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DIGITAL GASTRO-DIPLOMACY: SHOWCASING BALINESE CUISINE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

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Abstract

This study explores the emerging concept of digital gastrodiplomacy and its role in enhancing the visibility and preservation of Balinese cuisine through social media platforms. Employing a qualitative methodology, the research combines an extensive literature review with semi-structured interviews involving two Balinese restaurants, two chefs active on social media, and three high-reach influencers. Social media metrics (including likes, comments, shares, and engagement rates) were analyzed across platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Findings reveal that these platforms serve as powerful tools for promoting Balinese cuisine, with high-quality visual content and interactive features significantly enhancing audience engagement. Collaborations with influencers were found to be especially effective in expanding reach and fostering both immediate interest and long-term cultural preservation. The study highlights the strategic importance of digital platforms in promoting culinary heritage, emphasizing that digital gastrodiplomacy offers a promising avenue to deepen global appreciation for Balinese food culture and support its sustainable preservation
Keywords: Balinese Cuisine, Cultural Preservation, Digital Gastrodiplomacy, Social Media

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1. INTRODUCTION

Understanding the role of cuisine in tourism requires an appreciation of its deeper cultural functions. Culinary culture has always been a vital component of cultural and traditional identities. Cuisine, where various societal identities converge, mirrors everyday lifestyles, religious beliefs, customs, traditions, and practices (K. S. Lee, 2022; Moscato, 2018). Changes in eating habits and the increasing social significance of dining have greatly influenced tourism activities. In recent years, gastronomic tourism has emerged as a primary and rapidly expanding element of tourist attractions ((Forman & Lejeune, 2023; Pitanatri, 2016; D. Scarpato et al., 2017; R. Scarpato, 2003). Recognizing its importance, many countries are developing marketing opportunities for culinary tourism. The desire of tourists to experience local flavors at destinations and accommodations has created substantial opportunities for the growth of gastronomic tourism. Acknowledging gastronomic tourism's significance to local and foreign tourists, tourism businesses have integrated gastronomic elements into their offerings (Yubianto, 2023). To effectively highlight culinary expertise, tourism must be coordinated with all tourism-related foundations and civil society organizations, with support from relevant ministries (Demir & Alper, 2021). Furthermore, gastronomic tourism developers must measurably conduct these promotional activities (Muangasame & Park, 2019). Gastrodiplomacy is crucial in this regard, as promoting culinary culture through diplomatic channels can significantly enhance the appeal and value of gastronomic tourism on a global scale. This leads us into the growing strategic role that gastronomy plays beyond tourism, especially in cultural diplomacy and policy.

Expanding the discussion beyond tourism, gastronomy also presents itself as an influential driver in national policymaking and global positioning. Gastronomy presents a compelling argument in policymaking (Grandi, 2023). Its multidisciplinary nature covers reflective sourcing, preparation, cooking, and eating, making it a broad-based field that includes all aspects of food, including tourism. From a business perspective, as noted by Rockower (2012), gastronomic tourism's primary advantage lies in its adaptability to phenomena such as globalization, localization, and creolization, driven by changes in the surrounding living culture. Destinations are investing in food tourism in response to significant economic shifts, recognizing that food and beverages account for one-third of tourism revenue—a figure substantial enough to capture the interest of both enterprises and governments, though some may consider it low (Forman & Lejeune, 2023; Green et al., 2015; Pitana & Pitanatri, 2016). As gastronomy gains policy attention, it creates further momentum for initiatives like gastrodiplomacy that link cuisine with national identity and international influence.

Following this economic and cultural rationale, food tourism itself has diversified into various levels of engagement. As a tourism product expressing identity and culture, food encourages travel and is a critical component of cultural and heritage tourism (Yayla et al., 2024). Food tourism, a special interest in tourism, places food as the primary travel motivation, with varying levels of engagement. This ranges from minimal interest (eating for sustenance) to various degrees of enthusiasm: rural or urban tourism (interested), culinary tourism (curious), and high-engagement categories such as cuisine, gastronomic, or gourmet tourism. Food tourism emphasizes the "spatial fixity" where tourists must visit the production site to consume the food, thus becoming food tourists. This dynamic involves consuming local cuisine and engaging with the production of place. Globalization issues like the homogenization and erosion of regional cuisines become less acute in this context. Increased focus on regional identities and cultural roots highlights regional foods over international versions of ethnic cuisines (Pujayanti, 2017; Sonenshine et al., 2016). These conditions further reinforce the value of promoting regional cuisines through global channels, a task increasingly addressed through gastrodiplomacy efforts.

As gastronomy continues to evolve as a core tourism and identity asset, its economic and cultural interdependencies become more apparent. Gastronomic tourism, at various levels, fosters interdependencies that shape the development and appeal of both destinations and their culinary

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offerings to visitors (Rockower, 2012). For destinations lacking the allure of sun, sea, and sand, gastronomy emerges as a cost-effective and profitable alternative, as Scarpato et al. (D. Scarpato et al., 2017) demonstrated. Typically linked with quality tourism, gastronomy enhances the tourist experience through short breaks and wine tourism, which attracts premium travelers. Thus, gastronomy is a viable tourist product integral to the holiday experience due to its symbiotic relationship with the destination. From a policymaker's or commercial perspective, gastronomic tourism enhances and extends tourist spending without compromising the region's environmental, social, or cultural integrity (Aditiya, 2021; Pujayanti, 2017). It also supports the "triple bottom line" of economic, social, and environmental sustainability. Green et al. (2015) observed that culinary tourism is connected to tourist motivation, characteristics, and behavior typologies, informing more effective policymaking. This is where gastrodiplomacy becomes crucial, as promoting culinary culture through diplomatic channels can significantly elevate the appeal and value of gastronomic tourism on a global scale. From here, we transition into understanding gastrodiplomacy itself, including its principles and global applications.

