

NAME OF THE ELEMENT: TRADITIONAL FOOD OF GHANA: “GROUNDNUT OIL”

DOMAIN: SOCIAL PRACTICES, RITES AND RITUALS

COMMUNITY: COMMUNITIES WITHIN MOLE DAGBANI

REGION: NORTHERN REGION

The ICH element is called “Suna kpaan” (Groundnut Oil), a locally produced oil made by the indigenous people of Gambaga, Karaga, Nalerigu, and other Northern communities of Ghana. It is classified under the domain of Social Practices, Rites, and Rituals due to its cultural significance and traditional production methods.

The practice of making Suna kpaan is closely associated with the Mole Dagbani communities, specifically in Mangashri Fong, Gambaga. It is a popular and widely used oil in the community, both for cooking and other local practices. Suna kpaan is made using roasted groundnuts, dry pepper, mosori, and kanafari. The groundnuts are first spread on a mat and threshed with a wooden slap to remove their covers, then winnowed. The nuts are milled into a paste, which is then placed in a wooden mortar for stirring. A salt solution is added intermittently as the paste thickens. After continued stirring, the paste turns golden, and oil starts to separate. The oil is collected after the paste is turned in the mortar, and more oil is extracted by squeezing the remaining paste on a knead slab.

The primary practitioner of this traditional oil-making process is Madam Adama Azara, a skilled community member. Her daughters, Bilkis Adam and Shafawu Adam, also participate in the preparation, assisting with the stirring and oil extraction, thereby contributing to the transmission of the practice. The language involved in the practice of Suna kpaan is Mampruli, which plays an important role in the community’s cultural practices and the passing down of knowledge related to the oil production.

Tangible elements associated with the production of Suna kpaan include cooking tools such as frying pans, tripod stoves, firewood, basins or bowls, knead slabs, calabashes, and mortars and pestles. These items are essential in every step of the oil-making process.

The intangible elements tied to the practice include a strong sense of community interaction and the preservation of indigenous knowledge, which is passed down through generations. The process is also a significant part of local cultural rituals, reinforcing the community’s social fabric.

Currently, there are no major threats to the continued enactment and transmission of Suna kpaan in the community. However, imported cooking oils pose a challenge to the traditional oil-making practice, as they are becoming more readily available and affordable.

There are no notable threats to the sustainability of access to tangible elements or resources associated with the oil-making process, as the materials used are locally sourced and readily available.

The viability of other intangible heritage elements associated with Suna kpaan remains stable, as the practice is still well-maintained within the community. To safeguard the tradition and ensure its future transmission, partnerships with organizations such as the National Folklore Board (NFB), the National Commission on Culture (NCC), and UNESCO can be explored to support its preservation.

Verbal consent was obtained from the community members before the collection of information, ensuring that their rights and cultural practices were respected. There are no restrictions on the use or access to the collected information.

The resource persons involved in documenting this element include Madam Adama Azara, her daughters Bilkis Adam and Shafawu Adam, and Chief Yussif Adams, who acted as an interpreter. The data collection took place on 28th November 2023, in Mangashri Fong, Gambaga, from 8:15 AM to 11:10 PM.

CONSENT: COMMUNITIES WITHIN MOLE DAGBANI
SUBMITTED BY: NATIONAL FOLKLORE BOARD