



UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES
Alubijid | Balubal | Cagayan de Oro | Claveria | Jasaan | Oroquieta | Panaon | Villanueva

PROJECT PROPOSAL

SQUASH CHICHARON: A LOCAL, HEALTHY SNACK ALTERNATIVE

BFPT 3A
GROUP 1

GRACE C. HERMOSADA
PRINCESS GRACE A. ABASTILLAS
MARIEL B. CADUYAG
ANGEL MAE D. DATUIN
JASON C. FRANCISCO
HAROLD L. LUSTRE
DIANA ROSE SAGAIRAN

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INTRODUCTION

Squash, known locally as *kalabasa*, is a highly nutritious vegetable widely grown in Poblacion, Claveria, Misamis Oriental. Known for its mild flavor and versatile uses in Filipino cuisine, squash is packed with essential nutrients like beta-carotene (a precursor to vitamin A), vitamin C, fiber, and various minerals that support overall health. This nutritional profile makes squash an excellent choice for creating a wholesome snack. Its high fiber content aids digestion and gives a feeling of fullness, while its low-fat content aligns with health-conscious dietary needs.

Recognizing these health benefits, the team saw an opportunity to develop Squash Chicharon as a nutritious alternative to traditional pork chicharon, a popular but often high-fat snack. While traditional chicharon is beloved for its crunch and savory taste, its high fat and cholesterol content can limit its appeal, particularly for those focused on healthier eating habits. In contrast, squash-based chicharon would provide the same satisfying crunch with significantly lower fat and more nutrients like fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Given the abundant supply of squash in the region, this project not only leverages local resources but also supports sustainable agriculture in Claveria. By choosing squash as the main ingredient for this healthy snack, the team aims to offer a tasty, affordable, and nutritious option that caters to a growing demand for better-for-you snacks in the community and beyond.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- **Health Risks of Traditional Pork Chicharon:** Traditional pork chicharon is high in cholesterol and fat, posing health risks for consumers, particularly those with dietary restrictions or who are health conscious.
- **Limited Alternatives:** Health-conscious consumers seeking crunchy, savory snacks have limited options, as most available alternatives do not match the taste and texture of traditional chicharon.
- **Demand for Healthier Snacks:** There is a growing demand for nutritious, low-fat snack options that cater to healthier lifestyles without compromising on taste.
- **Support for Local Squash Farmers:** By introducing a squash-based chicharon, this product not only meets consumer demand but also supports local farmers, creating economic benefits for the community.
- **Promotion of Healthy Eating Habits:** A plant-based chicharon made from squash promotes healthier eating habits, aligning with consumer preferences for more nutritious, plant-based food choices.

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to:

- a. develop a crispy, flavorful squash chicharon that appeals to health-conscious consumers and traditional chicharon enthusiasts;
- b. promote the use of locally sourced squash, thereby supporting local agriculture and providing added value to this crop;
- c. offer a healthier, cholesterol-free alternative to traditional snacks that can be enjoyed by a wide range of consumers; and

- d. introduce squash chicharon to local markets and expand its reach to nearby towns.

PROJECT SCOPE AND APPROACH

Scope

This project focuses on the research, development, and production of squash chicharon using locally sourced squash. The scope includes recipe formulation, product testing, packaging design, and distribution within Poblacion, Claveria, and surrounding areas.

Approach

- a. Recipe Development: Develop a recipe that achieves the desired texture and flavor, using minimal oil to keep the fat content low.
- b. Local Sourcing: Collaborate with local farmers to ensure a consistent supply of high-quality squash.
- c. Product Testing: Conduct taste tests within the local community to gather feedback and refine the product.
- d. Market Introduction: Launch the product in local markets and through retail outlets, supported by a marketing campaign highlighting the health benefits of squash chicharon.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

The demand for healthier snack options is steadily rising as consumers become increasingly aware of the health risks associated with high-fat, high-cholesterol foods. Traditional pork chicharon, while popular for its taste and texture, poses significant

health concerns, particularly for individuals managing cholesterol levels and heart health. Existing healthier snack options, such as vegetable chips or baked snacks, often fall short of replicating the unique crunch and savory experience of chicharon, leaving a gap in the market for a satisfying yet health-conscious alternative.