Gastrodiplomacy, as a cultural tool, offers a compelling framework to enhance international relationships and promote national identity. Gastrodiplomacy, a form of cultural diplomacy, leverages food and culinary traditions to foster cross-cultural understanding and strengthen international relations. The term "gastrodiplomacy" describes global soft diplomacy campaigns aimed at increasing interest in a country's cuisine and products, enhancing its profile, generating sympathy, and achieving economic and commercial benefits (Moscato, 2018; Rockower, 2012; Solleh, 2018). Although gastrodiplomacy has recently gained global attention, its roots are not new. Historically, food has been crucial in official meetings, negotiations, and cultural exchanges between nations (Bajar & Peña, 2022; Chakraborty, 2024; Forman & Lejeune, 2023; S. T. Lee & Kim, 2021; Pham, 2013; Ulung, 2023). The growing number of gastrodiplomacy initiatives underscores the recognized value of food in diplomatic relations, extending beyond merely entertaining foreign guests (Nihayati et al., 2022). National authorities can use gastrodiplomacy to elevate a country's visibility on the international stage. This approach is particularly relevant as food enthusiasts and professionals increasingly seek uniqueness, authenticity, and originality, partly as a response to the perceived uniformity brought about by globalization (Yayusman et al., 2023). With this strategic base established, it is also important to consider the challenges and real-world outcomes of gastrodiplomacy efforts.

In addition to its promotional value, gastrodiplomacy often serves internal sociocultural functions. Culinary diplomacy campaigns are particularly attractive to middle powers, which often struggle to gain attention on the global stage due to limited political or economic influence (Chapple-Sokol, 2013; Sonenshine et al., 2016). These nations leverage food to enhance their image among international audiences. In international relations, brand marketing practices aim to increase a country's visibility through distinctive and recognizable features. This strategy targets other governments, consumers, businesses, and foreign investors (Prameswari & Yani, 2023). The rise of gastrodiplomacy initiatives directly results from the globalization of food, facilitating the worldwide circulation of ingredients, products, ideas, and food professionals. As such, the successful implementation of gastrodiplomacy often depends on digital tools to maximize global reach—particularly in the current media environment.

To this end, digital media has fundamentally transformed how culinary traditions are shared and scaled internationally. Gastrodiplomacy can also cultivate a sense of unity and national pride around food within the countries involved. It can evoke nostalgia to ease domestic tensions, recalling a better past before modernity and globalization, as seen in South Korea's idealization of the Joseon court and the timeless, unchanging *kimchi* (Nihayati et al., 2022). However, assessing the success of gastrodiplomacy, both domestically and internationally, is challenging due to the various socio-political factors and processes that influence the participation and cooperation of the necessary parties. While foreign audiences may frequently visit Chinese restaurants, Mexican taco stands, or Turkish kebab

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shops, they often remain uninterested in delving deeper into these food cultures. They do not view them as traditions worth exploring beyond accessibility and affordability (Lipscomb et al., 2019). Additionally, lesser-known culinary traditions may go unnoticed, partly due to the limited presence or visibility of immigrants associated with them. This indicates a need for new, more dynamic approaches—such as digital gastrodiplomacy—which may offer more direct access to global audiences.

Several countries have already demonstrated that structured national campaigns can produce global culinary awareness. Practical examples used by various countries include Thailand's Global Thai program, started in 2002, which resulted in more than 10,000 Thai restaurants globally by 2011, Japan's *Shoku-bunka kenkyū suishin kondankai* launched in 2005, and South Korea's Global Hansik campaign started in 2009, which have raised global awareness and appreciation of their culinary traditions (Aditiya, 2021; Lipscomb et al., 2019; Pham, 2013). Indonesia has also seen success with the Rendang Diplomacy campaign, which has elevated rendang to global recognition. These examples demonstrate the effectiveness of gastrodiplomacy in promoting national cuisine worldwide (Pitanatri, 2016; Prameswari & Yani, 2023). As these models suggest, the integration of digital technologies into cultural diplomacy may amplify outcomes even further—especially in regions with rich culinary diversity like Bali.

Bali, known for its deeply spiritual and ritual-rich culinary culture, represents a unique opportunity for digital gastrodiplomacy. In the digital age, social media has become crucial for promoting culture and heritage, including Balinese cuisine. Social media allows content to reach a global audience, creating significant opportunities for cultural promotion (Page, 2012; Syvertsen & Enli, 2019). As a form of digital gastrodiplomacy in culinary promotion, social media can enhance cultural awareness and attract tourist interest. Digital gastrodiplomacy allows for broader promotion and more effective cultural preservation. However, the pre-survey conducted by the author in February 2025, involving 50 domestic and international tourists visiting Bali, revealed several key issues. Although food-related content is viral on social media, specific content about Balinese cuisine shows low engagement, which indicates a critical need to explore the most effective types of content and platforms for promoting and preserving this cultural heritage. Furthermore, while some influencers successfully introduce new foods to their audiences, there is a significant lack of exposure and visibility for Balinese cuisine. This underscores the importance of understanding how influencers can be more effectively utilized to increase the visibility of Balinese culinary traditions. These observations justify a closer examination of how digital strategies may enhance the preservation and international appreciation of Balinese food culture.

Despite short bursts of popularity, many digital initiatives fall short of maintaining long-term interest. Initial data collection also revealed that digital campaigns often generate short-term spikes in interest but fail to sustain long-term engagement and appreciation. This finding highlights the need to investigate the long-term impact of digital gastrodiplomacy strategies to ensure sustained interest and preservation efforts. Additionally, although some international collaborations exist, their effects on global appreciation of Balinese cuisine are not well-documented, highlighting the need for deeper investigation into how these collaborations can enhance international understanding and appreciation of Balinese food culture. Lastly, the survey indicated that successful digital campaigns related to Balinese cuisine are rare, demonstrating the need to gather and analyze empirical evidence from successful initiatives to inform future efforts. The notion of gastrodiplomacy, which leverages a country's culinary heritage to promote its culture and soft power, has garnered significant attention in recent years (Richards, 2015; Rockower, 2012; Sonenshine et al., 2016). As digital technologies have become increasingly integrated into our daily lives, researchers have begun to explore the intersection of gastrodiplomacy and social media. This emerging field examines how countries and cultures can utilise online platforms to showcase their unique culinary traditions and authentically engage with

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global audiences. As such, further exploration of these strategies will support more evidence-based, sustainable approaches to digital gastrodiplomacy.

