



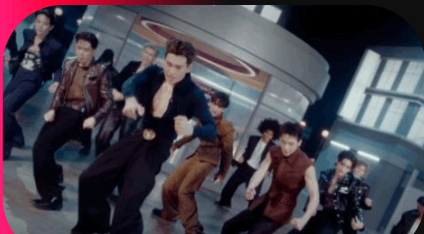
APAC



# Culture & Trends Report



Southeast Asia





# Local Culture Going Global

Elevating local South East Asian culture on a global stage

# South East Asian Street Food and Local Cuisine

Extending beyond traditional reviews of food and dining experiences, creators are biting into the stories behind South East Asian street food through YouTube-native content styles like long-form food challenges, in-depth cooking tutorials, and restaurant reviews and interviews. Introducing local dishes to global audiences with heartfelt storytelling, explorations of local heritage, and cultural deep-dives, channels use a range of content formats to spotlight the history and community behind some of the region's most iconic dishes, ultimately preserving the traditions of local street food online.

## 8M<sup>+</sup>

As a food channel sharing local SEA cuisine with global viewers, Abroad and Hungry gained **8M** channel views in 2025 YTD\*.



**Abroad and Hungry**  
(329K subscribers)

## An International Perspective on Local Food

Many international creators like [Luke Martin](#), [Mark Wein](#), and [Abroad and Hungry](#), use YouTube-first content trends to showcase SEA's rich food culture to global viewers. Through long-form content such as 24 hour food challenges, market tours and interviews, these creators deep-dive into local dishes, eateries, and the people behind them.



\*Source: Tubular Data, Jan 1 to Aug 12 2025



# Trend Features

01

## Elevating SME Food Businesses

Straying away from major chain restaurants and prominent eateries, many creators dive into [local food markets](#) and [street food spots](#) that take a closer look at SME (small to medium enterprise) vendors. This content [emphasises the authentic flavours](#) of these smaller eateries, rebranding them to hidden gems and speaking to the growing role of smaller businesses in how people experience food and wider local culture.

02

## Local Eats with a Side of Storytelling

Emphasizing the role of food culture in everyday life, creators often use food as a vehicle for storytelling, often speaking with collaborating creators or sharing personal stories over local delicacies and dishes. For instance, a collaboration between prominent food and travel creator [Ria SW and singer Jackson Wang](#) revealed a more personal and down-to-earth side to the artist, as they sampled local dishes from street vendors.

03

## Highlighting Local Food Culture as a Travel Experience

Content frequently spotlights local food markets and popular places to eat, elevating these settings as [tourist destinations](#) and [must-visit areas](#) for international travellers. Showcasing their travel experiences through hyperlocal cuisine journeys, travel creators often share reviews of traditional cuisine as well as the space and [destination](#) in which it is eaten, ultimately heightening the authenticity behind local dishes and eateries.

04

## Spotlighting the Traditions Behind the Cuisine

Many creators shift their focus from the meals themselves to the [people](#) and culture behind them, instilling a sense of realness to their recommendations for places to visit. This taps into vibrant South East Asian food cultures, seeing local creators keep their [rich food traditions alive](#) in foreign countries as well as [international creators](#) sharing first-hand experiences of local cuisine that emphasise flavourful culinary storytelling.



Ria SW

(4.56M subscribers)



Agassi Ching

(5.81M subscribers)



## How Are Brands Engaging With The Trend?

Using cuisine as a vehicle for driving interest in local tourism, Indonesian online travel agency Tiket.com collaborated with various creators for a rebranding campaign aimed at Gen Z and Millennial audiences. By showcasing creators enjoying local cuisine during their travel journeys, the brand attracted 9.1M unique users in 11 days and over doubled their engagement rate to 13%.



#1

Surveyed Gen Z (18-27) viewers in Indonesia rank YouTube as the #1 platform for product reviews and information, outperforming all competitors including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Snack Video\*.



#1

Surveyed viewers in the Philippines rank YouTube as the #1 platform for product review and information, outperforming all competitors including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok\*.



#1

YouTube is the #1 touchpoint used for travel inspiration among surveyed Thailand travellers, surpassing options like word-of-mouth, travel booking platforms, and other social media platforms\*\*.

\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, Future of Video, 2025

\*\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, APAC Travel 2024, 2024





# Local South East Asian Bands

As a thriving melting pot of music trends, South East Asia's growing young population of music lovers is being shaped by a range of local bands. Taking centre stage across a variety of genres, these artists are expanding their fanbases beyond their home countries, blending innovation with local culture in both sound and visuals. YouTube serves as a key platform for these rising artists, aiding them in expressing their unique identities online and connecting with fans worldwide.

