

Commodity Presentation: Coconuts

1. Cultivation

- Coconut palm trees are planted commercially in tropical lowlands
- Require an average temperature of 72°F, an annual rainfall of at least 30 inches, and full sunlight for successful cultivation
- Extremely hardy plants

2. Production Process

- Production process differs based on the type of product being made
- Common product is copra (dried coconut meat)
- Copra production process: shell of the coconut is removed, meat is shredded, then heat treated to reduce bacteria & moisture levels
- Other products: coconut oil (byproduct of copra) and coconut water
- Products are graded by their coarseness (extra fine, macaroon, medium, and coarse)

3. Transnational Flows

- Top coconut producing countries: Philippines, Indonesia, & India
- Top coconut exporting country: Thailand
- Top coconut importing country: United States

4. Advertising & Commodity Fetishism

- Coconut advertisements generally promote health (“natural/organic”)
- Message: consuming something healthy will make you feel “beautiful” inside and out
- Heavily marketed towards middle class or higher individuals, specifically younger health conscious women

5. Injustice & Inequality

- Most injustice surrounding coconuts includes poor labor conditions, poverty, & environmental issues
- 70-95% of coconuts come from independent smallholders
- Since the coconut industry is largely informal, farmers are more vulnerable to exploitation
- Recent demand for coconut products is due to Western health concerns and perceptions about sustainability

6. Social Movements

- Fair Trade aims to uplift and assist coconut farmers (standards, structure, & premiums)
- Increase in the small-scale promotion of sustainability practices
- Rainforest Alliance certification: product was produced using methods that support social, economic, & environmental sustainability

7. How to Help

- Fundraiser to help raise money for female coconut farmers in the Philippines
- Project supports women-led coconut enterprises with the goal of improving their lives by making and selling coconuts and their secondary crops that come from the coconut palm
- By donating, we can provide women and their families who are dependent on coconut farming with additional income to empower them socially & economically
- Coconut by-products won't be wasted

Link to fundraiser:

<https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/coconut-based-women-entrepreneurship-initiative/>

Thank you!