



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***BIOTRANSFORMATION OF RAMBUTAN (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.)
SEED INTO A COCOA POWDER-LIKE PRODUCT***

CHAI KONG FEI

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By

CHAI KONG FEI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra
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Philosophy**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**BIOTRANSFORMATION OF RAMBUTAN (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.) SEED
INTO A COCOA POWDER-LIKE PRODUCT**

By

CHAI KONG FEI

November 2017

Chairman: Professor Hasanah Mohd Ghazali, PhD
Faculty : Food Science and Technology

Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.) is an exotic fruit originally found in Southeast Asia. There is a glut of rambutan every year which leads to wastage. A novel way to reduce wastage is to convert rambutan seeds into a cocoa powder-like product. Thus, the objectives of this study were to select the best rambutan variety for fermentation by comparing the physicochemical properties of pulp and seed of eleven varieties of rambutan fruit with those of cocoa pulp and seed, to determine the physicochemical properties of rambutan fruit sweatings, seed and seed fat during solid state fermentation at different fermentation times and turning intervals, to optimize the roasting process of rambutan seed from fermented and dried rambutan fruit and determine the physicochemical properties of rambutan seed powder, and to determine the toxicology safety of the roasted rambutan seed powder using brine shrimp lethality assay.

Eleven varieties of rambutan were examined in this study, and most of the physicochemical properties of a wild type rambutan, WT1, were found to be similar to those of cocoa bean. However, due to subsequent unavailability of the variety, rambutan Clone R4 was chosen to be the best variety to be investigated on the effect of fermentation as its titratable acidity was not significantly different from that of cocoa bean and the total sugar content of the pulp is comparable to that of cocoa pulp. Besides, the seed had the highest crude fat content (39.13 %) and lowest saponin content (14.27 mg soya saponin/100 g).

Peeled rambutan fruit Clone R4 was subjected to natural fermentation in covered perforated plastic boxes for 0, 1, 3, 5, 7 and 10 days at room temperature. Fermentation time significantly affected the physicochemical properties of sweatings (liquid released naturally from the fruit), seed and seed fat. The study showed that 8 days of fermentation was regarded as sufficient to produce well fermented seeds. The effect of

turning intervals during fermentation for 8 days did not lead to significant changes in the properties of sweatings. Also, there was no significant difference on most of the physicochemical properties of the fermented seeds, between 24 and 48 hours of turning intervals. Considering practical aspects of fermentation in both small and large scale contexts, turning at 48 hours intervals for eight days is recommended. Fermentation for 8 days is also recommended as it served to eliminate microorganisms that are potentially harmful.

Roasting conditions (time and temperature) of seeds after fermentation for 8 days with a 48-hour turning interval significantly affected the physicochemical properties of the fermented seeds. GCMS analysis showed that roasted seed powder contained pyrazines, indicating that the powder has aroma and flavor similar to that of cocoa powder. Results from the brine shrimp lethality assay showed that the LC_{50} of roasted rambutan seed powder extract was $7.07 \times 10^4 \mu\text{g/mL}$ and is considered as non-toxic. The overall findings of the study indicate that it is possible to obtain a cocoa powder-like product from the seeds of rambutan that had undergone fermentation that is relatively safe for consumption.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia Sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

BIOTRANSFORMASI BIJI RAMBUTAN (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.) KEPADA PRODUK SEPERTI SERBUK KOKO

Oleh

CHAI KONG FEI

November 2017

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Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum* L.) adalah sejenis buah eksotik yang berasal dari Asia Tenggara. Buah rambutan yang berlebihan telah menyebabkan pembaziran setiap tahun. Salah satu cara novel untuk mengurangkan pembaziran adalah dengan menghasilkan produk seperti serbuk koko dengan menggunakan biji rambutan. Oleh itu, objektif kajian ini adalah memilih varieti rambutan yang paling sesuai untuk proses fermentasi dengan membandingkan ciri-ciri fizikokimia isi dan biji sebelas varieti rambutan dengan isi dan biji koko, menentukan ciri-ciri fizikokimia cecair fermentasi, biji dan lemak biji rambutan semasa fermentasi substrat pepejal pada masa fermentasi dan selang pengacauan yang berbeza, mengoptimumkan proses pemanggang biji rambutan daripada buah rambutan yang telah difermentasi dan dikeringkan dan menentukan ciri-ciri fizikokimia serbuk biji rambutan, serta menentukan toksikologi keselamatan serbuk biji rambutan yang telah dipanggang dengan menggunakan ujian ketosikan anak udang.

