

Hidden in Plain Sight: The Glass Kitchen and Women's Culinary Innovation in Rural Tourism

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Abstract: Sustainable gastronomy has become an important lens for understanding how rural tourism can connect food heritage, local ingredients, community livelihoods, and more responsible forms of development. Yet, within many rural tourism villages, the everyday culinary practices that sustain local food systems often remain hidden behind destination branding and formal tourism planning. This study examines this overlooked dimension through the concept of the “glass kitchen”, a metaphor used to describe women’s culinary labour as highly visible in daily community life but structurally invisible within tourism governance and economic recognition. Based on fieldwork in Angseri and Tegaljadi, two rural tourism villages in Bali, this research adopts a qualitative exploratory approach involving semi-structured interviews, field observations, and focus group discussions with 45 participants engaged in food production, tourism coordination, village governance, and community-based culinary activities. Thematic analysis reveals three interconnected findings: the persistence of indigenous ingredients and household-based food production, the emergence of informal culinary innovation through everyday experimentation, and the gendered organisation of culinary labour within rural tourism systems. The findings show that culinary innovation often emerges gradually from domestic kitchens, inherited knowledge, seasonal resources, and adaptive practices rather than from formal enterprises. However, these contributions remain weakly integrated into tourism narratives and decision-making structures. By advancing the glass kitchen concept, this study contributes a gender-sensitive perspective to sustainable gastronomy and rural tourism studies, arguing that inclusive tourism development requires recognition of women’s everyday culinary labour as cultural heritage, social practice, and economic potential.

Keywords: culinary innovation, gendered labour, glass kitchen, sustainable gastronomy, rural tourism.

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Introduction

Food has increasingly moved beyond its traditional function as nourishment and entered broader discussions surrounding culture, sustainability, and regional development. Within tourism scholarship, food is widely recognised as a cultural resource capable of shaping place identity, supporting local economies, and enriching visitor experiences (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2025; Green et al., 2015; Nyberg et al., 2022; Richards, 2015). This growing recognition has contributed to the development of sustainable gastronomy, an interdisciplinary perspective that links culinary heritage with ecological responsibility, cultural continuity, and community wellbeing (Nyberg et al., 2022). Rather than focusing solely on restaurants or culinary consumption, sustainable gastronomy emphasizes the relationships among landscapes, food producers, traditional knowledge, and local communities that collectively shape food systems (Malinowska et al., 2024; Reynolds, 2020).

Within tourism contexts, gastronomy plays an important role in creating meaningful visitor experiences and strengthening territorial identity. Local food traditions enable destinations to differentiate themselves while promoting cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2025; Yubianto, 2023). Gastronomy tourism therefore extends beyond the act of eating; it encompasses the narratives, agricultural practices, and community knowledge that give meaning to food within particular places (Resmi et al., 2023; Richards, 2012). Through this perspective, food becomes both a cultural expression and a development resource capable of supporting more sustainable forms of tourism.

Despite this growing recognition, much of the existing gastronomy literature remains concentrated on urban and commercial culinary environments. Research frequently focuses on restaurants, celebrity chefs, gastronomic branding, or formal food enterprises, while everyday culinary practices in rural communities receive comparatively less scholarly attention (Balderas-Cejudo et al., 2025; Mulcahy, 2015; Reynolds, 2020; Romanova do Nascimento Costa et al., 2025). This emphasis tends to obscure the importance of rural food systems as spaces where culinary knowledge, agricultural diversity, and cultural traditions intersect.

In many rural settings, food production and preparation are embedded within household routines, seasonal agricultural cycles, and community relationships rather than professional culinary industries (Cheng, 2023; Cheng et al., 2024; Giamporcaro et al., 2025). These everyday practices represent living knowledge systems transmitted across generations through informal learning processes. They involve not only recipes but also knowledge of local ingredients, seasonal availability, preparation techniques, and cultural meanings associated with food (Resmi et al., 2023; Widjaja, 2020). As such, rural culinary practices constitute an important cultural asset that can contribute to both heritage preservation and local economic development.

This gap becomes particularly evident within rural tourism development, where planning frameworks often prioritize physical infrastructure, accommodation facilities, and landscape attractions (Ernawati et al., 2022; Lang, 2019). While natural scenery and cultural performances are frequently highlighted in tourism promotion, everyday culinary practices are often treated as complementary elements rather than central components of tourism experiences (Giamporcaro et al., 2025; Rosalina et al., 2023). Such an approach underestimates the potential of local food practices to communicate place identity, sustain cultural heritage, and generate community-based economic opportunities.

