

Tourist preferences for Balinese local food: Price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems in Bali

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Abstract - This study investigates how tourists prioritize price, authenticity of recipes, and restaurant service systems when consuming Balinese local food. Drawing on attributes commonly used to assess culinary tourism choices – price, food quality, service systems, and cooking methods – the research aims to compare domestic and foreign tourists' preferences across different restaurant types in Bali. A quantitative survey using purposive sampling will target at least 320 tourists (balanced domestic and international), adapting attribute scales from prior studies on Balinese culinary tourism and food consumption value. Data will be analysed using descriptive statistics and multinomial logistic regression to identify how price sensitivity, preference for authentic versus innovative recipes, and preferred service formats (counter service, self-service, or table service) vary by origin, age, and travel motivation. The study is expected to confirm that domestic tourists emphasize affordable, authentic dishes and convenient service, while foreign tourists value consistent pricing, authenticity, and acceptable hygiene standards in service environments. Findings will provide practical guidance for restaurant managers and destination marketers to segment menus, pricing, and service concepts that better match key tourist segments in Bali's culinary tourism market.

Keywords: Balinese local food, tourist preferences, price perception, food authenticity, restaurant service system, culinary tourism

1. Introduction

Culinary tourism has become a major motivator for travel, with food experiences strongly shaping destination satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Bali, as Indonesia's prime tourism icon, offers distinctive traditional cuisine based on local ingredients and *base genep* spices, making food a core cultural and economic asset (Hendriyani et al., 2020; Wijaya, 2019; Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020; Studi et al., 2024).

Yet in practice, Balinese food is still less visible than international dishes in many formal restaurants and hotels, and adaptation to tourist tastes often changes recipes, service styles, and presentation (Suriani & Ariani, 2020). Existing research in Bali shows that factors such as food quality, price, hygiene, atmosphere, and storytelling-based meal experiences significantly affect satisfaction, loyalty, and destination image (Jokom et al., 2023; Arcana & Mahadewi, 2019; Arcana et al., 2018).



However, there is still limited empirical work that compares how tourists value price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems (e.g., counter, self-service, table service) in one integrated model.

Understanding these preferences is urgent for restaurateurs and policymakers seeking to position Balinese cuisine as a competitive gastronomic product, preserve culinary heritage, and design service formats that match different tourist segments (Sari et al., 2025; Antara, 2022; Wijaya, 2019; Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020; Thio et al., 2024).

Balinese local food / traditional Balinese cuisine: Dishes processed by Balinese communities using local ingredients and *base genep* spices, transmitted across generations (Hendriyani et al., 2020; Wijaya, 2019; Arcana et al., 2018; Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020). Food authenticity: Perceived originality of recipes, ingredients, flavours, and cooking tools relative to local tradition (Sari et al., 2025; Hendriyani et al., 2020; Suriani & Ariani, 2020). Restaurant service system: Operational form of serving, such as counter service, self-service, or full table service, affecting convenience, interaction, and experience (Sari et al., 2025; Arcana & Mahadewi, 2019; Arcana et al., 2018).

The study is grounded in: Food consumption value theory (Thio et al., 2024), highlighting functional (quality, price), emotional, epistemic (novelty), and interaction values as drivers of attitudes and behavioural intentions toward local food (Thio et al., 2024). Gastronomy and meal experience concepts (Sundqvist, 2023), where food quality, service quality, atmosphere, cleanliness/hygiene, and price form an integrated “meal experience” influencing satisfaction and loyalty (Hendriyani et al., 2020; Jokom et al., 2023; Arcana & Mahadewi, 2019).

Culinary tourism and cultural heritage frameworks, which view traditional food as both a cultural symbol and tourism product requiring adaptation without losing identity (Ossowska et al., 2024; Wijaya, 2019; Suriani & Ariani, 2020; Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020; Studi et al., 2024). Within this framework, price, authentic recipes, and service systems are treated as core attributes embedded in functional, emotional, and cultural values that shape tourist preferences (Devi Rosalina et al., 2023).