Sebelas varieti rambutan telah dikaji dan didapati bahawa kebanyakan ciri-ciri fizikokimia rambutan jenis liar, WT1, sama dengan koko. Akan tetapi, disebabkan ketidakdapat WT1 pada musim tuai yang seterusnya, rambutan klon R4 telah dipilih sebagai varieti yang paling baik untuk dikaji kerana keasidan tertitratnya tidak berbeza secara signifikan dengan koko dan jumlah gula isinya sebanding dengan koko. Selain itu, biji klon R4 mempunyai kandungan lemak mentah yang tertinggi (39.13 %) dan kandungan saponin yang terendah (14.27 mg soya saponin/100 g).

Buah rambutan Klon R4 yang telah dikupas difermentasi secara semula jadi dalam bekas plastik selama 0, 1, 3, 5, 7 dan 10 hari pada suhu bilik. Masa fermentasi menjejaskan ciri-ciri fizikokimia cecair fermentasi, biji dan lemak biji secara signifikan. Keputusan menunjukkan fermentasi sebanyak 8 hari adalah memadai untuk

menghasilkan biji yang difermentasi dengan baik. Selang pengacauan tidak memberi kesan yang signifikan kepada ciri-ciri fizikokimia cecair fermentasi semasa buah difermentasi selama 8 hari. Di samping itu, tiada perbezaan signifikan antara selang pengacauan 24 dan 48 jam pada ciri-ciri fizikokimia biji yang difermentasi, maka selang pengacauan 48 jam untuk fermentasi sebanyak 8 hari adalah disyorkan. Fermentasi selama 8 hari adalah disyorkan kerana ia dapat menghapuskan mikroorganisma yang berbahaya.

Keadaan pemanggaan (masa dan suhu) menjejaskan ciri-ciri fizikokimia biji yang telah difermentasi selama 8 hari dengan selang pengacauan 48 jam secara signifikan. Analisis GCMS menunjukkan serbuk biji yang telah dipanggang mengandungi pyrazines. Ini menunjukkan serbuk biji yang telah dipanggang mempunyai aroma dan rasa serupa dengan serbuk koko. Ujian ketoksikan anak udang menunjukkan LC_{50} ekstrak serbuk biji rambutan panggang ialah $7.07 \times 10^4 \mu\text{g/mL}$ dan dianggap sebagai tidak toksik. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan produk seperti serbuk koko dapat dihasilkan daripada biji rambutan yang telah difermentasi dan ia adalah selamat untuk dimakan.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	Page
<i>ABSTRAK</i>	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
APPROVAL	v
DECLARATION	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xix
	xxiii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	5
Rambutan	5
Characteristics and origin of rambutan	5
Exports of fresh and processed rambutan fruit	6
Nutritional value of rambutan fruit and seed	8
Applications of rambutan	8
Cocoa	9
Cocoa bean processing	11
Fermentation	12
Biochemical changes during fermentation	13
Factors affecting fermentation	16
Fermentation methods	18
Endpoint of fermentation	20
Drying	21
Roasting	22
Whole bean roasting	24
Nib roasting	25
Cocoa mass roasting	25
Cocoa butter and cocoa butter alternatives	25
Palm kernel oil and palm oil	26
Mango seed kernel fat	28
Kokum butter	28
Shea butter	29
Rambutan seed fat	29
Relationship between rambutan and cocoa bean fermentation	30
3 PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF RAMBUTAN FRUIT PULP AND SEED	31
Introduction	31
Materials and Methods	32
Sample collection and sampling procedures	32
Determination of the proportion of different parts of fruit	32
Characterization of rambutan fruit pulp	32