Our project proposes a squash-based chicharon as an innovative solution to these challenges. By utilizing locally sourced squash, this product not only offers a cholesterol-free, low-fat alternative to traditional chicharon but also aligns with health-conscious trends that emphasize fresh, minimally processed, and locally sourced ingredients. Additionally, this project supports local farmers, creating a new market for squash that enhances economic stability in the community.

Squash chicharon also addresses the limitations of existing healthy snacks in terms of affordability and accessibility. Many alternative snacks are either imported or highly processed, making them costly and potentially less appealing to consumers looking for local, natural options. By developing and promoting squash chicharon, the team are not only meeting consumer demand for healthier choices but also contributing to sustainable agricultural practices and local economic growth.

TECHNICAL BACKGROUND

The production of squash chicharon involves slicing squash into thin pieces, seasoning, and frying them using a technique that retains their crispiness while minimizing oil absorption. This process ensures that the snack remains low in fat and calories. The product will be available in multiple flavors, including classic, spicy, and garlic, to appeal to a broad range of tastes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Squash chicharon offers a healthier snack alternative that retains the crispy texture of traditional pork chicharon. The snack is rich in fiber, vitamins A and C, and low in calories, making it an attractive option for health-conscious consumers. The use of locally sourced squash promotes sustainability and supports local farmers, creating a positive impact on the community.

Feasibility Confirmation

- Initial testing of squash as a base for chicharon has shown promising results, with prototypes demonstrating an ability to achieve the desired texture and flavor profile. Through small-scale trials, the team will further confirm that the production process is sustainable and cost-effective, ensuring that the end product can meet both quality and economic standards.

Specific Benefits

- **Health Benefits:** Squash chicharon is low in fat, cholesterol-free, and nutrient-dense, addressing the need for a healthier alternative to traditional pork chicharon.
- **Economic Benefits:** By creating demand for squash as a snack ingredient, this project supports local squash farmers, contributing to the local economy and providing them with a stable income source.
- **Cultural Relevance:** The product draws upon traditional Filipino snack preferences, offering a familiar but healthier alternative that respects cultural taste preferences while promoting wellness.

Consequences of Not Implementing

- Without introducing this healthier alternative, consumers will continue to rely on high-fat, high-cholesterol snacks, which can contribute to health risks such as obesity and heart disease. Additionally, the opportunity to boost local agriculture and sustainability in food production will be missed.

Methodology

- **Product Development:** Refining the recipe to ensure squash chicharon has a desirable taste, texture, and appearance similar to traditional chicharon.
- **Testing and Feedback:** Conducting taste tests within the community and gathering feedback to make any necessary adjustments.
- **Production Process Optimization:** Ensuring that production can be scaled while maintaining quality and efficiency.
- **Market Introduction:** Utilizing local markets and digital platforms to introduce the product, accompanied by educational materials on its health benefits.

Potential Obstacles and Concessions

- **Consumer Resistance:** Given that vegetable-based snacks may be unfamiliar to some consumers, extensive product testing and effective marketing strategies will be necessary to build acceptance. Providing sample tastings and highlighting the health benefits can help address initial reluctance.

- **Cost Sensitivity:** Since healthier snacks sometimes cost more to produce, the team will explore cost-cutting measures in packaging and bulk ingredient sourcing without compromising quality to keep the product affordable.

TARGET MARKET

The target market includes health-conscious consumers in Poblacion, Claveria, and neighboring towns, as well as individuals seeking alternatives to traditional high-fat snacks. The product will also appeal to schools, offices, and businesses that prioritize healthier food options.