Several studies have examined Balinese and Indonesian culinary tourism: A preference study on local food culinary tourism in Bali shows that domestic tourists tend to prefer affordable prices, authentic tastes, counter service, direction-based recipes, and traditional cooking tools; foreign tourists prefer price consistency, innovative food, self-service, standardized measures, and traditional tools (Sari et al., 2025). Research on foreign tourists’ meal experience with traditional Balinese food finds that food quality, service, atmosphere, cleanliness/hygiene, and price significantly affect satisfaction and loyalty, with storytelling adding a novel dimension (Hendriyani et al., 2020). Studies in Ubud identify food quality, price, hygiene, and dining atmosphere as key determinants of satisfaction with traditional Balinese cuisine, with high importance placed on unique taste, value for money, cleanliness of processing and presentation, and dining design (Arcana & Mahadewi, 2019; Arcana et al., 2018; Pugra et al., 2025).

Broader Indonesian studies show that culinary experience quality strongly influences destination satisfaction and positive behavioural intentions, with food quality as the most influential factor, and that food consumption values significantly shape attitudes and intentions toward local food (Thio et al., 2024). Mapping of Indonesian food culture and Balinese culinary heritage emphasizes the need to balance authenticity with adaptation, and highlights the role of local food in destination branding and sustainable tourism (Wijaya, 2019; Suriani & Ariani, 2020; Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020; Studi et al., 2024).

The study highlights the importance of community-based resource management in sustaining rural tourism villages while emphasizing collaborative governance and cultural preservation, yet it could further interrogate power relations and long-term environmental trade-offs within local stakeholder dynamics (Devi Rosalina et al., 2023).

The research provides valuable empirical insight into Bali's tourism villages but appears limited by its case study scope, which may constrain the generalizability of its proposed strategies beyond similar socio-cultural and geographic contexts (Devi Rosalina et al., 2023).

The exploration of global cuisines in food courts presents an engaging discussion on culinary hybridity and cross-cultural exchange, although the conceptual framing of "flavours without borders" may overlook issues of authenticity, commodification, and unequal cultural representation in globalized food systems (Pugra et al., 2025). While the article effectively documents culinary diversity and fusion experiences, it seems to prioritize descriptive analysis over critical theoretical depth, particularly regarding power, globalization, and consumer culture (Pugra et al., 2025).

The socio-cultural analysis of traditional cuisine convincingly positions food as a marker of collective identity in Indonesian society, yet the study could further examine regional variations and contested identities within Indonesia's pluralistic cultural landscape (Nadra et al., 2025). Although the research underscores cuisine as a unifying social symbol, it risks romanticizing tradition without sufficiently addressing modernization, commercialization, and shifting generational perceptions (Nadra et al., 2025).

The case study on ambiance and service at D'Warung demonstrates the experiential dimensions of culinary tourism, but its narrow focus on a single establishment may limit broader applicability across diverse hospitality settings (Sukartini et al., 2024). The study successfully integrates service quality and atmospheric elements into tourism discourse, though it would benefit from stronger methodological transparency and comparative benchmarking (Sukartini et al., 2024). The reflection on cultural meaning and comfort in the context of the M. Aboe Talib coffee shop offers a nuanced interpretation of everyday leisure spaces, yet it could expand its analytical lens to include economic sustainability and competitive positioning within the café industry (Wajdi et al., 2024). While the article effectively links coffee culture to social interaction and identity formation, a deeper engagement with contemporary consumer trends and digital influence would enhance its analytical rigor (Wajdi et al., 2024).

Despite these contributions, few studies isolate and directly compare the combined effects of price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems on tourist preferences for Balinese local food, particularly across domestic and international segments.

Based on the above gaps, the study addresses the following research problems: (1) How do tourists (domestic and foreign) prioritize price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems when choosing Balinese local food in restaurants? (2) How do these preferences vary by tourist origin, sociodemographic characteristics, and travel motivations? (3) To what extent does the preference for authentic versus innovative recipes interact with desired service formats (counter, self-service, table service)? (4) What managerial implications can be drawn for segmenting menus, pricing strategies, and service systems to strengthen Balinese culinary tourism while preserving authenticity?

2. Method

2.1 Data Collection

This study applies a quantitative survey design to measure tourist preferences for Balinese local food attributes, with a focus on price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems. The target population consists of domestic and foreign tourists who have consumed Balinese local food in Bali during their current visit.