Indonesia's tourism village initiatives provide an important context for examining these dynamics. Tourism villages are designed to promote community-based development by integrating local culture, natural resources, and everyday life into tourism experiences (Cecep, 2021; Wahyuni, 2017). Through this model, visitors are encouraged to engage directly with local traditions, agricultural practices, and community activities. However, in many tourism villages, culinary practices remain only partially integrated into tourism planning (Sukerti & Marsiti, 2020; Suriani & Ariani, 2020). Traditional foods may appear during festivals or special events, yet everyday food preparation and household culinary knowledge often remain outside formal development strategies.

Within these rural food systems, culinary innovation frequently emerges from informal community practices rather than from professional kitchens or commercial enterprises. Local residents continuously adapt traditional recipes, experiment with available ingredients, and develop new food products based on seasonal resources and changing social conditions (Guiné et al., 2021; Kartini et al., 2025; Sukerti & Marsiti,

2020). Because such innovation occurs within household and community contexts, it is often overlooked in conventional tourism development models that prioritize standardized products and formal businesses.

At the same time, these everyday food practices are closely connected to gendered divisions of labour. In many rural communities, women play central roles in food preparation, ingredient management, and the transmission of culinary knowledge within families and communities (Adnyani, 2023; García-Henche et al., 2024; Kartini et al., 2025). Through these activities, women contribute significantly to both household food systems and the preservation of local culinary traditions (Baghdadi, 2019; Lusiana et al., 2022). Despite their central role, however, this labour is rarely recognised within formal tourism development frameworks, as culinary work carried out in domestic or semi-formal settings often falls outside official definitions of entrepreneurship or tourism employment.

This article builds upon preliminary research in 2025 and expands the analysis through deeper field data interpretation and conceptual development. Initial exploratory research conducted in Desa Angseri revealed that women's culinary labour plays a central role in everyday food production while remaining largely absent from formal tourism decision-making processes. Building on these insights, the present study advances the concept of the "glass kitchen." Borrowing metaphorically from the notion of the "glass ceiling," the glass kitchen describes a condition in which women's culinary contributions are highly visible in daily community life yet structurally invisible within tourism governance and economic recognition. Although women are widely acknowledged as custodians of local food traditions, their roles frequently remain confined to informal or supportive positions rather than leadership roles within tourism initiatives.

To explore these dynamics, this study adopts sustainable gastronomy as its conceptual framework. Within this perspective, gastronomy is understood as an integrated system linking food production, culinary practices, cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and community livelihoods. Culinary practices are therefore interpreted not merely as technical activities but as everyday expressions of gastronomic culture embedded within social and ecological contexts.

Building on these gaps, this study examines the relationship between everyday culinary practices, gendered labour, and rural tourism development. Specifically, it explores how everyday culinary activities and locally available ingredients are mobilized within rural tourism contexts, how gendered roles influence the organisation and visibility of culinary labour in tourism villages, and how informal culinary innovation emerging from daily practices contributes to sustainable gastronomy and community-based tourism development.

To address these questions, the study adopts a qualitative research design that enables an in-depth exploration of everyday culinary practices, gendered labour structures, and informal innovation within rural tourism contexts. Fieldwork was conducted through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation of culinary practices involving local ingredients and household food production. The empirical investigation focuses on two tourism villages in Tabanan Regency, Bali—Desa Angseri and Desa Tegaljadi—both of which possess strong agricultural traditions and emerging tourism activities while their culinary practices remain largely embedded in informal household systems rather than formal tourism enterprises. Through thematic analysis, the study identifies patterns of culinary knowledge circulation, gendered labour organisation, and informal innovation within rural gastronomy systems.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory approach to examine how everyday culinary practices are embedded within rural tourism contexts. A qualitative design enables the research to capture the social meanings, local knowledge, and gendered dynamics that shape food production and culinary activities in village settings, which are often embedded within everyday community practices and informal knowledge systems (Giamporcaro et al., 2025; Malinowska et al., 2024; Reynolds, 2020). The study follows an interpretivist perspective, focusing on how local actors understand and organize culinary practices within emerging tourism development. Fieldwork was conducted in two rural tourism villages in Tabanan Regency, Bali: Desa Angseri and Desa Tegaljadi. Both villages are characterized by strong agricultural traditions and growing tourism initiatives that incorporate local cultural and natural resources. These settings provide an appropriate context for examining how local food practices contribute to rural tourism development and community-based gastronomy. Participants were selected using purposive sampling (Haryono & Wardoyo, 2015; Sugiyono, 2015), focusing on individuals directly involved in culinary production, food entrepreneurship, tourism coordination, and village governance.