TIMELINE AND BUDGET PLAN

Timeline

1. **Recipe Development and Testing (1-2 months)**
 - **Tasks:** Finalize recipe formulation, conduct initial sensory tests, assess texture and flavor profiles, gather feedback, and adjust.
 - **Resources:** Test kitchen facilities, ingredients (squash, oil, seasonings), culinary expertise.
2. **Packaging and Branding (1 month)**
 - **Tasks:** Design packaging with nutrition information and cultural branding, select eco-friendly materials, and develop a marketing concept that highlights the health and cultural aspects of the product.
 - **Resources:** Graphic designer, packaging supplier, branding consultant.

3. Initial Production and Market Testing (2 months)

- Tasks: Small-scale production run, quality control checks, product sampling, conduct focus group feedback, and adjust based on consumer reactions.
- Resources: Small-scale production equipment, focus group facilities, raw materials for a small batch, and feedback mechanisms.

4. Full Product Launch (6 months from project start):

- Tasks: Ramp up production, distribute products to initial retailers, initiate marketing campaign, and monitor customer feedback for potential improvements.
- Resources: Distribution channels, marketing team, packaging inventory.

TASK	MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4	MONTH 5	MONTH 6
Recipe development and Testing	█					
Packaging and Branding			█			
Initial Production and Market Testing				█		
Full Product Launch						█

Budget

Item	Description	Total Cost
Raw Materials		
- Squash	Fresh squash for chicharon	₱4,000.00
- Oil	For frying	₱3,000.00
- Rice	Basic ingredient for chicharon	₱1,200.00
- Beef Cube	For flavoring	₱2,500.00
- Salt	Add to chicharon taste	₱100.00

- Water	For cooking and preparation	₱500.00
- Seasonings	Additional Spices	₱2,000.00
Packaging and Branding		
- Packaging Materials	Eco-friendly bags and labeling	₱15,000.00
- Branding and Logo Design	Professional branding designer	₱6,000.00
Production Equipment		
- Frying Pan	Large industrial frying pans	₱10,000.00
- Dehydrator Machine	For drying squash slices before frying	₱20,000.00
- Blending Machine	For blending seasonings and ingredients	₱6,000.00
- Cutting Tools	Knives, peelers, and slicers	₱3,000.00
- Measuring Tools	Scales, measuring cups/spoons	₱3,000.00
Marketing and Promotion		
- Advertising	Social media ads and online promotions	₱12,000.00
- Product Sampling	Free samples for target audience feedback	₱10,000.00
- Marketing Collaterals	Flyers, posters, and other printed materials	₱7,000.00
Total Estimated Budget		₱105,300.00

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS

Grace C. Hermosada

- Role: Project Lead
- Skills: Strategic Planning, team coordination, quality control, and product design

Princess Grace A. Abastillas

- Role: Marketing and Branding Specialist
- Skills: Branding, social media marketing, content creation, customer engagement, and campaign management

Maribel B. Caduyag

- Role: Supply Chain Coordinator
- Skills: Supplier negotiation, inventory management, logistics planning, and vendor relations

Angel Mae D. Datuin

- Role: Production Supervisor
- Skills: Production scheduling, process optimization, equipment handling, and team management

Jason C. Francisco

- Role: Financial Analyst
- Skills: Budgeting, cost control, financial analysis, and reporting

Harold L. Lustre

- Role: Quality Assurance Manager
- Skills: Quality control, food safety compliance, HACCP implantation, and testing procedures

Diana Rose Sagairan

- Role: Research and Development Specialist
- Skills: Product Formulation, ingredient testing, sensory evaluation, and nutritional analysis

CONCLUSION

The Squash Chicharon project represents an innovative approach to providing a healthy, locally-sourced snack alternative that meets the rising demand for nutritious food options. By leveraging the unique properties of squash, the project not only introduces a sustainable, eco-friendly product but also strengthens the local agricultural sector through partnerships with Filipino farmers.

This initiative highlights a commitment to quality, community support, and the promotion of native ingredients, which align with current consumer preferences for wholesome and ethically produced foods. Investing in this project offers an opportunity to contribute to an emerging market with strong growth potential, while also supporting local industry and sustainable practices.

Support for the Squash Chicharon project is an investment in the future of Filipino food innovation—one that combines health-conscious choices with a positive impact on local economies.