Given the above context, there is a need to explore effective methods that align cultural values with digital tools. It is essential to explore various strategies and methodologies. Investigating the types of social media content and platforms that effectively engage audiences with traditional cuisine can provide valuable insights into how to enhance visibility and appreciation (Qutteina et al., 2022). Additionally, understanding the role of influencers in promoting traditional culinary traditions can help develop more targeted and impactful campaigns (Koay et al., 2021). The long-term effects of digital gastrodiplomacy strategies will offer a comprehensive understanding of maintaining sustained interest and cultural preservation (Muangasame & Park, 2019) Moreover, documenting the impact of international collaborations on the appreciation of traditional cuisine can inform future strategies for global engagement ((Bajar & Peña, 2022). Finally, gathering empirical evidence from successful digital campaigns will provide a foundation for developing evidence-based strategies for promoting and preserving traditional cuisine through digital gastrodiplomacy (Coates et al., 2019; Montgomery & Chester, 2009). These inquiries form the basis of this study's focus on Balinese cuisine as a case in point.

Bali offers a rich yet underutilized resource for exploring how local culinary heritage can thrive in the digital age. In the context of Bali, the rich gastronomic heritage has long been considered an integral part of the island's cultural identity and a potent tool for attracting tourists (Pitanatri, 2016; Pitanatri & Putra, 2016) However, limited academic research has examined the specific strategies and challenges of leveraging social media to promote and preserve Balinese cuisine. Existing studies on digital gastrodiplomacy have primarily focused on larger, more internationally known cuisines, such as those of Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Farina, 2018; Nihayati et al., 2022; Zhang, 2015). This research is essential because digital gastrodiplomacy can be an effective tool in promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine in the modern era by leveraging access to social media platforms. The theory of technological determinism suggests that promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine can be effectively achieved if there is adequate access to social media platforms and other digital technologies (Qutteina et al., 2022; Scuotto et al., 2017). According to digital marketing theory, collaborating with culinary influencers with large followings can significantly enhance the visibility and appeal of Balinese cuisine. This strategy can mitigate promotional challenges by leveraging existing audiences. Effective digital collaboration in gastrodiplomacy requires deep knowledge of digital technology and the ability to create engaging content. These frameworks inform the objectives and research questions guiding this study.

Bringing all elements together, this research sets out to explore how digital platforms can serve as vehicles for cultural promotion and preservation. This study examines how social media can enhance the global visibility of Balinese cuisine, highlight effective digital strategies, and analyze the cultural and economic impacts of digital gastrodiplomacy. The long-term implications of digital gastrodiplomacy strategy can be understood by examining how clear goals and outputs of digital campaigns help increase appreciation and understanding of the cultural value of Balinese cuisine among international audiences. Digital gastrodiplomacy opens opportunities to enhance international appreciation and understanding of Balinese cuisine, overcoming geographical limitations and expanding the reach of Balinese culture to a global audience. This article explores how digital gastrodiplomacy can be implemented to promote and preserve Balinese cuisine through social media. These insights will contribute meaningfully to the academic discourse on culinary heritage and its intersection with modern technology.

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2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining in-depth interviews with key stakeholders and a comprehensive analysis of social media content to gather in-depth insights and understand the nuanced dynamics of digital gastrodiplomacy. The data collected are qualitative, focusing on key stakeholders' perspectives and experiences in promoting Balinese cuisine via social media. The study population comprises restaurants and chefs in Bali who actively use social media to promote Balinese cuisine, and influencers engaged in similar promotional activities. Data are sourced from social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, which these restaurants and influencers utilize. A purposive sampling method is employed to select restaurants and chefs renowned for their active digital campaigns on Instagram and YouTube. These entities are well-known for their promotion of Balinese cuisine. Additionally, the sample includes influencers with at least 50,000 followers on Instagram or YouTube who actively promote Balinese cuisine through posts made up to March 2025.

The sampling strategy aims to ensure the selection of participants who can provide rich, relevant data on effective digital campaigns. Restaurants and influencers are chosen based on their significant roles in promoting Balinese cuisine and their extensive use of social media. Metrics from their digital campaigns, such as likes, comments, shares, and audience engagement rates, are collected and analyzed from March 2025. These metrics are essential for evaluating the effectiveness of the digital campaigns and the level of audience engagement. Data collection methods include conducting interviews, analyzing digital marketing campaigns, and examining social media content. The instruments used for data collection involve interview guides for semi-structured interviews and digital tools for extracting social media metrics. The collected data are then analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and strategies employed in digital gastrodiplomacy.

This study's qualitative approach, coupled with a purposive sampling method and comprehensive data collection from social media platforms, aims to provide a detailed understanding of how digital gastrodiplomacy can effectively promote and preserve Balinese cuisine. Analyzing social media metrics offers insights into these digital campaigns' success and audience engagement, contributing to the broader understanding of effective digital strategies in cultural promotion.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the contemporary digital era, social media has become a pivotal platform for promoting and preserving cultural heritage, including culinary traditions. Applying digital gastrodiplomacy through social media channels such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube offers new avenues for reaching global audiences, enhancing visibility, and fostering an appreciation for regional cuisines. This section discusses the findings from a case study involving two renowned restaurants and two chefs in Bali who actively use these platforms to promote Balinese cuisine. The analysis encompasses their content strategies, engagement metrics, and the overall effectiveness of their digital marketing campaigns in achieving the objectives of promoting and preserving Balinese culinary heritage.