Table 1. Profile of Research Participants

Code	Role	Gender	Affiliation	Main Activity	Age	Experience
R01	Culinary micro-entrepreneur	Female	Independent	Produces traditional snacks for visitors	41–50	10+ yrs
R02	Culinary micro-entrepreneur	Female	BUMDes cooperative	Develops herbal-based food products	31–40	7 yrs
R03	Culinary micro-entrepreneur	Female	Pokdarwis	Runs food stall near tourism site	51–60	15+ yrs
R04	Local food vendor	Male	Independent	Manages seasonal food stall	31–40	5 yrs
R05	Culinary unit manager	Male	BUMDes	Oversees village culinary enterprise	41–50	12 yrs
R06	Tourism group member	Male	Pokdarwis	Coordinates culinary tourism activities	31–40	6 yrs
R07	Village Head (Angseri)	Male	Village Office	Policy on culinary–tourism integration	51–60	10+ yrs
R08	Village Head (Tegaljadi)	Male	Village Office	Supports village culinary initiatives	41–50	9 yrs
R09	Customary council member (Angseri)	Male	<i>Adat</i> Council	Advocates preservation of local ingredients	61+	20+ yrs
R10	Customary council member (Tegaljadi)	Male	<i>Adat</i> Council	Oversees customary norms in food practices	61+	20+ yrs

Code	Role	Gender	Affiliation	Main Activity	Age	Experience
R11	Home-based food processor	Female	Independent	Produces fermented condiments	41–50	8 yrs
R12–R45	Community participants (FGDs & interviews)	Mixed	Mixed groups	Shared views on culinary heritage and tourism integration	Mixed	5–30+ yrs

Source: Field Data (2025)

As summarized in Table 1, the study involved 45 participants, including 12 key informants representing various roles within the rural culinary system, such as culinary micro-entrepreneurs, local food vendors, BUMDes representatives, tourism awareness group members, village leaders, customary council members, and a young entrepreneur. In addition, 33 community participants contributed through focus group discussions and supporting interviews, providing broader perspectives on culinary heritage, local ingredients, and the integration of gastronomy within rural tourism. Data collection was conducted between April and October 2025 through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and focus group discussions (FGDs).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke (2006). Interview transcripts, discussion records, and field notes were coded inductively to identify recurring patterns related to everyday culinary practices, gendered roles in culinary labour, and local food innovation. The interpretation of themes was guided by the conceptual lens of sustainable gastronomy and the notion of the “glass kitchen,” enabling the analysis to examine how culinary practices, gendered labour, and informal innovation intersect within rural tourism development. By integrating community-based gastronomy perspectives with a gender-sensitive analytical lens, this methodological approach allows the study to capture the often-overlooked role of everyday culinary labour in shaping rural tourism systems. The analysis revealed several recurring patterns in how culinary practices are mobilized within rural tourism settings, which are presented in the following section.

Results and discussions

Results

Thematic analysis of interviews, FGDs, and participant observations generated three interconnected themes that explain how rural gastronomy is practiced and negotiated within the tourism villages studied (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These themes reflect patterns observed across both Angseri and Tegaljadi villages: (1) everyday culinary practices and the role of local ingredients, (2) the emergence of informal culinary innovation within household food systems, and (3) the gendered organisation of culinary labour, conceptualized in this study as the “glass kitchen.” Together, these themes illustrate how culinary knowledge circulates within rural communities and how everyday food practices intersect—often unevenly—with tourism development.

Everyday Culinary Practices and Local Ingredients in Rural Tourism

Across the two villages studied, everyday culinary practices emerge through different yet complementary forms of rural food production. Field data reveal that several indigenous ingredients in Angseri—although deeply embedded in everyday culinary

practices—remain largely absent from formal tourism offerings. Ingredients such as *kecombrang* (torch ginger) and *rebung* (bamboo shoots) are widely consumed in domestic cooking but rarely appear in curated menus or value-added products aimed at visitors. This discrepancy illustrates how culinary biodiversity that is actively practiced within the community remains largely absent from tourism-oriented food offerings. Rather than reflecting a lack of ingredients, this invisibility stems from how these ingredients are perceived and positioned—commonly regarded as ordinary household components rather than marketable culinary assets.

Several interviews underscored this divide between everyday use and potential innovation. One culinary micro-entrepreneur explained:

“We always use *kecombrang*, especially for soup or sambal. But it’s not something you’d find in the food for visitors. It’s for us, not for display,” (P03, Female, Culinary Micro-entrepreneur).

This perception reflects a symbolic distinction between “home food” and “tourist food.” Ingredients commonly used in domestic cooking are often perceived as too ordinary for tourism presentation, even though they represent important elements of local culinary identity.

A case from a young female returnee (P10) illustrates this emerging potential. She experimented with bottling *sambal kecombrang* using recycled glass jars and simple hand-drawn labels, envisioning a product that could combine ecological values with place-based identity. However, due to limited access to marketing knowledge and mentorship, the initiative remained informal and confined within family networks.

