

Cousin Margaret: The Coconut Oil Legacy

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In the villages along the East Coast of Demerara, there is a familiar name, spoken in almost every household, *Cousin Margaret*. For almost six decades, she has held the name of The Queen of Coconut Oil, a skill that has rapidly turned into a tradition inherited by her grandmother at the tender age of 15. What began as a household necessity for her home, the skills obtained have led to a thriving enterprise, serving communities from Paradise to Golden Grove to Victoria and beyond.

Cousin Margaret recalls anxiously awaiting her grandmother's return from the backyard, carrying bags of coconut for her preparation. She was always amazed to see the careful rhythm of the craft from the grating of the coconuts, extracting the oil-rich white flesh, to the slow boiling that transforms the liquid from the coconut into oil and the benefits that come with it. Cousin Margaret recalls, "It's always about patience; it's the love and respect for the coconut, knowing the nourishment you provide to families."



Picture of Cousin Margaret



Cousin Margaret and one of her many grandchildren

Over the years, Cousin Margaret's oil business has been more than just kitchen use; she has educated the public about the multi-use and the benefits of it, a beauty secret for hair and skin, and the symbol of community resilience. What started as two to three bottles passing through the gate quickly led to villagers lining up for their bottles. Some genuinely admitted, even calling at the house not knowing her first name to this day, simply *Cousin Margaret*, a title that reflects pleasing her customers even if it takes being up all night to get it done.

Margaret stands out for being one of the most trustworthy and authentic people the village knows. With new customers pouring in, her oil remains pure, never trying to shortcut her work or offering less than the required amount. What brings a smile to her face is when customers say they can always differentiate her oil from the others.



Products made by Cousin Margaret

In a time where mass production threatens to erase artisanal practices, Cousin Margaret stands out as a cultural anchor, a pillar of authenticity. Her story is not just about her oil; it is about tradition, preserving her heritage, and the love and support of communities. Each bottle carries with it decades of wisdom, the passing down of generational love, the memory of her grandmother, and the growth of the household to build a legacy that started from scratch.