicenter of duman production, the eagerly awaited specialty is honored annually with its own festival. Years ago, during duman season, Santa Rita's streets rang daily with the "tok-tok" of baseball bat-sized wooden pestles hitting meter-high mortars as lacatan malutu, a red-husked variety of glutinous rice, was transformed into duman. Nowadays, only a few barangay (the smallest Philippine administrative unit, something along the lines of a district or village) engage in the laborious and time-consuming production process.

Most Filipinos have never tasted duman. Once word gets out that harvest is near, in-the-know locals place their orders, leaving little for the open market. And it's expensive — up to 30 times the cost of regular rice per kilo. Yet Santa Rita's duman producers, motivated less by profit than by the desire to keep a local tradition alive, do little better than break even after covering production costs. Butchie's Recipes of la Moderna (Ground Level Health Cube

Building, 226 Wilson Street, San Juan City, Pampanga) also has a small amount for sale but it goes quickly.

This town's 10th Duman Festival is set on December 3, 2012, highlighting local delicacies like a night of dining and music in front of the Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish Church here. "Arti. StaRita" started the festival in 2002, which originated from the long standing tradition of pounding and winnowing unripe glutinous rice (lacatan) and turned into a light pale gold or green delicacy called "duman." The festival features alfresco dining in front of the Sta. Rita Church patio where rows and rows of delicacy stalls would sell various pastries and native dishes of the town with duman being the major highlight.

The food sold during the festival would include native pastry attractions of the town like sansrival, masa podrida, mamon and mamon tostado. Sta. Rita town is known as a pastry town with a strong culinary tradition. The festival has attracted a steady following of local and international tourists. ArtiSta. Rita that will present their latest musical "Ing Tauling Sarsuela." Different grades of duman, the star of the festival celebration, will also be sold in the event. Traditionally regarded as a Christmas delicacy, duman is eaten with hot chocolate or milk as additive or accompanying drink.

Duman is relatively expensive. Food critic Claude tayag explains that unlike the regular rice variety, which can be planted and harvested three times a year, duman can only be harvested in the cool air of November and December, otherwise it will not be a bountiful one. For every hectare (San Agustin and Santa Monica), a farmer can produce only a maximum of 4.5

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cavans of duman, while a maximum of 300 cavans can be harvested from the regular rice variety. Duman prices range from P600 to P1, 000 per kilo depending on the quality.