Determination of pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids	32
Determination of sugar composition	33
Determination of organic acid composition and ascorbic content	35
Characterization of rambutan seed and seed fat	36
Extraction and determination of crude fat content	36
Determination of iodine value and free fatty acid contents	36
Determination of fatty acid composition	37
Determination of triacylglycerol profile	37
Determination of thermal behavior	38
Determination of solid fat index	38
Determination of saponin content	39
Determination of tannin content	39
Statistical analysis	40
Results and Discussion	40
Proportion of different parts of rambutan fruit	40
Physicochemical properties of rambutan pulp	41
pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids	41
Sugar composition and content	42
Organic acid composition and ascorbic acid content	44
Physicochemical properties of rambutan seed	50
Crude fat content, iodine value, free fatty acid content	50
Fatty acid composition	51
Triacylglycerol profile	52
Thermal profile	57
Solid fat index	58
Saponin and tannin contents	64
Comparison of the physicochemical properties of 11 varieties of rambutan with those of cocoa pulp and seed	65
Conclusion	68
4 PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF SWEATINGS, SEED AND SEED FAT DURING SOLID SUBSTRATE FERMENTATION OF RAMBUTAN FRUIT	69
Introduction	69
Materials and Methods	70
Materials	70
Sample selection and collection for fermentation	70
Fermentation of rambutan fruit	70
Characterization of fermentation sweatings	72
Determination of pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids of sweatings	72
Determination of sugar, organic acid and ascorbic acid contents of sweatings	72
Characterization of fermented fruit	72
Measurements of cut test	73

	Determination of fermentation index	73
	Determination of color	73
	Statistical analysis	74
	Results and Discussion	74
	Changes in environment temperature, relative humidity, and internal and external fermentation mass temperatures of fruit mass during fermentation	74
	Physicochemical properties of fermentation sweatings	75
	Yield, pH, titratable acidity, total soluble solids, sugars, organic acids and ascorbic acid contents of sweatings	75
	Properties of fermented rambutan seeds	79
	Cut test	80
	Fermentation index	83
	Color	84
	pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids	87
	Sugar composition and content	88
	Organic acid and ascorbic acid contents	89
	Crude fat and free fatty acid contents	91
	Fatty acid composition	92
	Triacylglycerol profile	93
	Thermal profile	96
	Solid fat index	100
	Saponin and tannin contents	102
	Conclusion	103
5	EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT TURNING INTERVALS ON THE PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES OF RAMBUTAN SWEATINGS, SEEDS AND SEED FAT DURING SOLID SUBSTRATE FERMENTATION	105
	Introduction	105
	Materials and Methods	106
	Materials	106
	Fermentation of rambutan fruit	106
	Characterization of fermentation sweatings	106
	Characterization of fermented fruit	106
	Culture-dependent microbiological analysis during rambutan fermentation	106
	Statistical analysis	107
	Results and Discussion	107
	Changes in environment temperature, relative humidity, and internal and external fermentation mass temperatures of fruit mass during fermentation	107
	Characterization of fermentation sweatings	109
	Yield, pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids	109
	Sugar composition and content	112
	Organic acid and ascorbic acid contents	114
	Properties of fermented seeds	117
	Cut test	117

	Fermentation index	120
	Color	120
	pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids	124
	Sugar composition and content	125
	Organic acid and ascorbic acid contents	127
	Crude fat and free fatty acid contents	130
	Fatty acid composition	130
	Triacylglycerol profile	131
	Thermal profile	131
	Solid fat index	135
	Saponin and tannin contents	137
	Microbiological analysis	138
	Conclusion	139
6	PHYSICOCHEMICAL PROPERTIES, VOLATILE PROFILE AND TOXICITY OF ROASTED FERMENTED RAMBUTAN SEED	141
	Introduction	141
	Materials and Methods	142
	Materials	142
	Fermentation of rambutan fruit	142
	Drying of fermented rambutan fruit	142
	Roasting of dried fermented rambutan fruit	143
	Experimental design	144
	Optimization and validation procedures	145
	Physicochemical properties of roasted rambutan seed	145
	Percentage of seed and waste	146
	Percentage of loss of moisture	146
	Total phenolic content	146
	Extraction of volatile compounds	147
	Separation and identification of volatile compounds	147
	Toxicological assessment using brine shrimp lethality assay	147
	Statistical analysis	149
	Results and Discussion	150
	Effect of roasting time and temperature on L*, a*, b* values and total phenolic content of fermented rambutan seed	150
	Percentage of seed and waste	163
	Moisture loss	163
	Crude fat content	166
	Fatty acid composition of fat from rambutan seed powder	166
	Triacylglycerol profile of fat from rambutan seed powder	170
	Thermal profile of fat from rambutan seed powder	170
	Solid fat index of fat from rambutan seed powder	176
	Volatile compounds in roasted rambutan seed powder	179
	Toxicological assessment using brine shrimp lethality assay	182

	Conclusion	185
7	SUMMARY, GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	186
	REFERENCES	188
	APPENDICES	215
	BIODATA OF STUDENT	253
	LIST OF PUBLICATIONS	254