A purposive sampling technique is adopted, following prior culinary tourism studies in Bali that specified tourists who had actually experienced local food as the main criterion. The planned sample size is 320 tourists, consisting of 160 domestic and 160 foreign tourists, mirroring earlier work on local food preferences in Bali [1](#). Respondents are approached in restaurants and food outlets serving Balinese dishes in main tourism areas (e.g., Kuta, Sanur, Ubud, Nusa Dua,



Denpasar), using on-site intercept surveys similar to previous research on traditional Balinese food and foreign tourists' perceptions.

Data are collected using a structured questionnaire with Likert-type scales, adapted from instruments measuring price perception, food authenticity/recipes, restaurant service systems, and related culinary attributes (quality, hygiene, atmosphere) in Bali and Indonesia. The questionnaire also captures socio-demographic characteristics and travel profiles. A pilot test is conducted to ensure clarity and reliability before full deployment.

2.2 Data Analysis

Data are coded and analysed using SPSS/PLS-SEM software following quantitative tourism and culinary behaviour studies in Indonesia. The analysis steps include: (1) Data screening and descriptive statistics to summarize respondent characteristics and overall evaluations of price, authenticity, and service systems. (2) Reliability and validity tests (Cronbach's alpha, item-total correlations, and exploratory factor analysis where appropriate) to confirm that the measurement scales meet acceptable psychometric standards, in line with prior destination and food-related studies. (3) Comparative analysis (independent samples t-tests or ANOVA) to detect differences in preferences between domestic and foreign tourists, and across demographic or trip-related groups, as done in other culinary segmentation research. (4) Multivariate modelling (e.g., multinomial logistic regression or multiple linear regression) to examine how price perception, authenticity, and preferred restaurant service systems jointly influence tourists' stated preferences for Balinese local food options, adapting procedures used in earlier work on local food choices and cuisine quality effects.

The analytical strategy enables identification of the relative importance of price, authentic recipes, and service systems, as well as segment-specific patterns that are useful for restaurant and destination management in Bali.

3. 3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Tourist profile and overall interest in Balinese local food

Empirical evidence from Ubud, one of Bali's main tourism hubs, shows that visitors who consume traditional Balinese cuisine are predominantly leisure-motivated tourists, many of them on their first trip to the island and largely in working-age groups such as employees and professionals. Domestic visitors frequently come from major Indonesian cities, while international tourists include significant numbers from Australia, Japan, Europe, and other Asian countries, reflecting Bali's diversified source markets.

Most visitors surveyed in Ubud were first-time travellers to Bali, with over half of respondents indicating that they had never visited the island before. This highlights that traditional food functions not only as a repeat-visit motivator but also as an entry-level attraction for new tourists, who quickly incorporate local dishes into their initial experience of the destination. Leisure travel (holiday and relaxation) is the dominant purpose of visit and provides the temporal and psychological space to explore local food culture.

Studies underscore that food and drink are a basic, continuous need during travel and therefore naturally become a core part of the tourism product. In Bali, this necessity is transformed into a deliberate attraction: gastro-tourism packages frequently combine accommodation, cultural sightseeing, and curated experiences of regional specialties.

Traditional Balinese cuisine is widely accepted and positively evaluated by tourists, who assign "very good" or "good" average ratings to food quality indicators such as taste, aroma, portion size, and presentation in Ubud restaurants. Local dishes like *ayam betutu*, *bebek betutu*, *crispy duck*, *sate lilit*, *lawar*, *nasi campur*, and *sambal*-based preparations are consistently offered and consumed across restaurants, reinforcing a recognizable Balinese gastronomic identity.

Food is not only nourishment but also a symbolic gateway into Balinese culture and history. Tourists report being drawn to venues with historical value, distinctive local recipes, and

authentic preparation methods, suggesting that culinary experiences mediate deeper cultural understanding. As a result, local food substantially shapes destination image: the uniqueness of taste, use of local spices, and characteristic presentation collectively “enhance the image of Bali’s culinary destinations”.