“I tried bottling sambal kecombrang, just to see how it looks. My cousin helped design the label. But I don’t know if I’m ready to sell it yet—it’s still just for fun.” (P10, Female, Young Entrepreneur)

This example illustrates how culinary creativity already exists within the village but often remains in an embryonic stage, relying on informal experimentation and limited visibility. The case highlights a broader gap between grassroots culinary creativity and the institutional pathways needed to transform such ideas into tourism-linked products.

Participant observations further confirmed that many indigenous ingredients are harvested seasonally and frequently used in rituals or communal meals. During FGDs in Angseri, several elders spoke with pride about the medicinal and symbolic significance of *kecombrang*, yet none had previously considered presenting it as part of the village’s culinary identity for visitors. The absence of visual branding, recipe standardization, and institutional support for experimentation contributes to the limited visibility of these ingredients within tourism narratives.

In contrast, Tegaljadi village shows a stronger presence of traditional snack production. Several households are engaged in producing snacks commonly consumed in daily meals and religious offerings. These include *kripik bayam* (spinach chips), *keripik singkong* (cassava chips), *keripik ubi* (sweet potato chips), *keripik kedele* (soybeans crackers), *keripik kacang ijo* (mungbean crackers), *kaliadrem*, and *jaje reta*. Many of these foods are prepared by home-based producers who specialize in traditional snacks for *banten* (religious offerings) as well as everyday consumption. Despite their cultural significance, these products remain largely confined to local markets within the Marga area of Tabanan. Packaging and branding are generally minimal, often consisting of simple plastic wrapping without standardized labeling or product narratives. As one participant noted:

"We make these snacks almost every day, especially for banten or family events. Sometimes people from nearby villages order them, but we usually sell them only around here." (R34 & R35, FGD participant, Tegaljadi).

Table 2 summarizes several ingredients frequently mentioned during interviews and FGDs, alongside their common uses and current position within local tourism activities.

Table 2. Local Ingredients and Traditional Food Production in Angseri and Tegaljadi

Village	Ingredient / Product	Local Name	Common Local Use	Tourism Presence	Production Pattern
Angseri	Torch ginger	<i>Kecombrang</i>	Sambal, soup aroma, ceremonial offerings	Absent from tourist menus	Household cooking
Angseri	Bamboo shoot	<i>Rebung</i>	Vegetable dishes in ceremonial meals	Informally sold	Seasonal harvest
Angseri	Fern shoots	<i>Paku</i>	Stir-fried greens in home dishes	Used at household level	Seasonal gathering
Tegaljadi	Spinach chips	<i>Keripik Bayam</i>	Daily snack, community consumption	Limited tourism exposure	Home-based production
Tegaljadi	Cassava chips	<i>Keripik Singkong</i>	Snack for daily consumption and banten	Sold locally	Small household industry
Tegaljadi	Sweet potato chips	<i>Keripik Ubi</i>	Local snack	Sold locally	Home production
Tegaljadi	Soybean crackers	<i>Keripik Kedelai</i>	Snack and ritual food	Local market only	Home production
Tegaljadi	Mungbean crackers	<i>Keripik Kacang Ijo</i>	Snack and ritual food	Local market only	Home production
Tegaljadi	Traditional cake	<i>Kaliadrem</i>	Ceremonial food and daily snack	Not integrated in tourism	Household production
Tegaljadi	Traditional cake	<i>Jaje Reta</i>	Ritual offering and snack	Not integrated in tourism	Household production

Source: Fieldwork Observations & Transcripts (2025)

Participant accounts, supported by observational data, demonstrate how several underutilized ingredients hold strong cultural relevance but remain absent from culinary tourism narratives. The comparison illustrates two distinct yet complementary forms of rural gastronomy. In Angseri, culinary identity is closely tied to indigenous ingredients embedded in agricultural landscapes. In contrast, Tegaljadi demonstrates a stronger tradition of household-based snack production associated with ritual food preparation and everyday consumption. Taken together, these findings reveal a gap between the agro-ecological richness of local food practices and their representation within tourism offerings. Rural culinary traditions in both villages are sustained through everyday practices and community knowledge, yet they remain only partially integrated into the economic and narrative frameworks of rural tourism.

Informal Culinary Innovation in Everyday Practices

While local ingredients provide the raw materials of rural culinary identity, field data indicate that innovation in the villages does not primarily emerge through institutional entrepreneurship or formal tourism initiatives. Instead, culinary innovation develops through everyday improvisation within household food systems. In both Angseri and Tegaljadi, residents adapt recipes, experiment with locally available ingredients, and modify preparation techniques in response to seasonal availability, taste preferences, or small economic opportunities. These activities typically occur in domestic kitchens rather than formal production spaces, and they are rarely recognised locally as “innovation.” Rather, they are understood as practical adaptations embedded within routine cooking and caregiving practices.