## 2.9M<sup>+</sup>

Thai girl group 4EVE garnered over **2.9M views** in six weeks with their first fully-english MV "Like You".



**4EVE**  
(1.24M subscribers)

## SEA Girl Groups Breaking Boundaries and Empowering Women

Girl groups from across South East Asia are using their songs and music videos to challenge traditional barriers that many women face. For instance, [Voice of Baceprot](#), an all-female hijabi rock-metal group from West Java, Indonesia, partnered with local menstruation pad brand [Softex](#) for an online advertisement, speaking to the challenges that women face globally. Similarly, Filipino girl group [BINI](#) frequently embraces themes of female empowerment, self-love, and individuality in their music.



# Trend Features



**BUS because of you i shine**  
(905K subscribers)



**BINI**  
(3.12M subscribers)

01

## Local Bands Reaching Global Audiences

Redefining representation in the music industry, local bands are bridging the gap between South East Asian culture and the global music scene. Groups like Indonesia's [Galdive](#), Thailand's [Gemini and Forth](#), and Philippines' Boy Band [SB19](#) are garnering attention from global audiences, appearing on channels from international creators and bringing their local talents to the world stage.

02

## Spotlighting Off-stage Moments

From [behind-the-scenes concert vlogs](#) to YouTube-exclusive [variety shows](#), many Southeast Asian bands use online content to elevate the people behind the music. This content captures unscripted moments on long-form and light-hearted interactions between artists and fans on livestreams, often using on-platform or embedded subtitle options to establish stronger connections with international audiences.

03

## Local-culture-influenced Identities and Aesthetics

With Indonesian girl group No Na's "[shoot](#)" MV featuring local village aesthetics and Thai boy band BUS visiting a local [durian orchard](#), a uniquely local experience, many South East Asian artists are integrating elements from their home countries into their online content. Staying true to their cultural roots, these bands show immense respect for their heritage in their music and band aesthetics.

04

## Embracing YouTube's Formats and On-platform Features

Whether it's [offline moments](#) in long-form videos or Shorts [memes](#) and [dance challenges](#), Southeast Asian bands use the full spectrum of YouTube's video formats and on-platform features to cultivate their online presence and global reach. Connecting with fans through frequent posts on the community tab or album release livestreams, YouTube is a foundation upon which bands can build their music industry influence.



## How Are Brands Engaging With The Trend?

Partnering with Musica Studio, car manufacturing company Toyota collaborated with Indonesian Rock Band Noah to reignite hype for their 2021 All New Toyota Veloz. Integrating their brand into the band's MV for "Khayalan Tingkat Tinggi", the partnership resulted in a 14 percentage point (pp) increase in Brand Awareness, a 17pp increase in Purchase Intent, and a 6pp increase in Noah audience interest in the Toyota Brand, demonstrating the impact of local bands in advertising content.



**81%**

Surveyed Gen Z (18-27) viewers in Indonesia agree that YouTube has the best content for entertainment including music videos (95%) and podcasts (94%).\*



**94%**

Surveyed Gen Z (18-27) viewers in the Philippines agree that YouTube has the best content for entertainment, including music videos (94%) and podcasts (83%).\*



**54%**

Viewers in Thailand choose YouTube as their favorite platform to watch a variety of video types (54% music videos, 52% podcasts, 38% creator/influencer produced).\*\*

\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, Future of Video, 2025

\*\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, WhyVideo, 2024







# Evolving Online Entertainment

Reflecting the evolving nature of audience interests and needs through creator-community collaborations

# Sportainment

From athletes and industry experts to casual creators and media celebrities, sportainment content transforms sporting events into an engaging and entertaining viewing experience beyond the games themselves. The trend's versatility creates rich opportunities for channels to extend the in-person camaraderie of offline events into online spaces, exploring innovative ways to interact with fans and foster greater sports fandom connections by creating content around professional sports leagues as well as ongoing YouTube-specific events.

## Celebrity Leagues and Tournaments

A tournament pitting Indonesia's actors and celebrities against one another, VINDES' "Bahkan Voli" returned again in 2025, racking up millions of views following its success of the previous year. Beyond the livestream of the main event itself, pre and post-match related content like player [introductions](#) and [interviews](#) attracted significant viewership. Similarly, [IDOL GAMES](#) is a football league featuring teams made of "idols" from Thailand and neighboring countries. The popularity of such events highlight the versatility of 'sportainment' content as an authentic way to capture celebrity interactions, journeys, and personalities outside of their usual professions.

