

# MANILA BULLETIN

Published on *The Manila Bulletin Newspaper Online* (<http://www.mb.com.ph>)

[Home](#) > Coco Loco

## Coco Loco



Hollywood superstar Madonna with her favorite drink

MANILA, Philippines — Hollywood stars Gwyneth Paltrow, Courtney Cox, Sienna Miller, and supermodel Gisele Bundchen are devoted fans of Vita Coco, one of the most popular coconut water brands exported from the Philippines to the United States. Celebrity-singer Rihanna and Yankees star Anthony ‘A-Rod’ Rodriguez proudly endorse it. Madonna loves it so much she invested \$10 million in it.

Fondly known as “coco water” in the US, the Philippines’ buko juice is hailed for its natural capacity to rehydrate and provide essential amounts of electrolytes. It contains high levels of lauric acid that protect the body against infections and boost the immune system. It has also been claimed to help reduce the risk of cardiac arrest, improve blood circulation, regulate digestion, and a quick-fix for hangovers.

Made of 100 percent pure coconut water, coconut drinks have become a healthier alternative to sports drinks and enhanced bottled waters. An 11 oz serving of pure coconut water contains about 60 calories, no fat, a gram of protein and 15 grams of carbohydrates. It’s rich in the electrolyte potassium (lost in sweat), and packs twice as much as a banana.

Vita Coco is the brand that started the US’ craze for fresh coconut water. In the US Vita Coco is sold at over 20,000 retailers including Whole Foods Market, GNC, Kroger, Publix, Ralph’s, Stop & Shop/Giant, select Costco and Wal-Mart stores and many chain and independent groceries. It is also sold in major US airports and on university campuses, as well as online at Amazon.com.

The second largest and best coconut producer in the world, the Philippines exports high quality coco water for Vita Coco as well as Pepsi Co.’s O.N.E. Coconut Water, which was originally developed in Brazil. In the first semester of 2011, the year the buko juice rose from obscurity, coconut water export increased by an impressive 315 percent with figures going up from 1.8 million to 7.2 million, year-on-year.

In President Aquino’s recent visit to the US, Vita Coco’s brand owners expressed their intention to invest around \$15 million in the Philippines in the next four years. This big scale coco water export and recent developments in the country’s coconut-growing regions like Cagayan de Oro, Quezon, and Camarines Sur would not have been possible without Tetra Pak’s aseptic technology.

“Coconut water spoils very quickly,” said Anders Wester, managing director of Tetra Pak Malaysia, Singapore, and Philippines. “Here in the Philippines, the Tetra Pak innovation has been applied to produce natural coconut water packaged in aseptic Tetra Pak cartons with an extended shelf life of up to 12 months which makes it suitable for export.”

Apart from catering to the world's biggest and most trusted food and beverage companies, especially in the dairy and coco segments. According to Tetra Pak processing director David Tan, aseptic technology is simply the continuous process where products are heated to a temperature suited for sterilization and delivered to an aseptic filling machine in a commercially sterile condition.

On the other hand, aseptic packaging is a packaging process by which microorganisms are prevented from entering into the package during and after packaging. "Our packaging has six protective layers outside that keep the product fresh and sterile. The benefits of this aseptic technology are it reduces thermal impact, retains the nutritional value of the product, longer shelf life, and no preservatives required," Tan added.

However, in spite of the Philippine's high-grade coconuts and Tetra Pak's aseptic technology, Vita Coco together with other coco water brands is not available in the Philippines.

"Vita Coco tastes slightly different from our fresh buko juice," said Tetra Pak communications and environment manager Tess Raymundo. "The coconuts used for Vita Coco are the more mature ones. That's why it's a little sour. It's an acquired Western taste."

Nonetheless, the idea that Filipinos will be hooked on the coco water craze is moot. Sweet or not, cartooned coco water just won't do it for this nation. In the Philippines, buko juice is best enjoyed straight from the fruit with a straw along the beach because it's always more fun in the Philippines.

<b>Attachment</b>	<b>Size</b>
<a href="#">Hollywood superstar Madonna with her favorite drink</a> <sup>[1]</sup>	10.91 KB

**Source URL:** <http://www.mb.com.ph/articles/351962/coco-loc>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.mb.com.ph/sites/default/files/mad.jpg>

Copyright 2012. Manila Bulletin | All Rights Reserved