In Angseri, innovation often appears through experimentation with indigenous ingredients that are already embedded in local culinary traditions. Several participants described testing new ways of processing or presenting ingredients that are commonly used in domestic cooking. One young returnee (P10), for instance, experimented with drying *kecombrang* petals to produce a herbal tea product that she occasionally shared with homestay guests as a wellness beverage. Another participant (P02) described infusing turmeric and lemongrass into massage oils, which she packaged in reused bottles and sold informally to visitors. Meanwhile, P09—an older home-based processor—revived an ancestral preparation using fermented *rebung* (bamboo shoots) to enhance soups and broths. These examples illustrate how culinary experimentation in Angseri emerges through trial-and-error learning, family knowledge, and adaptive use of local ingredients, rather than through formal entrepreneurial training. Although these initiatives occasionally intersect with tourism activities, they typically remain small in scale and embedded within household networks.

A somewhat different pattern can be observed in Tegaljadi, where innovation occurs primarily within the village’s established snack production traditions. Instead of developing entirely new products, producers often modify existing recipes, adjust seasoning levels, or refine frying techniques in response to local demand. Producers rarely frame these adjustments as innovation; instead, they describe them as routine improvements to family recipes that have been prepared for generations. Nevertheless, these incremental modifications illustrate another form of culinary creativity embedded within everyday food production practices.

Table 3 summarizes several examples of these everyday innovations observed during fieldwork.

Table 3. Selected Everyday Culinary Innovations in Angseri and Tegaljadi

Village	Ingredient Used	Form of Innovation	Context of Use
Angseri	Kecombrang (<i>Etlingera elatior</i>)	Dried herbal tea	Shared with homestay guests as wellness beverage
Angseri	Turmeric, lemongrass	Infused massage oil	Sold informally to visitors
Angseri	Rebung (bamboo shoot)	Revived fermented condiment recipe	Used domestically, tested for small sales
Tegaljadi	Cassava	Adjustment of seasoning and frying technique for cassava chips	Sold locally within Marga
Tegaljadi	Spinach	Modification of batter composition in spinach chips	Produced for daily snacks and ritual food

Tegaljadi	Rice flour, palm sugar	Recipe adjustments in <i>kaliadrem</i> preparation	Produced for banten and family events
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Source: Field Data (2025)

As illustrated in Table 3, everyday culinary innovation in both villages tends to develop through incremental experimentation within existing food traditions rather than through the creation of entirely new culinary products. In Angseri, innovation is often associated with transforming indigenous ingredients into alternative product forms. In contrast, innovation in Tegaljadi is more closely tied to gradual adjustments within established snack production practices. Despite these differences, both patterns reflect a broader form of grassroots culinary creativity that remains largely embedded within domestic spaces and informal community networks.

These observations suggest that rural communities already possess significant innovative capacity within their everyday food systems. However, because these practices remain informal and small in scale, they rarely become visible within tourism narratives or formal culinary development initiatives. As the next section will show, the invisibility of these innovations is also closely linked to the gendered organisation of culinary labour within the villages.

The Glass Kitchen: Gendered Organisation of Culinary Labour

While everyday culinary practices and informal innovations sustain rural gastronomy in both villages, field data reveal that these activities are strongly shaped by gendered divisions of labour. Women play a central role in food preparation, ingredient processing, and the transmission of culinary knowledge across generations. Much of the culinary creativity observed during fieldwork—including experimentation with ingredients, snack production, and recipe adaptation—takes place within household kitchens and is largely carried out by women. Despite this central role, women’s culinary labour often remains positioned within domestic spaces and informal economic activities.

This pattern is conceptualized in this study as the “glass kitchen.” Borrowing metaphorically from the notion of the glass ceiling, the term describes a situation in which women’s culinary labour is highly visible in everyday village life yet remains structurally invisible within tourism governance and decision-making processes. Women are widely recognised as the individuals who prepare food, maintain culinary traditions, and manage small-scale food production. However, their knowledge and contributions rarely translate into strategic roles within village tourism planning or culinary development initiatives.

Interview data illustrate how women’s culinary work is frequently framed as an extension of domestic responsibilities rather than as entrepreneurial or professional activity. For example, one participant who had operated a small food stall near a local attraction for several years explained that although tourists regularly purchased her food, she had never been involved in discussions regarding the village’s tourism programs.