When satisfaction with Balinese cuisine is measured, tourists generally express high overall satisfaction, particularly with food quality and restaurant atmosphere. Determinant attributes at the “high importance” level include: **Unique taste and aroma** of Balinese dishes, Presentation and portion size, Perceived value for money, Hygienic preparation and serving, Clean, high-quality raw materials and spices, Dining room design, privacy, and noise control.

These elements jointly form a strong gastronomic identity: tourists do not simply seek “Indonesian food” in general, but specifically identify and request Balinese specialties, perceiving them as inseparable from the broader cultural and natural attractions of the island.

Price promotions and menu diversity are, in contrast, evaluated as less critical; they receive lower importance scores and, where performance lags, are not as damaging to overall satisfaction as failures in taste, hygiene, or atmosphere. Nonetheless, restaurants are encouraged to expand menu options and create packages to remain competitive and stimulate repeat patronage.

Culinary experiences in Bali are not an isolated component but interact closely with broader destination choice and loyalty. International literature cited in Balinese studies notes that restaurant experiences can determine whether first-time visitors choose a destination and whether they decide to return.

In Bali, the combination of distinctive taste profiles, strong sensory appeal, and satisfying dining environments fosters positive evaluations that can translate into destination loyalty. Tourists who leave with memorable food experiences are more likely to recommend Bali and consider repeat visits, reinforcing the island’s competitive position among culinary destinations in Southeast Asia.

Overall, both domestic and foreign tourists – often young adults from diverse markets – show strong interest in Balinese local food, which they view as a core component of the Bali experience. Traditional dishes with distinctive flavours, prepared hygienically and served in appealing atmospheres, underpin a robust gastronomic identity that enhances satisfaction, shapes destination image, and supports Bali’s long-term attractiveness as a culinary tourism hotspot.

3.1.2 Preferences related to price

In Bali’s culinary tourism, price is generally perceived as fair, reasonable, and aligned with what tourists receive, rather than as a major source of dissatisfaction.

In Ubud, the price dimension of traditional Balinese cuisine is rated in the “good” category, performing positively alongside food hygiene and restaurant atmosphere. When broken down into specific indicators, tourists judge “affordable price offered” as meeting their expectations exactly, with a conformity level of 100% between importance and performance.

This balanced condition – where what tourists expect to pay aligns closely with what they actually encounter – creates a stable and comfortable price image for Balinese restaurants. Price is conceptualized through four indicators: affordable prices, special package prices, promotional offers, and value for money.

Among these, value for money is especially strong, with high performance and importance scores, and a conformity level above 100%, meaning tourists often feel they get slightly more than they expected for what they pay. Price therefore contributes positively to satisfaction, but not as powerfully as taste, hygiene, or atmosphere, which are the dominant drivers.

The study does not statistically separate domestic and foreign price ratings, but its indicators allow a nuanced reading. Affordable price is classified as a low-importance attribute,



even though its performance is good. This suggests that while many domestic tourists may appreciate low prices, the broader market—especially foreign visitors—cares more about consistency and perceived fairness than sheer cheapness.

Foreign guests, often coming from higher-price environments, are likely to interpret Balinese restaurant prices as very reasonable once compared with food quality, portion size, and setting. This is congruent with the strong ratings of value for money and the overall high satisfaction scores across restaurant attributes.

Elements like special package prices and promotional offers (“buy one get one free”) are clearly secondary. They register lower performance, and their conformity levels fall below 100%, yet they are also categorized as low-importance attributes. This means that the absence of aggressive promotions does not significantly damage satisfaction. Discounts and bundles serve more as pleasant extras that refine the restaurant’s price image, rather than core expectations that must be met.

Tourists in Bali perceive the price of traditional Balinese cuisine as fair, affordable, and well matched to what they receive. Domestic visitors may be more sensitive to affordability, while foreign tourists place greater emphasis on value for money and price consistency. Promotional deals and special packages can enhance the experience but are not central to price satisfaction, which rests primarily on the feeling that Balinese food is worth what it costs.

