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Ramadan-cuttlefish

GRILLED CUTTLEFISH OF RAMADAN NIGHTS

KUCHING, Dec 30 (Bernama) -- One activity that livens up Ramadan nights in Sarawak is grilled cuttlefish business.

It appears all over the state during the fasting month. But here, the popular places are in the Malay areas such as Satok, Jalan Ajibah Abol, Petra Jaya and Kampung Pinang Jawa.

In these areas, one is sure to find stalls, offering grilled cuttlefish or, as Sarawak Malays call it, "sutong tutok" or "sutong tunok".

Many grilled cuttlefish sellers are youngmen like Emeran Bueng, 28, of Taman Perumahan Rakyat, Petra Jaya. He never misses selling grilled cuttlefish during the Ramadan fasting month to find additional income.

"The grilled cuttlefish is sold between 50sen and RM3 a piece depending on the size," he told Bernama.

Emeran said he had been selling grilled cuttlefish for 10 years and it provided him extra RM500 for the Hari Raya.

To start a business, one needs dried cuttlefish of course, an iron hammer, grill and the "sambal" gravy.

The cuttlefish is grilled for a few minutes, then soften with the hammer to make it easier to chew.

It is then served with the "sambal", a mixture of dried chillies, onions and garlic, diluted in vinegar, or as some preferred, in ketchup with pounded ground nuts.

Hamzah Bujang, 29, who sells grilled cuttlefish at Kampung Astana, said selling grilled cuttlefish had turned into a tradition of sorts for the Sarawak Malays during the Ramadan.

"No one knows how it started but it was already on when I was a kid," said Hamzah who shares business with his friend, Zailani Ariffin, 34.

They also made about RM500 each from the grilled cuttlefish, a favourite with many Sarawakians, young and old.

A customer, Awang Mahathir Awang Johari, 12, said he loved grilled cuttlefish because the sampal was just delicious.

A check by Bernama showed fewer stalls this year compared to in the past.

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