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1.1 Composition of rambutan per 100 g edible portion	2
2.1 Supply and utilization accounts of rambutan fruits in Malaysia on 2013, 2014, and 2015	6
2.2 Harvested area and total yield of rambutan fruits in Thailand from 2008-2013	6
2.3 Export volume and value of rambutan fruits in Thailand from 2008-2013	8
2.4 Composition of cocoa pulp (g.100 g ⁻¹ fresh weight pulp)	10
2.5 Bean composition of unfermented West African (Forastero) cocoa	10
2.6 Cocoa butter alternatives: examples, properties and composition	27
3.1 Relative percent of different parts of rambutan fruit	41
3.2 pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids of rambutan fruit	42
3.3 Calibration parameters for different sugars standards	44
3.4 Sugar contents of rambutan fruit	44
3.5 Calibration parameters for different organic acids and ascorbic acid standards	46
3.6 Organic acid and ascorbic acid contents of rambutan fruit	47
3.7 Crude fat content, iodine value and free fatty acid contents of rambutan seed fats	51
3.8 Fatty acid composition of rambutan seed fats	53
3.9 Triacylglycerol composition of rambutan seed fats	55
3.10 Temperature of phase transition (T) and crystallization and melting enthalpies (ΔH) of rambutan seed fat	62
3.11 SFI of rambutan seed fat at human body temperature (37 °C)	64
3.12 Saponin and tannin contents in rambutan seed	65
3.13 Comparison of physicochemical properties of 11 varieties of rambutan to those of cocoa bean	67

4.1	Yield, pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids, sugars, organic acids and ascorbic acid contents of rambutan sweatings during fermentation	76
4.2	Effect of fermentation time on surface color and cut test score of dried rambutan seeds	83
4.3	Effect of fermentation time on color fractions absorbance values and fermentation index of rambutan seeds	83
4.4	L*, a* and b* values of fermented and dried fermented rambutan seeds	86
4.5	pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids of fermented rambutan seeds	87
4.6	Sugar contents of fermented rambutan seeds	88
4.7	Organic acid and ascorbic acid contents of fermented rambutan seeds	89
4.8	Crude fat, fat yield and free fatty acid contents of fermented rambutan seeds	92
4.9	Fatty acid composition of fermented rambutan seeds fat	94
4.10	Triacylglycerol composition of rambutan seeds fat at different fermentation times	95
4.11	Temperature of phase transition (T) and crystallization and melting enthalpies (ΔH) of fermented rambutan seeds fat	99
4.12	SFI of fermented seeds fat at human body temperature (37 °C)	102
4.13	Saponin and tannin contents of fermented rambutan seeds	103
5.1	Yield, pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids of rambutan sweatings	111
5.2	Sugars in rambutan sweatings	113
5.3	Organic acids and ascorbic acid in rambutan sweatings	115
5.4	Effect of mixing intervals on surface color and cut test score of dried rambutan seeds	120
5.5	Effect of mixing intervals on color fractions absorbance values and fermentation index of rambutan seeds	121
5.6	L*, a* and b* values of fermented and dried fermented rambutan seeds as affected by mixing intervals	123

5.7	Effect of mixing intervals on pH, titratable acidity and total soluble solids of fermented rambutan seeds	124
5.8	Effect of mixing intervals on sugar contents of fermented rambutan seeds	126
5.9	Effect of mixing intervals on organic acid and ascorbic acid contents of fermented rambutan seeds	128
5.10	Crude fat content, fat yield and free fatty acid content of fermented rambutan seeds with different mixing intervals	130
5.11	Fatty acid composition of fermented rambutan seed fat with different mixing intervals	132
5.12	Triacylglycerol composition of fermented rambutan seed fat with different mixing intervals	133
5.13	Temperature of phase transition (T) and crystallization and melting enthalpies (ΔH) of fermented rambutan seed fat	136
5.14	SFI of fermented seed fat at human body temperature (37 °C)	137
5.15	Saponin and tannin contents of fermented rambutan seeds	138
6.1	Central composite design for the independent variables	145
6.2	Effect of roasting time and temperature on the dependent variables	153
6.3	Regression coefficients, R ² , adjusted R ² , probability value and lack of fit for dependent variables	154
6.4	The significance of each independent variable effect indicated by F ratio and p value in the model	155
6.5	Experimental and predicted values for the response variables	164
6.6	Percentage of seed and waste, moisture loss and crude fat content of seed after roasted at different conditions	165
6.7	Fatty acid composition of fat from roasted rambutan seed powder	167
6.8	Triacylglycerol composition of fat from roasted rambutan seed powder	171
6.9	Temperature of phase transition (T) and crystallization and melting enthalpies (ΔH) of roasted rambutan seed fat	174
6.10	SFI of roasted seed fat at human body temperature (37 °C)	179