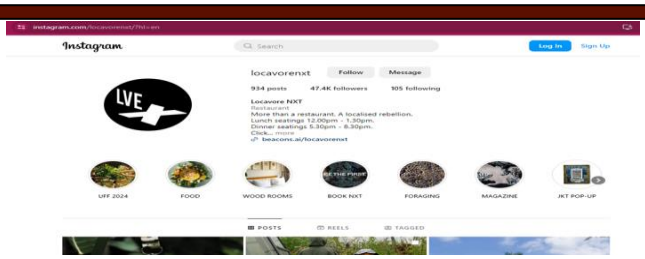
3.1 Case Study: Effective Digital Marketing Campaigns for Promoting Balinese Cuisine

In the digital age, Balinese culinary traditions can reach a global audience, offering unprecedented cultural exchange and preservation opportunities. This case study explores how two renowned restaurants and two chefs in Bali utilise social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to promote Balinese cuisine effectively. The strategies employed, engagement metrics achieved, and the overall impact of these campaigns are analysed to understand how digital platforms can enhance the visibility and appreciation of Balinese cuisine.

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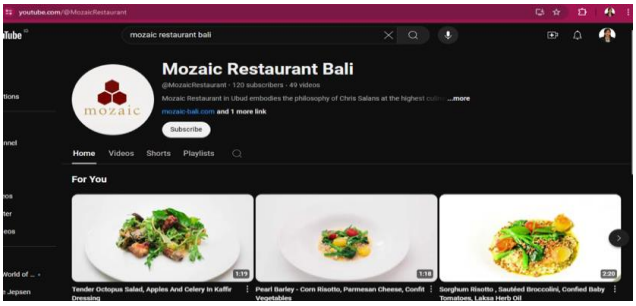
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Pigure 1. Instagram Page Locavore NXT @ locavorenxt
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/locavorenxt/?hl=en, accessed March 2025)

Image 1 is a screenshot of the Instagram profile for Locavore NXT restaurant on March 2025. The profile handle is @locavorenxt. The account has 934 posts, 47.4K followers, and follows 105 accounts. The bio reads, "More than a restaurant. A localised rebellion. Lunch seatings 12.00pm - 1.30pm. Dinner seatings 5.30pm - 8.30pm." Locavore NXT's chefs and kitchen team are taking their commitment to sustainability further than ever before by exclusively using local ingredients in their seasonal tasting menus. This unwavering focus on hyper-local, Balinese produce lies at the heart of their culinary philosophy, allowing them to authentically showcase the diverse flavours and traditions of the island's rich gastronomic heritage.

Locavore NXT has become Ubud's must-visit dining destination, situated just outside Ubud, surrounded by nature—complete with a rooftop food forest and an underground mushroom chamber. Chefs Eelke Plasmeijer and Ray Adriansyah have turned their vision for the future of food into a reality, creating more than just another great restaurant but a localized gastronomic revolution. Since its establishment in 2013, Locavore has become a local institution, earning multiple accolades at Asia's 50 Best Restaurants 2019, including the No. 42 spot, the title of Best Restaurant in Indonesia, and the Sustainable Restaurant Award before the coronavirus pandemic isolated Bali from the rest of the world for nearly three years.



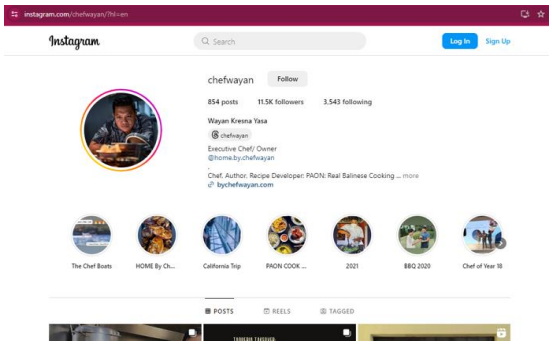
Pigure 2. YouTube Page Mozaic Restaurant Bali
(Source: https://www.youtube.com/@MozaicRestaurant , accessed March 2025)

Image 2 reveals that Mozaic Restaurant Gastronomic Bali has undergone a comprehensive redesign and the introduction of a new head chef, Blake Thornley, working alongside chef Chris Salans. This renowned Asian gastronomic destination has transformed both its physical space and the conceptual framework of its menu, marked a new chapter while maintained its core commitment to culinary excellence. The restaurant continues to highlight Indonesian and especially Balinese spices, ingredients, and seasonal products within a sustainable gastronomic approach. Significant additions include a state-of-the-art mixology lounge and a private dining kitchen, designed to elevate the overall dining experience. Mozaic's digital presence is also noteworthy, with a YouTube channel that shares a

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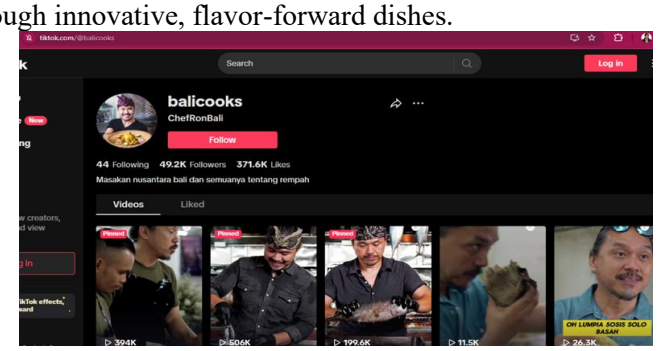
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variety of culinary videos showcasing dishes. With 120 subscribers and 49 videos, the channel exemplifies Chris Salans' culinary philosophy, allowing an online audience to engage with Mozaic's innovative creations.



