



BUSINESS PROFILE



HANDMADE BY JEANETTE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

[WEBSITE](#)

ABOUT HANDMADE BY JEANETTE

- **Company status:** Sole proprietorship.
- **Year of registration:** 2020.
- **Number of employees:** 2 full time and 3-part time employees, of whom 4 are women.
- **Business sector:** Agro processing.



Jeanette Marcelle - Founder and CEO

Jeanette Marcelle, also known as Chef Marcelle, is a seasoned culinary professional from Trinidad and Tobago, with over two decades of experience in the culinary and hospitality industry. Her passion for cooking was sparked while she was studying to become a pre-school teacher. During this time, she worked as a waitress at a Thai restaurant, where the dynamic environment and the intricate flavors of Thai cuisine piqued her interest in food. This experience was the turning point that led her to abandon her teaching aspirations and immerse herself in the culinary world. Over the years, Chef Marcelle refined her craft as a traveling chef, gaining recognition for her ability to merge diverse culinary traditions and create memorable dishes.

CONTEXT

Background

Handmade by Jeanette Company was born out of a moment of creative resilience during the socioeconomic challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Faced with unemployment, founder Jeanette Marcelle saw an opportunity to make a meaningful

impact by creating healthy, locally sourced import substitutes that could help reduce Trinidad and Tobago's reliance on imports. As a chef, Jeanette combined her culinary expertise with a passion for sustainable living, founding a company that produces innovative granola blends, sauces, and spice rubs made with fresh, indigenous ingredients like tamarind,



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cocoa, coconut, and scorpion pepper. Handmade by Jeanette markets itself as a lifestyle brand, prioritizing agri-food products crafted from 75% locally sourced ingredients.

Vision: To inspire healthier living through delicious, sustainable foods that support well-being and empower local communities.

Mission: To create nutrient-dense, flavourful products that promote health and sustainability, following by their ethos, "You are what you eat".

Position in the market

Handmade by Jeanette's products target food enthusiasts, travellers, expats, health-conscious individuals, and mindful consumers, particularly vegans and millennials aged 31 to 45. The brand appeals to those seeking high-quality, sustainable, and nutritious options, resonating with a growing demand for clean, ethically sourced foods.

Relationships with the community

Handmade by Jeanette actively contributes to the important conversations surrounding food security,

import substitution, and sustainable practices in the Caribbean. By building strong relationships with smallholder farmers and local producers, the company sources most of its raw materials directly from them. This supports the local economy and encourages the use of indigenous ingredients central to the company's product line. As a responsible food processor, Handmade by Jeanette is acutely aware of its environmental impact and continuously strives to implement sustainable practices. Beyond sourcing locally, the company contributes to the circular economy by repurposing its by-products. Tamarind seeds and coconut shells are given to local artisans for jewellery making, while pepper seeds are returned to farmers for replanting. Reclaimed orange peel is also creatively used to expand the product line into health-focused teas. Looking ahead, Handmade by Jeanette plans to establish a food bank that will provide healthier food options to families in need, particularly those who may have limited access to nutritious choices. The food bank will also play a role in helping farmers manage imperfect produce responsibly, reducing waste while supporting the community's well-being.

PRODUCTS AND MARKET

Main products

Handmade by Jeanette is committed to crafting delicious, unique, and healthy chef-inspired products that blend culinary creativity with nutritional value. The company offers a diverse range of products, including wholesome granola with cocoa nibs, flavourful sauces, and aromatic spice rubs, all made with clean, locally sourced ingredients. Each product is thoughtfully designed to not only satisfy the palate but also support a healthier lifestyle. The products are specifically marketed for their health benefits, such as being rich in antioxidants, high in fibre, and having a low glycaemic index, making them suitable for health-

conscious individuals. Handmade by Jeanette focuses on delivering nutrient-dense options that promote well-being without compromising on flavour. Whether it's the heart-healthy granola, the antioxidant-packed cocoa nibs, or the bold, fresh flavours of the sauces and rubs, every item is crafted with the goal of nourishing both body and mind. By combining traditional Caribbean ingredients with modern culinary techniques, Handmade by Jeanette offers products that contribute to a balanced and mindful lifestyle, helping customers feel good about what they eat.