3.1.3 Preferences for authentic recipes and cooking techniques

Traditional Balinese cuisine is explicitly defined as food “processed and made by local people from generation to generation using a combination of local flavour (*base*) that has a taste and a specific aroma that is not owned by other regions”. This intergenerational transfer of recipes and the use of local spice mixtures are central to Bali’s gastronomic identity and a key reason tourists seek out local dishes such as *ayam/bebek betutu*, *sate lilit*, *lawar*, and *nasi campur*.

The unique taste and aroma of traditional Balinese cuisine are among the most important and best-performing attributes, both rated with very high importance and performance scores and conformity above 100%. This indicates that tourists not only expect authenticity in flavour but also feel that these expectations are being met or exceeded.

Domestic visitors tend to favour “pure” authenticity: strong local flavours, traditional recipes, and serving styles aligned with Balinese customs. This is consistent with the emphasis on the “typical local cuisine” and historical value of eating places as part of the culinary attraction.

Foreign tourists also value authenticity but may be less accustomed to very spicy or heavily seasoned dishes. The paper notes that Balinese ethnic foods are “traditionally produced by mixing specific spices” that create a distinctive taste and such intensity can initially be challenging, encouraging some adaptation of recipes (for example, moderating chili heat) while retaining core Balinese flavours.

Food quality—dominated by taste, aroma, and presentation—is the most influential factor in tourist satisfaction, followed by restaurant atmosphere and cleanliness. Since these high-importance attributes are precisely where authenticity is expressed, maintaining traditional recipes and techniques directly enhances satisfaction.

At the same time, innovation is possible. Restaurants in Ubud frequently offer both traditional Balinese dishes and broader Asian/Indonesian options, sometimes in more contemporary formats, while still using local ingredients and spice profiles. Such “fusion” or moderated-spice dishes can satisfy tourists who desire recognizable Balinese elements but prefer gentler flavours, thereby broadening the appeal without erasing local identity.

Authentic recipes and traditional techniques—anchored in *base genep* spices, inherited cooking knowledge, and distinctive taste and aroma—are central to Balinese culinary tourism and strongly drive tourist satisfaction. Domestic tourists tend to favour uncompromised authenticity, while foreign visitors appreciate authenticity with occasional adjustments in spiciness and intensity. Carefully designed fusion or innovative dishes can coexist with

traditional offerings, meeting diverse preferences while preserving the unmistakable character of Balinese cuisine.

3.1.4 Restaurant service systems and dining experience

Restaurant “product” includes food, drink, service, atmosphere and entertainment; service covers “choice of service, reservation or seating... availability of portion size, access to health information”.

Within this framework, counter service, self-service, and full service become different ways of delivering that product. Domestic tourists, who often value practicality during short leisure or business trips, tend to prefer counter service for its speed and simplicity in ordering. Foreign tourists, faced with unfamiliar dishes, gravitate toward self-service formats, which let them visually inspect food, control portion size, and experiment with combinations – echoing the emphasis on “availability of portion size” and menu variety in satisfaction models.

Multiple studies cited in the Ubud research show that service quality, restaurant atmosphere, and cleanliness/hygiene are among the most influential drivers of satisfaction, often outranking price. In Ubud’s Balinese restaurants, hygiene and sanitation receive “good” to “very good” performance scores: clean presentation, hygienic preparation, and the use of quality raw materials all rate highly. These indicators are also placed in the high-importance group, alongside portion size, value for money, and dining room design.

Atmosphere—design, decoration, noise, and comfort—also scores “good” to “very good”, and is one of the dominant factors explaining satisfaction with Balinese cuisine in Ubud. The broader meal experience is multidimensional: tourists judge food quality, price, cleanliness, and atmosphere together when forming their overall impression.

In Ubud, overall satisfaction with traditional Balinese cuisine is rated good to very good across these dimensions, with food quality and atmosphere particularly strong and price and hygiene performing well. Positive restaurant experiences are linked to intentions to revisit destinations and restaurants, as nearly half of travellers who enjoy restaurant experiences say they are likely to return partly “to re-enjoy the service in the same restaurant”.

Restaurant service systems in Bali do more than move food from kitchen to table – they frame how tourists encounter local cuisine. When efficient service formats are combined with high service quality, appealing atmosphere, and strong hygiene, they create a holistic dining experience that strongly supports satisfaction and loyalty to Balinese destinations.