Pigure 3. Instagram Page Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/chefwayan/?hl=en , accessed March 2025)

Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa is a Balinese chef with training and education from Chicago and New York in the United States. On Image 3 as we can see from his Instagram profile, @chefwayan, he offers a glimpse into his culinary journey and expertise, with 854 posts and 11.5K followers. Chef Wayan masterfully blends classical French culinary techniques with the complex flavors of Southeast Asian cuisine. His unique approach combines modern cooking methods with traditional Southeast Asian flavors, using fresh ingredients to create homestyle dishes that burst with bold tastes from spices, roots, leaves, nuts, and chiles native to the region. Chef Wayan's culinary creations highlight the best of Balinese food, making it accessible and appealing on the world stage. His profile bio describes him as the "Executive Chef/Owner @home.by.chefwayan" and a "Chef, Author, Recipe Developer" focused on "PAON: Real Balinese Cooking." With 3,543 accounts followed, Chef Wayan maintains a broad and engaged network, allowing him to share his passion for preserving and showcasing Balinese culinary traditions through innovative, flavor-forward dishes.



Pigure 4. TikTok Page Chef Ron Bali
(Source: https://www.tiktok.com/@balicooks, accessed March 2025)

Chef Ron Bali, or @balicooks on TikTok, has a significant following with 49.2K followers and 371.6K likes on the platform. His TikTok profile features the tagline "*Masakan Nusantara Bali dan semuanya tentang rempah*," which translates to "Balinese archipelago cuisine and everything about

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spices." The profile showcases various culinary videos, with several pinned videos highlighting his expertise in using local ingredients and traditional cooking methods. Chef Ron's gastronomic journey has been primarily as an executive chef for high-end hotels across Indonesia. This journey also led him to work on a cruise line based in America, allowing him to delve deeper into the expansive world of culinary arts and its cultural background. His passion for culinary arts began after completing his studies at a tourism school, and he gradually discovered his lifelong passion for cooking and travel.

In 2009, Chef Ron opened his own restaurant, Bali Cardamon, marking a significant milestone in his career. This was followed by the opening of Glaze Restaurant three years later and Chef's Room seven years after. Over the years, Chef Ron has realized that food has the power to bring peace. Presenting food to guests and family brings him immense joy, as it makes them smile and feel comforted. He loves sharing his knowledge and passion for culinary arts, especially in local and Indonesian cooking, with a vision to see more young people mastering the art of local culinary traditions. Chef Ron focuses on using local Indonesian and Balinese spices and traditional barbecue grilling methods, as well as slow cooking techniques, particularly those used by Indonesian mothers in the past, to create distinctive and flavorful dishes. He is passionate about showcasing the richness of Balinese cuisine and Indonesian culinary traditions on the world stage.

The case study examines the digital marketing efforts of two prominent restaurants, Locavore NXT and Mozaic, and two influential chefs, Wayan Kresna Yasa and Ron Bali. These entities have strategically leveraged social media platforms, including Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, to showcase Balinese culinary heritage. The analysis is based on posts up to March 2025, highlighting their content strategies, engagement metrics, and the effectiveness of their campaigns.

Table 1. Digital Campaign Analysis

Subject	Restaurant Locavore NXT @locavorenxt	Restaurant Mozaic Ubud @mozaic restaurant	Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa @chefwayan	Chef Ron Bali @balicooks
Platform	Instagram (933 posts, 47.4K Followers)	Youtube (120 subscribers, 49 videos)	Instagram (11.4K followers, 854 posts)	TikTok (48,9K Follower; 209 video)
Content	● High-quality photos and videos of dishes and the restaurant's atmosphere. ● Interaction with the audience through posts and stories.	● High-quality videos showcasing the restaurant's atmosphere and various menus.	● Aesthetic images of daily menus. ● Cooking tutorial videos and vlogs on traditional market visits	● Educational videos on cooking Balinese food using conventional Balinese methods and ingredients. ● Videos on Balinese and Indonesian spices and traditional food reviews.
Engagement Metrics	● Average likes: 214.86 ● Average comments: 3.61 ● Average video likes: 251.24	● Average likes: 30.14 ● Average comments: 0.24 ● Average video likes: 151.24	● Average likes: 264.15 ● Average comments: 7.45 ● Average video likes: 611.32	● Average play count: 24595.64 ● Average comment count: 18.11

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Subject	Restaurant Locavore NXT @locavorenxt	Restaurant Mozaic Ubud @mozaic restaurant	Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa @chefwayan	Chef Ron Bali @balicooks
	● Average video views: 3397.88 ● Total posts: 151 (photos); 49 (videos)	● Average video views: 2291.34 ● Total videos: 49	● Average video views: 28717.55 ● Total posts: 512 (photos) 342 (videos)	● Average share count: 19.78 ● Average collect count: 60.77 ● Total videos: 209
Analysis	● Expanding audience reach through high-quality visual content, widespread hashtag usage, and collaboration with local influencers. ● Strengthening Balinese culinary identity by focusing on local ingredients and traditional Balinese cooking techniques.	● Increasing viewer engagement and appeal through aesthetically pleasing and informative video content related to the restaurant. ● Videos about the restaurant's atmosphere and menu highlight the cooking process and local ingredients and support preserving Balinese culinary culture.	● Focusing on historical and cultural aspects adds depth to the content. ● Collaborations with famous personalities and chefs enhance credibility and audience reach. ● Cooking tutorial videos and vlogs on traditional market visits introduce and preserve traditional Balinese cooking methods.	● High engagement levels across various interaction forms. ● Creating more high-quality and interactive video content can help increase overall engagement. ● Educational videos on Balinese spices and traditional food reviews help preserve the knowledge and techniques of conventional cooking.

Source: Processed Data, 2025

Table 1 shows that all subjects in this case study employ high-quality visual content, photos, and videos to attract audience interest. This approach has proven effective, with significant engagement metrics, especially on visually-focused platforms like Instagram and TikTok. For instance, Restaurant Locavore NXT averages 214.86 likes per photo and 251.24 likes per video, indicating that high-quality visual content can attract audience attention.

The high engagement metrics, such as likes and views, underscore the effectiveness of using social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok to promote Balinese cuisine. High-quality visual content and interactive features, such as comments and polls, enhance engagement and visibility. Collaborations with influencers and prominent figures have effectively increased the reach and credibility of digital campaigns. For example, Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa and Chef Ron Bali exhibit high engagement with cooking tutorial videos and educational content that incorporate local ingredients and traditional cooking techniques. These collaborations enhance visibility and strengthen the message of authenticity and cultural heritage being conveyed.