Main markets

Handmade by Jeanette's products are available at five locations across Trinidad, primarily sold in bulk to resellers. They're also featured at various pop-up markets and available for direct purchase at the company's East Trinidad location. In addition to in-person sales, the products are also sold on an e-commerce platform based in Jamaica, reaching customers in Canada, Florida, and beyond. The brand has strong appeal within the tourism market, especially among "foodies" who seek unique,

gourmet products. Handmade by Jeanette continues to expand its international presence, offering high-quality, locally crafted items that showcase the flavours and culture of the Caribbean.

Certifications

Local certifications include certificates of origin, free sale certificates, and certifications to sell in the US. They are currently working on a certification for the EU market.

INNOVATIONS: MILESTONES AND EXPANSION PLANS

Milestones

Handmade by Jeanette operates under a zero-waste policy, reflecting its commitment to sustainability. The company upcycles its production byproducts, such as tamarind seeds, coconut shells, and pepper seeds, which are repurposed by local artisans and farmers. In addition, the company creates compost from its waste to support gardening and agriculture. This dedication to sustainability is a core aspect of the brand's philosophy and business operations.

A key competitive advantage for Handmade by Jeanette is its focus on food innovation. Chef Marcelle leads the charge in creating unique, high-quality products using simple, locally sourced ingredients. For instance, the company combines dried mushrooms with cocoa powder to produce a shelf-stable, flavourful product, demonstrating the brand's creativity in transforming everyday ingredients into gourmet offerings.

The company has achieved several major milestones that underscore its growing impact. Handmade by Jeanette sent its first official shipment of products to St. Lucia and the US, marking a significant step in expanding its international reach. The company has also participated in three major trade missions,

allowing it to connect with key industry players and further build its global presence. One of the most notable highlights was showcasing its products at SIAL Paris, one of the world's largest food innovation expos, where Handmade by Jeanette introduced its unique offerings to an international audience. These milestones reflect Handmade by Jeanette's ongoing commitment to quality, innovation, and sustainable practices, as well as its ambition to grow and make a global impact in the agri-food industry.

Needs for upscaling

Handmade by Jeanette is currently looking to increasing its export, market share and revenue.

The founder remarks that it is difficult for a woman to earn equal pay and have equal opportunities. The challenges to being an entrepreneur amplify these struggles. She notes that although society has made some great strides, women in the business still run into more roadblocks than men. However, she has not allowed these roadblocks to stand in her way. Her advice to female entrepreneurs is that while they may have to work harder or face judgement for their appearances, these difficulties can be viewed as stepping stones to get through the next trial.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Jeanette is deeply committed to creating products that are not only wholesome for the body but also kind to the environment. She prioritizes fresh, locally sourced ingredients, purchasing directly from farmers who use pesticides responsibly. Jeanette avoids over-processed foods and products high in sugar, believing these approaches are outdated. Instead,

she uses natural food preservatives and creates products that tell a story—where customers can trace the origin of each ingredient and feel connected to the values behind them. This commitment aligns with the growing demand for socially conscious purchasing, as more consumers seek brands that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices. Though

Handmade by Jeanette was launched during the challenging period of the pandemic, it gave Jeanette the space to focus on her long-term vision. In its second year, the company became actively involved in local community groups and events, building strong relationships and contributing to the community. All revenue generated by the company is reinvested into improving operations, including the adoption of eco-friendly packaging and the development of informative labels that educate consumers. Now, in its fourth year, Handmade by Jeanette has seen significant growth, with a marked

increase in revenue compared to previous years. The company is on track to meet its retail revenue targets in the coming years, reflecting the success of its strategies and continued investment in quality and sustainability.

Moreover, Handmade by Jeanette is a beneficiary of the FFM+ project, facilitated by COLEAD. Jeanette received trainings in 'hygiene and food safety' and 'food safety quality management system and traceability'.



Jeanette Marcelle at SIAL, Paris.



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