# 6.3M<sup>+</sup>

VINDES's "[Bahkan Voli 2](#)"  
livestream on May 31  
amassed **6.3M views** in  
a month.



**VINDES**  
(4.82M subscribers)



# Trend Features

01

## Athlete & Expert Narratives

Legacy-media-run YouTube channels are leveraging online-exclusive content, sharing in-depth [interviews](#) with rising stars and [podcast](#) discussions with industry experts to highlight sports narratives beyond traditional games. Like [Thom Hays](#) and [John Riel Casimero](#), a growing number of professional athletes are also establishing their own YouTube channels, blending their personal journeys and on-field expertise.

02

## Celebrities Using Sports as a Vehicle for Personal Storytelling

Celebrities are turning to YouTube to share intimate perspectives on their lives outside of their professions. Soap opera star turned-creator [Antihero](#) uses football as a vehicle for personal storytelling, while podcasts like [IMPACT DRIVEN LEGACY PODCAST](#) offer candid conversations with celebrities and content creators about their personal journeys, leading to authentic, casual interactions and fostering deeper connections with fans.

03

## Leveraging Diverse Formats for Audience Interaction

Sportainment creators are evolving the way event hosts and broadcasters interact with viewers through hosting [live chat parties](#) where audiences can come together to watch games alongside other viewers. Local training hubs are also posting [Shorts challenges](#) to engage audiences, enriching the diversity of sports fandoms' content and mediating a greater sense of community amongst online viewers.

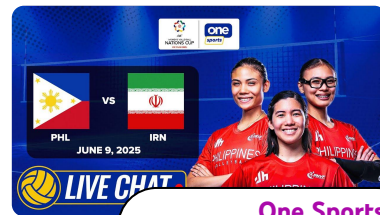
04

## Building International Fanbases through Cross-nation Events

Sportainment channels are hosting cross-nation events, like the [IDOL GAMES](#) football match between Cambodian and Thai celebrities and [Byon Combat Showbiz](#) fights bringing together Indonesian and Malaysian athletes. These channels extend their content's reach far beyond their home countries, fostering a broader, more engaged community centred around embracing national identities and shared competitive interests.



**IDOL GAMES**  
(1.16M subscribers)



**One Sports**  
(4.81M subscribers)



## How Are Brands Engaging With The Trend?

Partnering with IGN South East Asia for a 48-hour PUBG mobile gaming tournament, Samsung and McDonald's Malaysia used eSports content to drive brand awareness, featuring product demos and branded visuals across content on Media Prima TV3's official YouTube channel. Capitalising on existing sporting fandoms online, specifically around Esports, these brands achieved over 6.1M brand impressions, 630K live stream views, and 5K peak concurrent live stream viewers.

**79%**

89% of viewers in Indonesia agree that YouTube has top sports content, outperforming the competitive average (84%)\*.

**#1**

Surveyed viewers in the Philippines rank YouTube as the #1 platform for having the best ad experience, outperforming all competitors including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok\*\*.

**86%**

86% of viewers in Thailand and 89% of viewers in Indonesia agree that YouTube has top sports content, outperforming the competitive average (84%)\*.

\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, WhyVideo, 2024

\*\* Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, Future of Video, 2025



# Made-For-Shorts

From short skits and episodic micro-drama series to game shows and educational content, more creators across South East Asia are producing Shorts-exclusive content, demonstrating a growing demand for quick, mobile-friendly entertainment. These channels are innovating their approach to content creation and online storytelling, capturing viewer attention with a short run time and leaning into simple, narrative-driven content over high-production editing and visuals.

## South East Asian Shorts Skits & Dramas

Skits and drama series are thriving as Shorts-exclusive content, often centered on the everyday life of families and neighborhood communities. Consistently attracting millions of views, [omped\\_visual](#) takes a low-cost approach to drama and skit content, blending comedy and nostalgia to portray relatable “kampung” (meaning town or village) moments. Likewise, [Far Fin Fun](#) shares episodic Shorts that capture the heightened drama and emotions commonly associated with soap operas in a uniquely Thai narrative. Other creators also play on stereotypes associated with specific countries, like [Abi Marquez](#), who shares relatable Filipino behaviours.

# 1B<sup>+</sup>

Known for their comedy Shorts skits portraying everyday life in a local Indonesian village, [omped\\_visual](#) (12.4M subscribers) gained over **1B views** on their channel in May 2025 alone.