Content that showcases the cuisine and tells the story of its history and culture adds depth to digital campaigns. For instance, Restaurant Mozaic and Chef Wayan Kresna Yasa use videos and images depicting local ingredients' cooking process and rich cultural stories. This strategy helps preserve Balinese culinary culture by educating the audience about traditional values and the history behind the

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cuisine. Interaction with the audience through interactive features such as comments, polls, and Q&A sessions increases engagement. While Restaurant Mozaic has a lower average comment count, this indicates an opportunity to engage more actively with the audience to boost involvement. Chef Ron Bali successfully utilizes TikTok with high engagement across various interaction forms, such as play count, comment count, share count, and collect count, demonstrating that active interaction is crucial in successful digital campaigns.

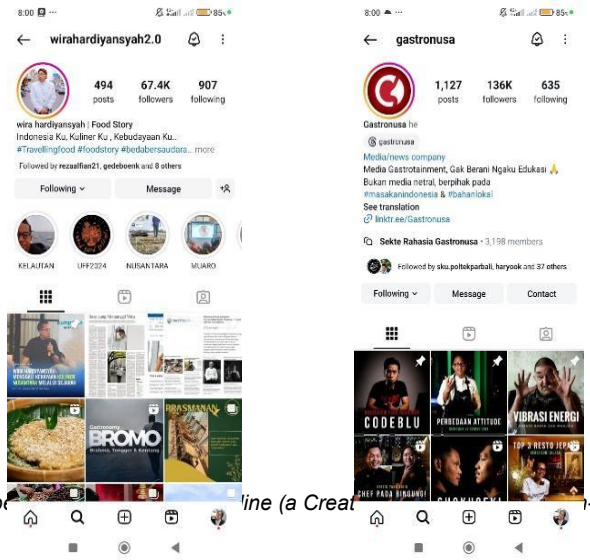
The data shows that structured and sustainable digital campaigns can significantly impact global perceptions and appreciation of Balinese cuisine. Well-structured and consistently executed campaigns can change global cultural perceptions and enhance appreciation of Balinese cuisine, validating the potential of digital gastrodiplomacy as an influential cultural promotion tool. Through these campaigns, the subjects have effectively utilized social media to promote and preserve Balinese culinary heritage, demonstrating the power of digital platforms in cultural promotion and preservation.

The effectiveness of social media in promoting Balinese cuisine is evident in the high engagement metrics across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. These platforms facilitate broad reach and interaction, making them ideal for digital gastrodiplomacy. Influencers play a crucial role in enhancing the visibility of Balinese cuisine: their large followings and ability to create authentic, engaging content help to generate buzz and sustain interest. Digital collaboration, mainly through interactive features such as comments, polls, and Q&A sessions, further increases engagement and appreciation of Balinese culinary traditions. The long-term impact of these strategies is seen in the sustained international interest and understanding of Balinese cuisine, which helps preserve its cultural heritage. Empirical evidence from these digital campaigns shows that a well-structured and consistently executed approach is critical to changing global cultural perceptions and enhancing appreciation of Balinese cuisine.

By focusing on these four variables—the effectiveness of social media, the role of influencers, digital collaboration for international appreciation, and the long-term impact of digital gastrodiplomacy—the study highlights how digital platforms can strategically promote and preserve Balinese culinary heritage. This integrated approach underscores the transformative potential of digital gastrodiplomacy in cultural promotion and preservation.

3.2 Strategies and Impacts on Promoting Balinese Culinary Traditions: An Influencer's Perspective

This case study demonstrates that high-quality visual content, collaborations with influencers, cultural storytelling, and active audience interaction are crucial to successful digital campaigns for promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine. These strategies increase visibility and help educate and preserve Balinese culinary culture in the digital age.



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Pigure. Instagram Profile of @wirahardiyansyah2.0 and @gastronusa
Source: https://www.instagram.com/wirahardiyansyah2.0/ https://www.instagram.com/gastronusa/ , accessed April 2, 2025

As we can see from Image 5, Wira Hardiyansyah's culinary journey began with a specialization in European cuisine, but a pivotal moment occurred when he was asked to create an Indonesian menu. This sparked a deep passion in him to learn more about the culinary traditions of his own country, Indonesia. For nearly a decade, Wira has travelled extensively across Indonesia especially Bali, both on his own initiative and through invitations to speak or serve as a resource person. During these travels, he has collected a wealth of knowledge about various regional culinary specialties, enriching his findings with additional data and insights from other sources. Wira believes that mastering and understanding one's national cuisine is key to introducing a country's rich traditions and culture to the world, a concept he refers to as "gastronomic diplomacy." He has gained valuable insights and stories by engaging directly with local chefs and restaurant owners, who have generously shared their recipes, cooking techniques, and the cultural significance of the dishes. Wira's Instagram profile, @wirahardiyansyah2.0, serves as a rich repository of his culinary explorations. With 494 posts and 67.4K followers, his profile showcases his extensive journey and passion for Indonesian cuisine. The profile features story highlights like "KELAITAN," "UFF2025," "NUSANTARA," and "MUARO," providing insights into his culinary experiences and the diverse locations he has visited. Through his Instagram presence and his dedication to promoting and preserving the rich culinary heritage of Indonesia and Bali, Wira Hardiyansyah is actively contributing to the global appreciation and understanding of Indonesian, especially Balinese cuisine and culture.