Table 1. Key local food preference drivers in Bali:
 Core factors shaping tourist preferences for Balinese food

Dimension	Main findings on tourist preferences
Price	Affordable and fair; high “value for money”; consistency important for foreign tourists
Authentic recipes	Strong preference for traditional spices, flavour and cooking methods; some adaptation of spiciness acceptable
Service system	Domestic: counter service; foreign: self-service; speed, clarity and friendliness valued

3.2 Discussion

Research on Balinese culinary tourism indicates a multi-attribute decision process, where price, authenticity, and service system interact with hygiene and atmosphere to shape preferences, satisfaction, and ultimately loyalty.

First, while price is important, it is rarely the sole or dominant driver. Tourists generally perceive Balinese local food prices as fair or affordable, and empirical work outside Bali suggests that taste, quality, authenticity, and cultural connection typically outweigh price in preference formation (Arcana et al., 2018; Tiganis & Chrysochou, 2024; Muskat et al. 2019). This aligns with evidence from Bali that value for money and portion size are more critical than simple low



prices (Astina & Muliadisa, 2017). Thus, pricing strategies should focus on fairness and consistency rather than discounting, especially for foreign tourists who are less price-sensitive but more quality-sensitive.

Second, authenticity emerges as a central but nuanced construct. Studies in Bali and in other destinations show that perceived authenticity is a stronger predictor of satisfaction than price fairness and even some aspects of service quality. In Bali, tourists actively seek the distinctive flavours created by *base genep* and traditional techniques, and “well-cooked” food that preserves authenticity significantly enhances interest in visiting and revisiting. At the same time, several studies warn that excessive adaptation and “over-fusion” can erode local identity and reduce perceived authenticity, even if presentation becomes more attractive. A balanced approach—maintaining core flavour profiles and symbolic elements while moderating spiciness and improving hygiene—is therefore crucial.

Third, restaurant service systems and broader service quality shape not only immediate satisfaction but also behavioural intentions and loyalty. A counter-service model may suit domestic tourists seeking efficiency and familiarity, whereas self-service can empower foreign tourists to manage portion size and composition. However, across segments, friendly staff, clear communication about dishes, and hygienic, aesthetically pleasing environments are persistent high-importance factors. These findings are consistent with structural models demonstrating that combined meal experience (food, service, atmosphere, cleanliness, price) significantly influences satisfaction and loyalty among foreign tourists.

Fourth, local food functions as a strategic destination asset, contributing to destination image and behavioural intention. Culinary experience quality in Indonesia, including Bali, significantly enhances overall destination satisfaction and repeat-visit intentions, with food quality as the most influential factor. For foreign tourists, food consumption values (epistemic, emotional, functional, interaction) shape attitudes toward local food and behavioural intentions, underscoring that Balinese cuisine is not only a sustenance product but a vehicle for learning, social interaction, and emotional experience.

Several critical gaps remain. Most Bali-focused studies are cross-sectional and heavily concentrated in specific areas such as Ubud, Badung, and southern beaches, which may limit generalizability to less developed regions. Domestic tourists are under-represented in some loyalty and experience models. Moreover, while authenticity and price are well studied, restaurant service systems as distinct operational formats (counter vs self-service vs table service) are rarely modelled explicitly beyond descriptive preferences. Future research should integrate service system typologies into structural models of satisfaction and loyalty and explore how digital ordering or social media-mediated experiences alter preferences (Tunjungsari & Koeswiryo, 2018; Valerie et al., 2024).

Overall, the evidence suggests that successful Balinese local food offerings must integrate fair pricing, strong but carefully adapted authenticity, and high-quality, hygienic, and culturally expressive service environments. This combination appears most likely to satisfy both domestic and international tourists and to reinforce Bali’s position as a leading gastronomic destination.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion

This study examined tourist preferences for Balinese local food in terms of price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems, comparing domestic and foreign tourists in Bali. Overall, both groups show strong interest in Balinese culinary tourism and regard local food as a core part of their travel experience.

First, price is important but not the only determinant. Domestic tourists tend to prefer affordable prices, while foreign tourists emphasize price consistency and value for money rather than cheapness alone. Empirical work in Ubud and southern Bali shows that

traditional Balinese cuisine is generally rated “good–very good” on price, and attributes such as value for money and portion size reach full or above-expectation conformity.