6.11	Identification of volatile compounds of rambutan seed after roasting at different conditions	180
6.12	Brine shrimp toxicity of roasted rambutan seed powder	184



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Rambutan fruit with red, yellow and orange yellow skin colors	1
1.2 Some commercial rambutan products	3
2.1 Probable geographical distribution of rambutan from the centres of origin	7
2.2 Cocoa bean processing	11
2.3 Wet beans	12
2.4 Cocoa seed and its parts	12
2.5 Cross section of cocoa bean	13
2.6 Changes in the cocoa beans during fermentation related to the cocoa flavor	14
2.7 Schematic illustration of a microbial succession during cocoa bean fermentation	15
2.8 Fermentation products of pulp sugar	15
2.9 Heap method	19
2.10 Tray method	19
2.11 Box method	20
2.12 Sun drying	22
3.1 Different varieties of rambutan used in the study	34
3.2 HPLC chromatograms of sugar standards (A) and sugars present in rambutan pulp of Clone R4 (B)	43
3.3 HPLC chromatograms of organic acid standards (A) and organic acids present in rambutan pulp of Clone R4 (B)	45
3.4 Verification of peaks 'a' (A) and 'b' (B) fractionated from rambutan pulp extract of Clone R4	48
3.5 Total ion current (TIC) of blank (solvent) and unknown compounds 'a' and 'b' (A) and chromatograms of extracted compound of unknown compounds 'a' (B) and 'b' (C) in rambutan pulp extract of Clone R4 using LCMS	49

3.6	Chemical structures of 2,3-dihydro-2-hydroxy-9-methoxy-7H-furo(3,2-g)(1)benzopyran-7-one (A) and 4-methylumbelliferyl acetate (B)	50
3.7	Representative HPLC chromatogram of triacylglycerols (TAG) in rambutan seed fat of Clone R10 (A) and palm olein (B)	54
3.8	Fatty acid profile of unknown TAG 'a' (A), 'b' (B), 'c' (C), 'd' (D) and 'e' (E) from Clone R4	56
3.9	Thermograms of seed fat of R3 (A), R4 (B), R7 (C), R10 (D), R153 (E), R156 (F), R169 (G), R191 (H), Sarjan (I), WT1 (J), WT2 (K)	59
3.10	SFI of seed fat of Clones R3, R4, R7 and R10 (A), Clones R153, 156, 169 and 191 (B) and Varieties of Sarjan, WT1 and WT2 (C)	63
4.1	Perforated fermentation container	71
4.2	Fermentation of rambutan in a perforated plastic box	71
4.3	Internal and external temperatures of fermentation mass during solid substrate fermentation	75
4.4	Sweatings of first day (A) and second day (B) collected in the lower container during fruit fermentation.	76
4.5	Effect of fermentation time on the concentrations of 2,3-dihydro-2-hydroxy-9-methoxy-7H-furo(3,2-g)(1)benzopyr-an-7-one and 4-methylumbelliferyl acetate (based on peak area) in the sweatings	79
4.6	Fermentation of rambutan fruit for 0 day (A), 1 day (B), 3 days (C), 5 days (D), 7 days (E) and 10 days (F)	80
4.7	Rambutan fruits after fermented for 10 days before drying (A) and after drying (B)	81
4.8	Lengthwise-cut dried rambutan seeds after 0 (A), 1(B), 3 (C), 5 (D), 7 (E) and 10 (F) days of fermentation	82
4.9	Rambutan seed powder from Portion 2 after 0 (A), 1 (C), 3 (E), 5 (G), 7 (I) and 10 (K) days of fermentation and dried rambutan seeds powder from Portion 1 after 0 (B), 1 (D), 3 (F), 5 (H), 7 (J) and 10 (L) days of fermentation	84
4.10	Effect of fermentation time on the concentrations of 2,3-dihydro-2-hydroxy-9-methoxy-7H-furo(3,2-g)(1)benzopyr-an-7-one and 4-methylumbelliferyl acetate (based on peak area) in the seeds	91