“I have been selling food here for years, and tourists come regularly. But when the village discusses tourism plans, no one asks us about the food.” (P03, Female, Food Vendor)

Similar dynamics were observed in Tegaljadi, where many snack producers are women working from their homes. Although these producers contribute to local food supply and occasionally sell products to visitors, their activities are often described as household work rather than as tourism-related enterprises. In contrast, formal roles

related to tourism management, branding, and strategic planning are more frequently held by male actors within village institutions.

Table 4 illustrates this imbalance between culinary labour and institutional influence.

Table 4. Gendered Division of Labour and Visibility in Culinary Tourism

Participant Code	Role in Culinary System	Culinary Activity	Tourism Visibility	Involvement in Decision-Making
P14	Home-based snack producer	Produces traditional snacks for visitors	Medium (warung-level only)	None
P15	Home-based processor	Produces herbal-based culinary products	Low	None
P20	Food stall operator	Manages food stall near waterfall site	High (tourist-facing)	Low
P21	Fermented food producer	Prepares fermented rebung condiments	Low (household level)	None
R38	Snack producer (Tegaljadi)	Produces cassava and spinach chips	Medium (local sales)	None
R39	Ritual snack producer (Tegaljadi)	Produces kaliadrem and jaje reta	Medium (ritual & local market)	None
P05 (male)	Village culinary planner	Coordinates village culinary programs	Low (non-cooking role)	High
P37 (male)	Village leadership	Supports tourism-related culinary initiatives	Medium	High

Source: Field Data (2025)

Although women dominate everyday culinary production across both villages, their representation in tourism governance structures remains limited, as reflected in the distribution of roles shown in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, women often sustain the everyday culinary activities that shape visitors' food experiences, yet they remain largely excluded from strategic decision-making processes. Male actors, meanwhile, are more likely to occupy roles associated with tourism planning and institutional governance, even when they are not directly involved in food production.

The concept of the "glass kitchen" therefore captures a key paradox within rural gastronomy systems: culinary knowledge and creativity are highly visible within everyday practices but remain structurally marginalised within tourism development frameworks. Women's labour sustains the flavors, techniques, and culinary heritage of the village, yet their roles remain largely confined to the private or semi-private spaces of household kitchens. This dynamic helps explain why many forms of culinary innovation observed in the villages remain informal and small in scale. When the individuals driving culinary experimentation operate primarily within domestic spaces and lack access to tourism decision-making networks, their innovations often remain embedded within household economies rather than evolving into visible gastronomic offerings.

Discussions

The findings of this study reveal that culinary innovation in Angseri and Tegaljadi does not primarily emerge from formal entrepreneurship, institutional planning, or

professional culinary enterprises. Instead, it develops through everyday practices embedded in household routines, agricultural landscapes, ritual obligations, and gendered forms of knowledge transmission. Across both villages, culinary innovation appears through the adaptive use of local ingredients, the refinement of inherited recipes, and small-scale experimentation responding to seasonal availability, local demand, and emerging tourism encounters. This finding challenges dominant models of tourism development that tend to privilege formalised culinary enterprises, gastronomic routes, and curated destination branding (Cheng, 2023; Cheng et al., 2024; Fernández & Irimia-Diéguez, 2025; Rosalina et al., 2023; Vieira et al., 2024; Wan et al., 2025). Rather than treating innovation as something that occurs only within commercial or institutional settings, the evidence from Angseri and Tegaljadi shows that rural gastronomy is often sustained through quiet, informal, and everyday forms of creativity.

In Angseri, this dynamic is particularly visible through the use of indigenous ingredients such as kecombrang, rebung, and paku. These ingredients are deeply embedded in domestic cooking, ceremonial practices, and local ecological knowledge, yet they remain weakly represented within formal tourism offerings. Their limited visibility does not indicate a lack of culinary resources. Rather, it reflects how local food is often classified as “home food” rather than “tourist food.” This symbolic distinction resonates with Richards’ (2015) critique of how authenticity in food tourism is often curated, commodified, and selectively represented. In the case of Angseri, ingredients that are culturally meaningful within household and ritual contexts are sometimes considered too ordinary for tourism presentation, even though they hold strong potential as markers of place-based gastronomy.

Tegaljadi presents a different but complementary configuration of rural gastronomy. While Angseri’s culinary identity is strongly connected to indigenous ingredients and agricultural landscapes, Tegaljadi demonstrates a more established tradition of household-based snack production. Products such as keripik bayam, keripik singkong, keripik ubi, keripik kacang ijo, kaliadrem, and jaje reta are regularly produced for daily consumption, ritual purposes, and small-scale local sales. However, despite their cultural significance and productive continuity, these foods remain largely confined to local markets and have not been fully repositioned as tourism narratives or gastronomic experiences. This suggests that even when food production is already active and economically present, it may still remain disconnected from broader tourism value chains.