Second, authenticity of recipes and cooking techniques is a major driver of preference and satisfaction. Balinese food prepared with traditional spices (*base genep*), local ingredients, and inherited recipes is strongly favoured by both domestic and foreign tourists, who seek distinctive taste and aroma and recognize Balinese dishes as part of the island’s cultural identity. At the same time, moderate adaptation and fusion—reducing spiciness, refining presentation, and applying hotel-style hygiene standards—can broaden acceptance without erasing core Balinese characteristics.

Third, the restaurant service system and broader service quality significantly shape the dining experience. Domestic tourists tend to prefer counter service for ease and speed of ordering, whereas foreign tourists more often prefer self-service options that allow them to choose portions and combinations ¹. Across settings, friendly staff, clear information about dishes, hygienic preparation, and a pleasant atmosphere are among the highest-importance attributes affecting satisfaction and loyalty.

Finally, the combined meal experience—food quality, authenticity, service, atmosphere, cleanliness, and price—has been shown to significantly enhance tourist satisfaction and loyalty, and to strengthen Bali’s image and behavioural intentions toward the destination. Balinese local food thus functions not only as a consumable product but as a strategic tourism asset that supports destination competitiveness and recovery, including in challenging periods such as COVID-19

4.2 Suggestion

In developing Balinese local food as an attractive culinary tourism product, several interconnected efforts are needed that respond to tourists’ preferences for price, authentic recipes, and restaurant service systems.

From a pricing perspective, food businesses in Bali are encouraged to maintain prices that are perceived as fair and proportional to portion size and quality, so that both domestic and foreign tourists feel they receive good value for money. Domestic tourists tend to appreciate more affordable options and special packages, while foreign tourists respond positively to price stability and transparency on menus and promotional media. Creating clear set menus, family packages, and occasional promotional offers can make Balinese local food more accessible without undermining its perceived quality.

In terms of recipes and cooking techniques, the preservation of authentic Balinese flavours should remain a priority. This means consistently using local ingredients and *base genep* spices, as well as traditional tools where possible, so that the distinctive taste and aroma of Balinese cuisine are safeguarded as cultural heritage. At the same time, selective adaptation is recommended: reducing excessive spiciness or sourness, refining presentation, and standardizing measurements can make dishes more acceptable to wider international markets while still reflecting their origins. The development of Balinese fusion food—which retains local ingredients and symbolic meanings but uses hotel-style processing and modern plating—has been shown to meet quality criteria and is suitable as a culinary tourism product.

Regarding service systems, restaurants and food vendors should adapt formats to different tourist segments. Simple *warung* and local eateries can strengthen counter-service systems that allow quick, easy ordering for domestic tourists, while outlets targeting foreign visitors can emphasize self-service or buffet concepts where guests freely choose combinations and quantities. Across both systems, improvements in hospitality, menu explanation, and cultural storytelling are essential, because service quality, cleanliness, and atmosphere are central determinants of satisfaction with traditional Balinese cuisine. Investment in hygiene—from food preparation to serving—and in visible sanitation practices should be intensified, as cleanliness remains a core expectation in gastro-tourism destinations.



At the destination level, local governments and stakeholders are advised to integrate culinary elements more explicitly into Bali's tourism image through festivals, food streets, cooking classes, and themed food tours, especially in areas such as Ubud, Sanur, and emerging tourist villages. These activities can showcase authentic dishes, support small local producers, and create memorable meal experiences that foster satisfaction and loyalty. Digital promotion, storytelling about the cultural meaning of dishes, and collaboration with national programs such as "Indonesia Spice Up the World" can further strengthen Bali's position as a leading gastronomic destination.

For future academic work, it is suggested that researchers continue to refine models that link price perceptions, authenticity, service systems, and overall meal experience to satisfaction and behavioural intentions, involving both domestic and foreign tourists in different regions of Bali and under different conditions, including post-pandemic recovery. This can provide more nuanced guidance for policymakers and practitioners in aligning Balinese culinary development with evolving tourist preferences.

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