**omped\_visual**  
(12.4M subscribers)



# Trend Features

01

## Elevating Awareness for Hyperlocal Cultures

Using niche communities as the primary setting for their content, creators are elevating local culture to a broader range of viewers by using Short-form content as a vehicle for increasing online representation. From [small town dramas](#) to [provincial backdrops](#), these creators are embracing unique rural lifestyles and settings online, showcasing local pride for a wider audience.

02

## Shorts as Long-form Teasers

Ranging from exclusively Shorts-produced [behind-the-scenes clips](#) to [repackaged footage](#) from other content, Shorts help creators direct viewership towards long-form videos through eye-catching visuals and quick-witted humor. This mediates a stronger channel presence online, reaching wider audiences and extending the lifespan of content via ongoing Shorts highlights.

03

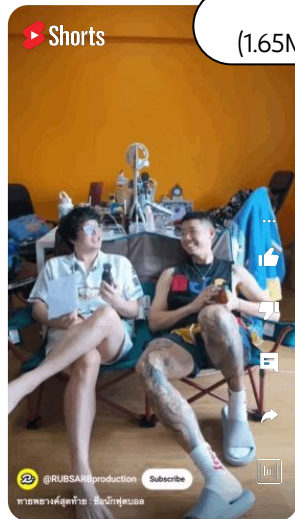
## One Format, Unlimited Content Styles

Despite being confined to a single content format, South East Asian creators are pushing the boundaries of made-for-Shorts content by diversifying their content styles and uses. From low-cost [Indonesian skits](#) and health conscious [Filipino product recommendations](#) to YouTube-exclusive [Thai game shows](#), Shorts connect with a wide array of niches and industries.

04

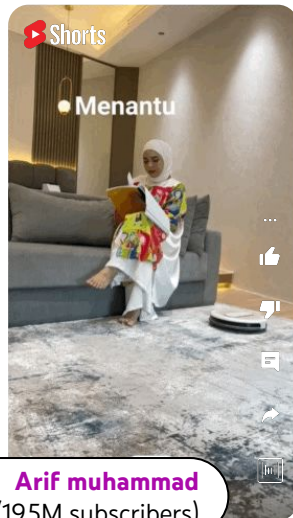
## Fostering Online Community

Shorts provide creators with the opportunity to connect with one another through shared audio and on-platform features. Whether these connections are formed through [remixes](#) with other creators or combining [trending audio with niche-specific content](#), Shorts is seeing increased creativity from channels looking to maximize their use of the format's 3-minute content time.



RUBSARB

(1.65M subscribers)



Arif muhammad

(19.5M subscribers)





## How Are Brands Engaging With The Trend?

Converting social content into YouTube engagement, Unilever Thailand collaborated with Publicis and Google on a series of online ads to drive increased engagement for their brands. This Shorts-exclusive content resulted in a 5.4% relative lift in Consideration and 7x higher completed views for hairbrand TRESemmé, and a 16.6% relative lift in Ad recall and 1.2x higher completed views for fabric conditioner brand Comfort.



# 59%

At least 59% of surveyed respondents in South East Asia said YouTube Shorts represent a wide range of voices, people, and perspectives compared to other short-form video platforms, and this is consistent across all SEA countries surveyed\*.

\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Material. Power of YouTube Shorts, 2024





# Purpose-driven Content

Explaining complex issues in easy-to-understand content  
to help viewers make sense of the world

# Money & Hustle Storytelling

Empowering increased accessibility for online education, creators are curating their content around money and business storytelling. This content uses a blend of humor, entertainment, and relatable topics like living on minimum wage, hustle culture, and saving for the *sandwich generation* (a term describing individuals taking care of both their children and parents) to convey complex ideas in a simplified medium. Reflecting the growing need for business and economic wellness literacy among young, digital-savvy audiences, the trend helps viewers navigate the evolving economic climate across various South East Asian markets.

## 7M<sup>+</sup>

Chinkee Tan amassed over **7M views** on non-members-exclusive long-form videos posted between January and June 2025.



**Chinkee Tan**  
(2.19M subscribers)

## Future-proof Wealth Building Tips for Younger Generations

As the cost of living continues to increase on a global scale, more Gen Z and Millennial audiences are turning to YouTube for tips on [side hustles](#) and diversifying their income streams. From content discussing [Gen Z spending habits](#) and [alienation](#) in traditional work spaces to channels dedicated to [economic independence](#) for younger demographics, many creators aim to increase literacy around personal economics and business.