Taken together, Angseri and Tegaljadi illustrate two complementary expressions of rural gastronomy. Angseri reflects an ingredient-based culinary heritage that remains underutilised within tourism development, while Tegaljadi reflects a household snack economy that is culturally active but weakly integrated into destination narratives. Both cases show that rural culinary resources are not absent; rather, they are insufficiently translated into recognised tourism assets. This finding supports sustainable gastronomy scholarship which argues that food should not be understood merely as a consumable attraction, but as part of a wider system involving culture, ecology, community livelihoods, and social relations (Malinowska et al., 2024; Nyberg et al., 2022; Reynolds, 2020).

The findings further suggest that culinary innovation in both villages is incremental rather than disruptive. In Angseri, innovation appears through attempts to transform local ingredients into herbal teas, sambal, fermented condiments, and wellness-related products. In Tegaljadi, innovation occurs more subtly through adjustments in seasoning, frying techniques, packaging, and recipe refinement within existing snack traditions. These practices may not always be labelled as “innovation” by the producers themselves.

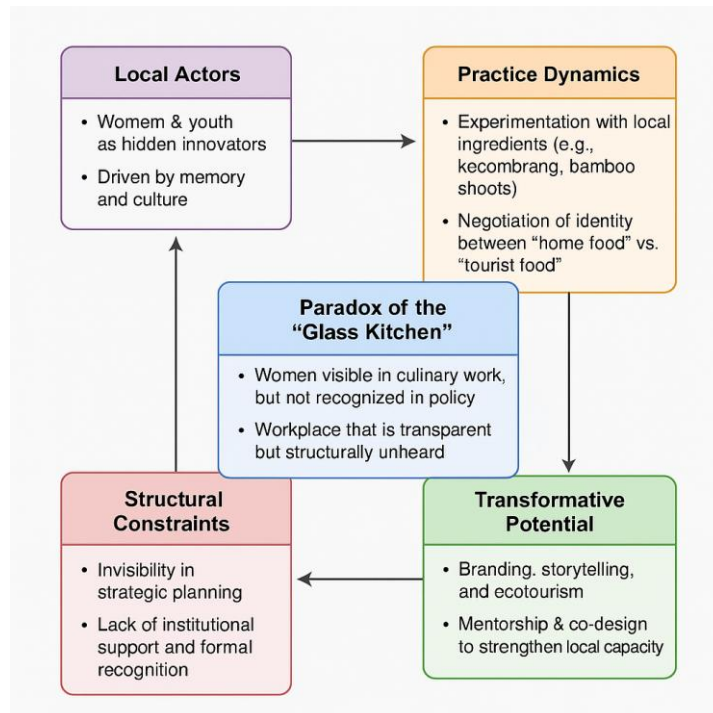
However, they reflect what Guiné et al. (2021) describe as the dynamic relationship between tradition and food development, where culinary continuity does not prevent adaptation but often becomes the basis for it. From the perspective of sustainable gastronomy, these adaptations represent important forms of grassroots creativity because they show how rural communities respond to changing tastes, tourism encounters, and economic opportunities while remaining anchored in familiar food practices.

This is where the negotiation of culinary identity becomes significant. In both villages, local actors are beginning to reinterpret what counts as valuable, authentic, or tourism-ready food. Older participants tend to associate culinary identity with ritual use, ancestral memory, traditional preparation, and ecological meaning. Younger actors, by contrast, are more likely to recognise the potential of packaging, storytelling, hygiene, portability, and visual presentation. This does not necessarily indicate a conflict between tradition and modernity. Rather, it reflects an ongoing negotiation between continuity and adaptation. Rural culinary identity is not static; it is continuously reworked as communities encounter new expectations, market opportunities, and tourism imaginaries.

However, this negotiation also carries certain risks. When local food is reframed primarily through tourism aesthetics, its deeper social and cultural meanings may be simplified. A sambal, a traditional snack, or a herbal drink can easily become a marketable product, but the labour, memory, ecological knowledge, and gendered practices behind it may remain invisible. This issue is particularly important in Angseri and Tegaljadi, where much of the culinary work is carried out by women in domestic or semi-informal spaces. Tourism may create new opportunities for visibility, but it can also reproduce older patterns of exclusion if women's roles remain limited to production while strategic decisions concerning branding, product development, and tourism planning are controlled by others.

A central contribution of this study is therefore the concept of the "glass kitchen." The metaphor captures a paradox found across both villages: women's culinary labour is highly visible in everyday life, yet structurally invisible within tourism governance and economic recognition. Women prepare food, manage ingredients, transmit recipes, adjust products, and sustain ritual and household food systems. Yet their contributions rarely translate into leadership roles, formal recognition, or participation in tourism planning. This dynamic reflects broader patterns identified in feminist rural development and tourism scholarship, where women's labour sustains local economies while remaining structurally undervalued (Adnyani, 2023; Ernawati et al., 2022; García-Henche et al., 2024; Lang & Fink, 2019; Shantika et al., 2021).