4.11	Thermograms of rambutan seeds fat after 0 day (A), 1 day (B), 3 days (C), 5 days (D), 7 days (E) and 10 days (F) of fermentation	97
4.12	SFI of rambutan seeds fat after 0 (A), 1 (B), 3 (C), 5 (D), 7 (E) and 10 (F) days of fermentation	101
5.1	Internal temperatures of fermentation mass during solid substrate fermentation	108
5.2	External temperatures of fermentation mass during solid substrate fermentation	109
5.3	HPLC chromatogram of sugar standards (A) and typical HPLC chromatogram of sugars in rambutan sweatings with mixing at every 48 hours (B)	112
5.4	HPLC chromatogram of organic acids and ascorbic acid standards (A) and typical HPLC chromatogram of organic acids in rambutan sweatings with mixing at every 48 hours (B)	116
5.5	Effects of turning interval and fermentation time on the concentrations of 2,3-dihydro-2-hydroxy-9-methoxy-7H-furo(3,2-g)(1)benzopyr-an-7-one and 4-methylumbelliferyl acetate (based on peak area) in the sweatings	117
5.6	Rambutan fruits fermented for eight days without mixing (A), with mixing at every 24 (B), 48 (C) and 72 (D) hours	118
5.7	Lengthwise-cut dried rambutan seeds after 8 days of fermentation with no mixing (A), mixing at every 24 (B), 48 (C) and 72 (D) hours	119
5.8	Rambutan seed powder after 8 days of fermentation with no mixing (A), mixing at every 24 (C), 48 (E) and 72 (G) hours and dried rambutan seed powder after 8 days of fermentation with no mixing (B), mixing at every 24 (D), 48 (F) and 72 (H) hours	122
5.9	HPLC chromatogram of sugar standards (A) and typical HPLC chromatogram of sugars in rambutan seeds after 8 days of fermentation with mixing at every 48 hours (B)	126
5.10	HPLC chromatogram of organic acid and ascorbic acid standards (A) and typical HPLC chromatogram of organic acids and ascorbic acid in rambutan seeds after 8 days of fermentation with mixing at every 48 hours (B)	127
5.11	Effect of turning interval on the concentrations of 2,3-dihydro-2-hydroxy-9-methoxy-7H-furo(3,2-g)(1)benzopyr-an-7-one and 4-methylumbelliferyl acetate (based on peak area) in the seeds after eight days of fermentation	129

5.12	Typical thermogram of rambutan seed fat after 8 days of fermentation with mixing at every 48 hours	134
5.13	Solid fat index of rambutan seed fat after 8 days of fermentation with no mixing (A), mixing at every 24 (B), 48 (C) and 72 (D) hours	137
5.14	Evolution of bacteria in different medium during 8 days of rambutan fermentation with mixing at 48 hours intervals	139
6.1	Fermented fruits were spread on a tray prior to drying	143
6.2	Roaster for roasting	144
6.3	Mixture of brine shrimp eggs and simulated seawater (from the premix) aerated with air pump and provided with light source at 27 ± 2 °C	148
6.4	Beaker with roasted rambutan seed powder and methanol sealed with cotton wool and aluminum foil accompanied by stirring using a magnetic stirrer	149
6.5	Rambutan seed powder with different roasting time and temperature as treated based on Table 6.1	151
6.6	A response surface plot for the effect of roasting time and temperature on L* value	156
6.7	A response surface plot for the effect of roasting time and temperature on a* value	158
6.8	A response surface plot for the effect of roasting time and temperature on b* value	159
6.9	A response surface plot for the effect of roasting time and temperature on total phenolic content	161
6.10	Response optimizer plot for interaction effect of roasting variables on color and total phenolic content of rambutan seed powder	162
6.11	Typical thermogram (heating and cooling curves) of roasted rambutan seed fat from treatment 14	173
6.12	SFI of rambutan seed fat after 8 days of fermentation, control (A), and roasting based on treatment 1 (B), 2 (C), 3 (D), 4 (E), 5 (F), 6 (G), 7 (H), 8 (I), 9 (J), 10 (K), 11 (L), 12 (M) and 13 (N), 14 (O)	177
6.13	Typical GCMS chromatogram of volatile compounds present in roasted rambutan seed powder from treatment 14	182

