

Philippine Regional Cuisine: Region IX

Zamboanga Peninsula

A cultural crossroads where Subanen, Tausug, Yakan, Chavacano, and Muslim traditions converge into one of the Philippines' most distinctive culinary landscapes.

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Introduction to Region IX



Located in **western Mindanao**, the Zamboanga Peninsula serves as a cultural bridge between the Philippines and neighboring Southeast Asian countries.

Composed of three provinces and one highly urbanized city:

- Zamboanga del Norte
- Zamboanga del Sur
- Zamboanga Sibugay
- Zamboanga City — *"Asia's Latin City"*

Its cuisine reflects centuries of interaction among indigenous peoples, Spanish settlers, Chinese traders, and Southeast Asian communities.

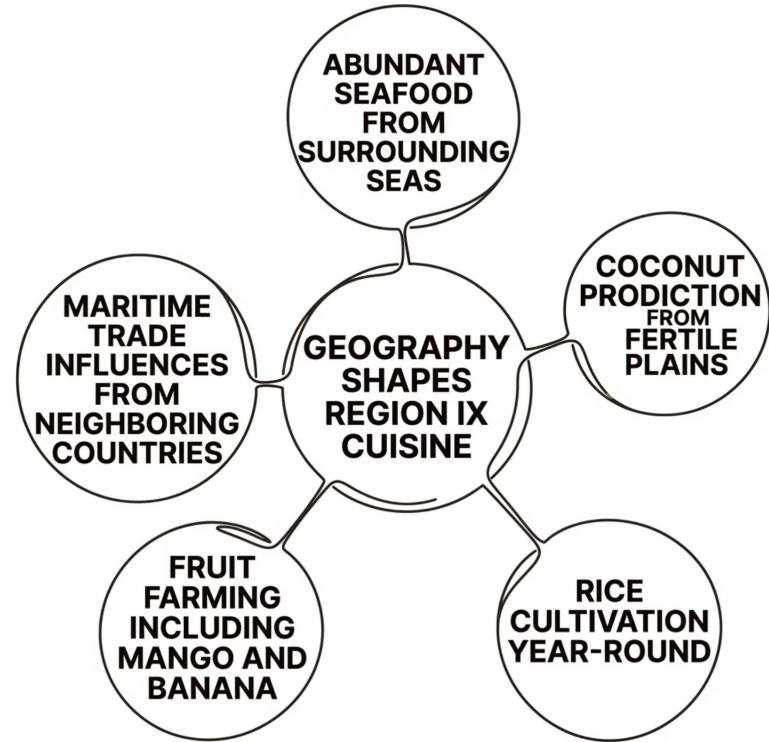
Geography & Its Influence on Cuisine

Strategic Location

Surrounded by the **Sulu Sea**, **Moro Gulf**, and **Celebes Sea**, the region's long coastlines, river systems, coral reefs, and fertile plains shape what ends up on the plate.

Climate

Tropical climate with moderate rainfall supports year-round farming and fishing.





Culture, Traditions & Festivals

Ethnolinguistic Groups

Chavacano, Subanen, Tausug, Sama-Bajau, Yakan, Cebuano, and Muslim communities

Key Values

Hospitality, religious traditions (Islam & Christianity), and a maritime lifestyle shape food customs

Festivals

Hermosa (Zamboanga City), Megayon (Zamboanga del Norte), Sibug-Sibug (Zamboanga Sibugay)

Agricultural & Fishery Products

Crops & Livestock

- Rice, corn, coconut, rubber, cassava
- Banana, mango, oil palm, coffee, cacao
- Cattle, carabao, goats, chicken

Fishery Products

Region IX is among the country's **major producers** of fishery products and sardines.

- Tuna, sardines, shrimp, squid, shellfish
- **Curacha** (spanner crab) — a regional icon
- Seaweed



Traditional Food Preparation Methods



Grilling

Fish, chicken, and seafood grilled over charcoal — the base of dishes like **Piyanggang**



Stewing & Simmering

Used for beef, seafood, and Muslim-inspired recipes like **Beef Kulma**



Coconut-Based Cooking

Coconut milk and cream enrich seafood and vegetable dishes throughout the region



Smoking & Drying

Traditional preservation methods for fish and seafood, extending shelf life and adding flavor

Zamboanga del Norte & Zamboanga Sibugay

Zamboanga del Norte

Known for seafood, coconut dishes, and indigenous influences.

- **Curacha with Alavar Sauce** — spanner crab in coconut-spice sauce
- **Sinuglaw** — grilled pork and kinilaw combination
- Seafood platters & native rice cakes

Zamboanga Sibugay

Celebrated for seafood and agricultural products.

- **Grilled Tuna** — freshly caught, charcoal-grilled
- **Kinilaw** — fish cured with vinegar, ginger, and spices
- Seafood soup & coconut-based desserts

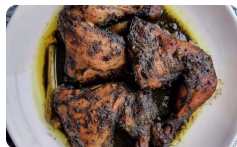


Zamboanga del Sur & Zamboanga City



Satti

Grilled beef or chicken skewers with spicy sauce and rice — a beloved breakfast and street food



Piyanggang

Chicken cooked with burnt coconut and spices — a signature Muslim-influenced dish



Pastil

Rice topped with shredded meat, wrapped in banana leaves — simple, flavorful, portable



Knickerbocker

Zamboanga City's iconic colorful fruit-and-ice cream dessert — a Chavacano culinary treasure

Key Ingredients & Dining Practices

Famous Culinary Ingredients

Ingredient	Role
Coconut	Sauces and desserts
Curacha	Regional seafood icon
Tuna	Major fishery product
Spices	Essential in Muslim cuisine
Banana Leaves	Traditional food wrapper

Dining Etiquette

- Meals are communal — shared among family and guests
- Rice accompanies every meal
- Seafood is frequently served
- Halal practices observed in Muslim communities

□ Hospitality, respect for elders, and cultural preservation are core culinary values.

Why Region IX Cuisine Matters

Cultural Preservation

Safeguards Muslim, Chavacano, and indigenous food traditions for future generations

Centuries of Exchange

Reflects the blending of Spanish, Chinese, indigenous, and Southeast Asian influences

Economic Backbone

Supports thriving fisheries and agriculture sectors across the peninsula

Culinary Bridge

Demonstrates how food connects cultures — enriching the diversity of Philippine gastronomy