The glass kitchen framework is useful because it does not merely describe women's participation; it explains the gap between participation and recognition. Women are present in the culinary system, but their presence does not automatically produce influence. Their work is visible at the level of practice, but less visible at the level of policy, branding, product development, and institutional decision-making. In Angseri, this invisibility appears in the under-recognition of women's knowledge of indigenous ingredients. In Tegaljadi, it appears in the way women's snack production is often treated as routine household work rather than as a meaningful part of the village's gastronomic identity. This distinction is important because inclusion in rural tourism cannot be measured only by whether women are involved in food production. It must also consider whether women have the authority to define culinary narratives, access development support, shape tourism products, and benefit from the value created by their labour.



(Source: Author's elaboration based on field data, adapted and further developed from the preliminary conceptual model presented in Kartini et al. (2025))

Figure 1. The Glass Kitchen Model of Informal Culinary Innovation

Figure 1 illustrates this conceptual framework by positioning everyday culinary practices, local actors, and structural constraints within a broader system of informal culinary innovation. The model shows how grassroots creativity emerges through experimentation with ingredients, storytelling practices, recipe adaptation, and small-scale product development, often initiated by women and youth. At the same time, it highlights how structural barriers—such as limited access to branding platforms, mentorship, institutional support, and tourism decision-making spaces—prevent these initiatives from becoming visible and recognised tourism products. The model therefore connects the empirical findings from Angseri and Tegaljadi with the wider conceptual argument of this study: that sustainable rural gastronomy depends not only on culinary resources, but also on the social structures that determine whose knowledge becomes visible, valuable, and institutionally supported.

The implications of this research extend beyond the two villages. Similar patterns of gendered culinary labour, underutilised food heritage, and informal innovation are likely to be found in many rural tourism destinations across the Global South. The glass kitchen framework therefore offers a diagnostic tool for identifying exclusionary dynamics in tourism development while also suggesting pathways toward more inclusive strategies. Sustainable gastronomy development requires more than promoting local food as an attraction. It requires institutional mechanisms that connect everyday culinary knowledge with tourism planning in ways that are participatory and context-sensitive. These mechanisms may include cooperative production spaces, women-led culinary forums, mentorship for packaging and storytelling, village-level culinary mapping, and participatory product development involving both older knowledge holders and younger entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, the cases of Angseri and Tegaljadi show that the future of rural gastronomy depends not only on what food is available, but also on whose knowledge is recognised and whose labour is allowed to shape tourism development. By repositioning everyday culinary actors, particularly women, as agents of innovation rather than merely as supporting labour, rural tourism can move toward a more inclusive model of sustainable gastronomy. In this model, food is not treated simply as a product for visitors, but as a living cultural practice through which heritage, livelihood, gender relations, and local creativity are continuously negotiated.

Conclusions

This study shows that sustainable gastronomy in rural tourism is sustained not only through formal enterprises, destination branding, or tourism infrastructure, but also through everyday culinary practices embedded in household routines, local ingredients, ritual obligations, and gendered knowledge. Evidence from Angseri and Tegaljadi demonstrates that culinary innovation often emerges informally through domestic experimentation, recipe adaptation, small-scale snack production, and the creative use of indigenous ingredients. These practices are central to rural food systems, yet they remain only partially recognised within tourism narratives and value chains.

The main conceptual contribution of this study lies in the introduction of the “glass kitchen” as a lens for understanding the paradox of women’s culinary labour in rural tourism. Women are highly visible in food preparation, ingredient management, culinary transmission, and informal innovation, yet their contributions often remain structurally invisible within tourism governance, product development, and institutional decision-making. This concept helps explain why rural culinary knowledge may be culturally present but economically and politically under-recognised.

The findings suggest that inclusive rural tourism development requires more than promoting local food as an attraction. It requires institutional support for the people and practices behind the food, particularly women whose everyday labour sustains local gastronomy. Practical strategies may include women-led culinary forums, cooperative production spaces, culinary mapping, mentorship in packaging and storytelling, and participatory product development that connects older knowledge holders with younger entrepreneurs.

By repositioning everyday culinary actors as agents of innovation rather than merely as supporting labour, rural tourism can move toward a more inclusive and culturally grounded model of sustainable gastronomy. In this sense, the future of rural gastronomy depends not only on preserving food heritage, but also on recognising whose labour, knowledge, and creativity are allowed to shape its development.

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