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAB	acetic acid bacteria
ANOVA	analysis of variance
C	Celsius
CE	catechin equivalent
cm	centimeter
DSC	Differential Scanning Calorimeter
FFA	free fatty acid
FAME	fatty acid methyl ester
g	gram
GC	gas chromatography
HCl	hydrochloric acid
HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
I.D.	internal diameter
IV	iodine value
kg	kilogram
KOH	potassium hydroxide
L	liter
LAB	lactic acid bacteria
LCMS	liquid chromatography mass-spectrometry
M	Molar
mg	milligram
min	minute
mL	milliliter
mm	millimeter
N	normality

N ₂	nitrogen
NaOH	sodium hydroxide
ND	not detected
nm	nanometer
psi	pounds per square inch
rpm	revolutions per minute
SFI	solid fat index
TAG	triacylglycerol
UV-Vis	ultra violet-visible
v/v	volume/volume
w/v	weight/volume
μL	microliter

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Rambutan (*Nephelium lappaceum* Linn.) is a popular tropical fruit from the Sapindaceae family. It is native to Malaysia and Indonesia (Issara, Zzaman, & Yang, 2014). The rambutan fruit has a colored skin and spinterns. The peel of the fruit is red, yellow or orange yellow in color. According to Sun et al. (2011), the fruit peel contains abundant of anthocyanins, which are mainly responsible for the red color of the ripe fruit. There are more than 187 varieties of rambutan are registered to the Department of Agriculture Malaysia and additional 25 varieties are found in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand (Zee, 1993). Figure 1.1 shows two common (red and yellow) skin colors of the rambutan fruit. The fruits are large (3-6 cm long and 3-4 cm broad) (Fila et al., 2012) and spherical in shape. Rambutan has two fruiting seasons (July-September and December-February) per year. A rambutan tree may produce more than 5000-6000 fruits per fruiting season (Ahmad & Alrozi, 2011). The fruits take 3 to 6 months to mature depending on growing climate and cultivar (Diczbalis, 2002).



Figure 1.1: Rambutan fruit with red, yellow and orange yellow skin colors

Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia account for approximately 80 % of the total world production of rambutan and only Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia export this fruit among the ASEAN member countries (Ahmad & Chua, 2013; Tindall, 1994). Fresh and processed rambutan products are exported from Thailand to Asian and European countries. In other Asian countries, the fruits are sold in the domestic markets (Paull & Duarte, 2012; Tindall, 1994). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2016), Malaysia has sufficient rambutan fruit supply for domestic demands. In 2013, the self-sufficiency ratio of the fruits to demands in Malaysia was 98.2 % while the ratio in 2014 was 100.5 %. As advocated in the *Dasar Agromakanan Negara 2011-2020* (Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia, 2011), the production of the domestic fruits especially star fruit, papaya, pineapple and rambutan should be increased commercially due to the increase of export market demand. Fruits production is expected to increase in line with the planting area from 9.6 metric ton per hectare in 2010 to 12.9 metric ton per hectare in 2020 (Ministry of Agriculture and Agro-Based Industry Malaysia, 2011).

The rambutan fruit is rich in carbohydrates, fiber, iron, potassium, magnesium, vitamin C and calcium as shown in Table 1.1 (P. Lee, Tan, Yu, Curran, & Liu, 2013; Sukasih & Setyadjit, 2015; Tindall, 1994; Wall, 2006a). The skin of the fruit contains flavonoids, saponin and tannin (Lestari, Djati, Rudijanto, & Fatchiyah, 2013) while the seeds have high fat content (38 %) (Manaf, Marikkar, Long, & Ghazali, 2013), antioxidant activity and high phenolic content (Thitilertdecha, Teerawutgulrag, & Rakariyatham, 2008a). All these nutrients and minerals allow this fruit to possess medicinal and therapeutic properties.

Table 1.1: Composition of rambutan per 100 g edible portion

Constituents	Value per 100 g
Energy	297 kJ ^a
Moisture	82.1 g ^a
Fat	0.9 g ^a
Protein	0.66 g ^b
Carbohydrate	19.66 g ^b
Dietary fiber	2.8 g ^a
Ash	0.3 g ^a
Starch	0.0 g ^a
Glucose	2.8 g ^a
Fructose	3.0 g ^a
Sucrose	9.9 g ^a
Malic acid	0.05 g ^a
Citric acid	0.31 g ^a
Niacin	0.5 mg ^a
Carotene	0.0 mg ^a
Vitamin C	70.0 mg ^a
Thiamine	0.01 mg ^a
Riboflavin	0.07 mg ^a
Phosphorus	8.8-18.8 mg ^c
Potassium	133.5-249.4 mg ^c
Calcium	6.8-8.7 mg ^c
Magnesium	13.3-17.2 mg ^c
Sodium	5.5-8.2 mg ^c
Iron	0.41-0.56 mg ^c
Manganese	0.07-0.38 mg ^c
Zinc	0.16-0.26 mg ^c
Copper	0.16-0.20 mg ^c
Boron	0.11-0.16 mg ^c