Gastronusa is driven by a spirit of culinary exploration, with the aim of highlighting local Indonesian cuisine and supporting small businesses, while providing memorable gastronomic adventures. It was founded by Edwin Pangestu and brings together a team of experienced media journalists, restaurateurs, chefs, and creators who have honed their culinary skills over many years. Gastronusa's Instagram profile, @gastronusa, showcases their dedication to culinary excellence. With 1,127 posts and 136K followers, the account offers a wealth of content that highlights the rich culinary traditions of Indonesia. They follow 635 accounts, reflecting their active engagement within the culinary community. The profile bio highlights Gastronusa's position as a "Media Gastrotainment" platform that is "not afraid to educate" and is "not neutral media, siding with Indonesian cuisine and local ingredients." This positioning underscores their commitment to promoting and supporting authentic Indonesian cuisine. Through their inspiring and informative content, Gastronusa aims to introduce and promote the authentic flavors of Indonesia to a wider audience, while also supporting small businesses and providing memorable gastronomic experiences. Their deep understanding of nuanced cuisines, cooking techniques, and flavor profiles lends credibility to their work, making Gastronusa a respected name in the culinary world.

Insights from interviews with two culinary influencers (@wirahardiyansyah2.0 and @gastronusa) further highlight some points as follows:

1. **Effectiveness of social media**. Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube each have their strengths in introducing gastronomy. Instagram excels in sharing aesthetic photos and videos, TikTok effectively spreads short viral video content, and YouTube is ideal for deep and educational

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content. Influencers prefer to focus on the authenticity of content while keeping an eye on trends. They emphasize the importance of maintaining the authenticity and originality of content to build audience credibility and trust. However, they do not entirely ignore trends but integrate them in ways that remain authentic and relevant to the culinary culture and traditions they promote.

2. **Role of influencers.** Instagram focuses on aesthetics and authenticity, TikTok combines popular trends with authentic content, and YouTube provides deep, educational content. High-quality visuals are crucial across all platforms to attract audiences to try regional foods. Visuals, whether photos or videos are essential in attracting audiences to try regional foods. High-quality visual content can entice and create a strong emotional appeal, encouraging audiences to explore further and try the promoted foods. Aesthetic and informative photos and videos effectively convey the uniqueness and beauty of regional cuisine. Short pictures and videos on Instagram and TikTok entice and create buzz, while long videos on YouTube educate and inspire audiences with in-depth explanations.
3. **Digital collaboration**. Influencers see collaborations with other influencers, interactive social media features, and participation in global campaigns as the most immense opportunities to increase the visibility of regional foods. Through collaborations, they can reach a broader and more diverse audience. Interactive features like polls, Q&A sessions, and live streaming help increase audience engagement. Participation in global campaigns and international culinary events can introduce regional foods to the worldwide stage, enhancing international visibility and appreciation.
4. **Long-term impact**. Using interactive features and collaborating with influencers on Instagram, leveraging viral algorithms and challenges on TikTok, creating deep content, and optimizing SEO on YouTube are key strategies to increase the global visibility of regional foods. These approaches ensure sustained interest and engagement, fostering a long-term positive impact on preserving Balinese culinary culture.

Interviews with culinary influencers reveal that effective use of social media platforms, a combination of authenticity and trends in content, high-quality visuals, and strategies for collaboration and interaction are key to promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine globally. By leveraging the strengths of each platform and the right content strategies, the visibility and appreciation of regional foods can be significantly enhanced, creating a long-term positive impact on the preservation of Balinese culinary culture. In summary, the effectiveness of social media, the pivotal role of influencers, strategic digital collaborations, long-term consequences, and empirical evidence of campaign success collectively underscore the transformative potential of digital gastrodiplomacy in promoting and preserving Balinese culinary traditions globally.

3.3 Model of Digital Gastrodiplomacy to Promote and Preserve Balinese Cuisine

The findings reveal that successful digital gastrodiplomacy in Bali relies on a multifaceted approach. Stakeholders emphasise the importance of authenticity, storytelling, and strategic collaborations to showcase the unique flavours, ingredients, and preparation methods of traditional Balinese dishes. They also highlight the challenges of navigating cultural sensitivities and maintaining the delicate balance between promoting tourism and preserving the integrity of local culinary traditions.

In the rapidly evolving digital landscape, gastrodiplomacy has become a powerful tool for promoting and preserving cultural heritage. By leveraging social media platforms, culinary traditions can reach a global audience, fostering cultural exchange and appreciation. This study explores the effectiveness of digital gastrodiplomacy in promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine, focusing on the strategic use of social media, the role of influencers, and the impact of digital collaboration. Through a comprehensive analysis of digital campaigns by prominent restaurants and chefs in Bali, this study

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highlights the transformative potential of digital platforms in enhancing the visibility and appreciation of Balinese culinary heritage.

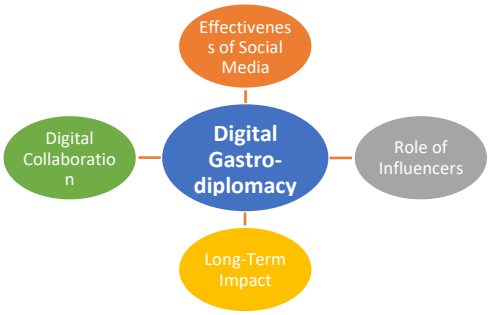


Image 6. Model of Digital Gastrodiplomacy to Promote and Preserve Balinese Cuisine
(Source: Kartini & Pitanatri, 2025)

This model illustrates the strategic components of digital gastrodiplomacy aimed at promoting and preserving Balinese cuisine. Each element in the model plays a crucial role in leveraging digital platforms to achieve these goals.