# Trend Features

01

## Accessible Online Education and Business Storytelling

With more South East Asian viewers turning to YouTube for fast and simple explainers, creators are blending entertainment with foundational [money management](#) and [business](#) knowledge to increase content accessibility. Paired with a strong sense of online identity, many channels share more [intimate perspectives](#) on how entrepreneurs run their businesses and the impact this has had on other areas of their lives.

02

## Timely Topics and Pop Culture Connections

Creators frequently center content on topical financial themes and issues currently facing many South East Asians, as well as the impact of [pop culture trends](#) and local brands, like Labubus and Jollibee, on the wider economic ecosystem. This manifests on YouTube through popular [brand and business breakdowns](#) and interviews with leading [figureheads](#) in political landscapes, maintaining a sense of timeliness and relevance to today's fast-paced, evolving online landscape.

03

## Expert Insights through Industry Professional Podcasts

Often organising content in curated playlists, Southeast Asian creators are using podcasts to share the ins and outs of business development and resource management. With many channels interviewing [industry professionals](#), these podcasts help creators share simple breakdowns of complex concepts, providing [live commentary](#) on the latest economic news as well as [practical business insights](#) backed by first-hand industry experience.

04

## Cross-industry Content Versatility

Alongside traditional money-focused content, like [breaking down budgeting strategies](#) and [exploring different income streams](#), many creators provide dialogue on the economic impacts of current events in other industries. From the [automotive](#) and [real estate](#) sectors to the [F&B](#) and [fashion](#) industries, this content diversity helps creators engage wider audiences with varying interests.



**THE MONEY COACH**  
(690K subscribers)



**Raymond Chin**  
(3.1M subscribers)



## How Are Brands Engaging With The Trend?

Digital banking company KROM sponsored a series of Shorts content from various YouTube creators. Breaking down the company's basic services through easy-to-understand Shorts, creators' diverse content styles and unique interpretations of the brand brief resulted in a 42% Search Lift. By tapping into personal economics and business storytelling, KROM digital bank also saw multiple brand lifts utilizing VRC 2.0 Shorts only campaign.

**70%**

In Indonesia, 70% of Gen Z users choose YouTube when they want to engage deeply to increase their understanding of a topic, compared to 36% Instagram users and 42% TikTok users.\*

**96%**

Surveyed Gen Z (18-27) viewers in the Philippines agree that YouTube has top content in education/learning (96%), music (95%), and how-to/DIY (95%), outperforming the competitive average.\*\*

**67%**

In Thailand, 67% of Gen Z users choose YouTube when they want to engage deeply to increase their understanding of a topic, compared to 39% Instagram users and 56% TikTok users.\*

\*Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, YouTube Narrative - Readiness, 2024

\*\* Source: According to a survey by Google/Kantar, Future of Video, 2025





# What Does This Mean For Brands?

How can brands engage with these themes and what can brands learn from the trends?



# What Does This Mean For Brands?

## **Tap into YouTube's Global Reach**

Connecting creators across South East Asian countries as well as international markets, YouTube presents brands with a unique opportunity to tap into the platform's global reach. Partnering with diverse creators, brands can reach audiences from a range of age and country demographics.

## **Leverage YouTube's Multi-formatted Storytelling Capabilities**

YouTube's multi-formatted content capabilities allow brands to diversify their approach to advertising and online storytelling. The platform's content versatility enables brands to engage with wider audiences and create dynamic online portfolios, showcasing products and services through a variety of formats, content styles, and verticals.

## **Build Credibility with YouTube's Reputation as a Trustworthy Online Platform**

Aligning with the high trustworthiness of the platform and its creators, brands can enhance their online presence through accessible, user-friendly content, shared through credible perspectives that engage with desired target audiences and industries.



# Creator **Trust Positively Extends** to Endorsed Brands

Viewers develop a deep sense of belonging with creator communities and feel like creators on YouTube **uniquely prioritise their communities trust** over commercial benefits.

This contributes to brand partnerships and collaborations being **viewed more favourably** as viewers **trust the genuineness of creators**.



# 83%

of surveyed viewers in Indonesia agree that  
**creators on YouTube are authentic when promoting products,**  
outperforming the competitive average^.



# Brands Advertising on YouTube are Perceived with Legitimacy and Trust

Viewers develop a **deep level of trust** and loyalty to YouTube, feeling secure in the knowledge they can access high quality content.

This creates a **trusted and reliable environment** which benefits brands and products seen alongside in this space.



# 86%

of surveyed viewers in Indonesia say  
**they trust the views and opinions  
on brands and products from  
creators on YouTube**

outperforming the competitive average^.