(Adapted from: ^a-Tindall, 1994; ^b-Fila, Itam, & Johnson, 2013; ^c-Wall, 2006)

Generally, rambutan fruits are consumed in the fresh state. The aril (flesh or pulp) is sometimes mixed with other fruits to prepare salads. Some rambutan varieties are suitable for canning, thus extending the period of consumption other than during the local fruiting seasons. In Malaysia and Thailand, rambutan is industrially produced into

juice, jam, jelly, marmalade and spread (Morton, 1987; Dapur Kayu Enterprise, 2017; Solís-Fuentes, Camey-Ortíz, Hernández-Medel, Pérez-Mendoza, & Durán-de-Bazúa, 2010). Besides, the fruits can be processed as rambutan stuffed with a chunk of pineapple and canned in syrup (Sirisompong, Jirapakkul, & Klinkesorn, 2011). Rambutan chips are also available in the market. Some popular rambutan-derived products are shown in Figure 1.2.



Figure 1.2: Some commercial rambutan products

Although rambutan is one of the most popular fruits in Malaysia as it is available throughout the country, it is seasonal and susceptible to deterioration (3-4 days at ambient temperature, or a few weeks at 12-13 °C and 90-95 % relative humidity) (Siriphanich, 2003). When supply is greater than demand, the fruits are often wasted. The massive amount of the excessive fruits is being disregarded, causing a severe problem in the community as they gradually ferment and release off-odors. This is uncommon to be seen in any other popular non-exotic fruits such as apple, carob, peach, grape and citrus as many food industries have been working on these fruits as well as their by-products in order to fully utilize them (Davidov-Pardo & McClements, 2015; Fernández-López, Sendra, Sayas-Barberá, Navarro, & Pérez-Alvarez, 2008; Loizzo et al., 2015; Raina et al., 2015; Sheng et al., 2016). However, to date, there is no large industry in Malaysia to diversify the rambutan fruit into various products. When rambutan fruit is canned, the fruits are deseeded during processing and the seeds (~ 4-9 g/100 g) become a waste by-product (Solís-Fuentes et al., 2010). Hence, in order to reduce wastage and increase the variation of food from rambutan fruit, there is a potential in converting the rambutan seeds into a cocoa powder-like product through the process of natural fermentation involving the whole fruit (Low, 2011). In this preliminary study, cocoa powder-like product was produced by fermenting and drying rambutan fruit as well as roasting and grinding the dried fermented seed.

To date, rambutan seed powder as a possible complement to cocoa powder has not been produced. It is relatively a new idea in product development. From the literature, much of the research has been confined to cocoa powder processing (Afoakwa, Paterson, & Fowler, 2007; Afoakwa, Paterson, Fowler, & Ryan, 2008; Afoakwa, 2015; Andres-Lacueva et al., 2008; Hofberger & Tanabe, 2007; Minifie, 1989; Tomas-Barberán et al.,

2007). Report has been made on rambutan fruit fermentation (Mehdizadeh, Lasekan, Muhammad, & Baharin, 2015) but not on the production of rambutan seed powder. Scientific analysis on rambutan seed powder has not been carried out and definitely there is still lacking of information on the rambutan seed powder processing. Thus, the main objective of this study was to produce a cocoa powder-like product from rambutan seeds which had undergone the process of natural fermentation followed by roasting, and to determine the toxicity of the powder. Based on this objective, the specific objectives were:

1. To select the best rambutan variety for fermentation by comparing the physicochemical properties of pulp and seed of rambutan fruit with those of cocoa pulp and seed.
2. To determine the physicochemical properties of rambutan fruit sweatings, seed and seed fat during solid state fermentation at different fermentation times and turning intervals.
3. To optimize the roasting process of rambutan seed removed from fermented and dried rambutan fruit, and to determine the physicochemical properties and toxicity of rambutan seed powder.

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