1. **Digital Gastrodiplomacy** describes the strategic use of digital and social media channels to showcase a country or region's culinary heritage as part of its cultural diplomacy efforts. In the Balinese context, this involves creatively using online platforms to share the rich gastronomic identity of the island with the world.
2. **Effectiveness of social media** highlights how effectively social media can be leveraged to reach and engage global audiences with the unique flavours, traditions, and stories of Balinese food. The research explores the most impactful social media strategies and techniques employed by Balinese culinary professionals. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, offer powerful tools to promote and preserve Balinese cuisine. Their visual and interactive features enhance engagement and attract a global audience. High-quality visuals such as photos and videos and interactive features like polls and Q&A sessions make promotional campaigns more engaging and effective. This indicates that social media is an exceptionally effective means of increasing awareness and interest in Balinese cuisine.
3. **Role of Influencers** recognises the influential role that social media personalities, food bloggers, and other online opinion leaders can play in amplifying the Balinese culinary narrative. By collaborating with the right influencers, Balinese stakeholders can tap into broader digital audiences and authentically promote their cuisine. Digital marketing strategies involving culinary influencers have proven effective in enhancing the visibility of Balinese cuisine through authentic and engaging content for **the role of influencers in improving visibility**. Influencers with large followings can spread information quickly and create buzz. Collaborations with influencers expand the reach and credibility of campaigns, ensuring that the content delivered is authentic and relevant. This indicates that involving influencers is a crucial strategy in digital marketing campaigns for Balinese cuisine.
4. **Digital Collaboration** refers to the ways in which culinary stakeholders in Bali - including restaurants, chefs, and food producers - work together using online tools and platforms. This allows them to pool resources, share knowledge, and coordinate efforts to collectively promote and preserve Balinese cuisine. Digital collaboration through social media and virtual events enhances international appreciation and understanding of Balinese cuisine. These

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collaborations create a more prosperous and deeper experience for the audience by showcasing the stories behind the dishes and the cultural values they embody. By working with other influencers and participating in global campaigns, these initiatives reach a broader, more diverse audience. This indicates that digital collaboration effectively increases the international visibility and appreciation of Balinese cuisine.

5. **Long-Term Impact** emphasises the long-lasting, sustainable impact that effective digital gastrodiplomacy can have in preserving and safeguarding the unique culinary traditions of Bali. The research examines how online engagement and awareness-raising can contribute to the continued vitality of Balinese gastronomy over time. Consistent and well-planned digital campaigns ensure sustained interest and engagement in Balinese cuisine. Educating audiences about the history and culture behind Balinese cuisine boosts short-term interest and contributes to the long-term preservation of culinary traditions. This long-term impact is evident in the increased international interest and understanding of Balinese cuisine, helping preserve its cultural heritage. This indicates that digital gastrodiplomacy strategies are not only effective in promotion but also in cultural preservation.

The model of digital gastrodiplomacy underscores the significant role that digital platforms can play in cultural promotion and preservation. By effectively utilising social media, engaging influencers, fostering digital collaboration, and planning for long-term impact, stakeholders can enhance the visibility and appreciation of Balinese cuisine globally. Several practical recommendations for Balinese restaurants, chefs, and social media influencers to effectively leverage digital platforms for gastrodiplomacy were proposed. These include developing a coherent content strategy that highlights the cultural significance of Balinese cuisine, fostering collaborative partnerships with local food producers and artisans, and adapting digital marketing tactics to cater to both domestic and international audiences. This integrated approach promotes Balinese culinary traditions and ensures their cultural preservation, contributing to a richer, more diverse global culinary landscape. The success of this model highlights the transformative potential of digital gastrodiplomacy as a powerful tool for cultural heritage promotion in the digital age.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This study underscores the growing importance of digital gastrodiplomacy in promoting and preserving cultural heritage, particularly in the context of Balinese cuisine. Through a combination of social media metrics and qualitative interviews, the research has demonstrated that platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube serve as effective tools for increasing visibility and cultural engagement. The ability of digital campaigns to generate high levels of audience interaction has proven essential in capturing both domestic and international attention. Collaborations with influencers significantly enhanced these efforts by leveraging their credibility and reach to promote Balinese culinary traditions more authentically. These findings position digital platforms as not just promotional tools but also as vehicles for sustainable cultural diplomacy in the digital age.

Building upon these findings, this study contributes to the theoretical development of gastrodiplomacy by illustrating how digital strategies can play a pivotal role in preserving culinary identity. The incorporation of high-quality visual content, cultural storytelling, and targeted influencer partnerships represents a new direction for digital marketing in the heritage sector. Specifically, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of how Balinese culinary stakeholders can harness digital tools to articulate and share their gastronomic heritage. By using strategic content tailored for specific platforms, these campaigns can cultivate international curiosity while reinforcing local identity. As such, this study adds meaningful value to the broader academic discourse on soft power and cultural promotion.

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Despite these promising outcomes, the research also reveals several key limitations that must be acknowledged. One major challenge is the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms, which makes it difficult to maintain consistent engagement and to measure long-term impacts accurately. The dynamic environment of digital trends requires constant adaptation from stakeholders, who must remain flexible and responsive to algorithm shifts and audience behavior changes. Additionally, limited access to complete social media analytics and inconsistencies in platform transparency hinder a more thorough analysis of campaign effectiveness. These issues suggest that while digital strategies are powerful, their outcomes are often difficult to quantify over extended periods. This calls for further exploration into the sustainability of digital gastrodiplomacy practices.

As a step forward, future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to assess the lasting influence of digital campaigns on the preservation of culinary traditions. By tracking audience engagement, perception shifts, and cultural awareness over time, researchers can gain deeper insights into what makes a digital gastrodiplomacy initiative successful. Moreover, expanding the scope to include a broader array of digital tools—such as augmented reality (AR), live streaming, or immersive experiences—could provide innovative ways to connect global audiences with regional cuisines. Investigating the roles of non-culinary influencers or cross-industry collaborations may also offer new angles on increasing outreach and inclusivity. These recommendations highlight the evolving and interdisciplinary nature of digital cultural promotion.

In conclusion, this research affirms that well-executed digital gastrodiplomacy initiatives can significantly impact the global visibility and appreciation of Balinese cuisine. Through the strategic use of digital platforms and influencer partnerships, Balinese culinary traditions can be both celebrated and safeguarded. While challenges persist in measuring long-term outcomes and maintaining consistent engagement, the evidence suggests that digital platforms hold transformative potential when used mindfully. Continued investigation into digital strategies, technological integration, and cross-sector collaboration will be essential for strengthening the field. Ultimately, this study offers both theoretical insights and practical strategies for using digital tools as a bridge between local identity and global cultural diplomacy.

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