

# PRODUCER PROFILES

Mohammed Hamada  
Burqin village, Palestine



Mohammed Hamada is a father of 7, born and brought up in the beautiful ancient village of Burqin. Burqin is home to 6000 people, who between them farm over 19,000 dunums. Known locally as “Arous Falastin”, or “Palestine’s bride”, in Christian tradition it is here that Jesus is said to have performed the miracle of curing the lepers. The Greek Orthodox church of St George in the heart of the village is considered to be the third oldest church in the world. Today, with 12 Christian families living amongst a majority Muslim population, Burqin residents don’t simply tolerate one another, they celebrate each others’ differences.

Mohammed Hamada is a full time farmer, working 15 dunums of land inherited from his ancestors (15 km<sup>2</sup>) in addition to 21 dunums recently bought and planted with olive trees.

One of the first farmers to register with the Palestine Fair Trade Association when it was established in 2004, he sells an average of 3 tonnes of organic Fairtrade olive oil each year. An enthusiast about the benefits of Fairtrade, Mohammed says the premiums have supported his community in many ways - supplying tools and equipment for the farmers in his co-operative, and investing in a newly built school in the village, providing for a new paved playground and new desks. Sales of his olive oil to Fairtrade customers have benefitted his family too. Thanks to credit arrangements between Zaytoun and Canaan Fair Trade, Mohammed receives payment soon after invoice, meaning that he can pay his children’s school and university fees which are due around the beginning of each harvest season. It also helps him to invest any surplus in expanding his crops, and caring better for his trees. Having started off with 500 trees, he now has 1,200.

Rooted in Time  
& Tradition



## THE FACTS

**Village Co-operative**  
Burqin, part of the  
Palestine Fair Trade  
Association since 2004

**Location:**  
5km west of Jenin,  
West Bank

**Members:** 45

**Co-operative  
annual yield:**  
Over 80 tonnes



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Farming in occupied Palestine is never straightforward, however. In 2004, Mohammed was barred from his land by the Israeli army, when a new illegal settlement was threatened close to his trees. Thankfully, the settlers and soldiers withdrew from the area and he was able to go back to take care of his trees. Like so many other farmers, though, Mohammed struggles with a lack of availability of water. Although underground water is abundant in the area, residents of Burqin must obtain a permit from Israel before any well is dug, with a limitation on the amount of water that can be pumped. Many farmers must buy water by the truckload, and this is too expensive to sustain many crops. Luckily, Palestine's olive trees are perfectly adapted to an arid climate, and thrive on rainfall alone.

Burqin's farmer co-operative produces over 80 tonnes of olive oil a year, selling all of it through the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA) to Canaan Fair Trade, who in turn sell it to fair trade organisations worldwide.



It's a perfect home for the state of the art factory built by Canaan Fair Trade in 2008. Situated in one of Burqin's largest olive groves, visitors from all over the world come to see the new facility and experience the warm welcome of this picturesque village. From narrow streets and wide plains, to tradition and modernity, this is a community which embraces plurality and diversity.

Zaytoun is a UK social enterprise importing and selling fairly traded Palestinian artisan food. Our products are both a celebration of the exceptional quality produced in Palestine, and a means of sustainable livelihood for the growers.

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## TREES FOR LIFE

Zaytoun supports an olive tree planting project which is run by the Palestine Fair Trade Association (PFTA). The PFTA farmer coops produce the olive oil, maftoul, almonds and freekeh which Zaytoun sells.

Farmers interested in participating in the project apply through Palestine Fair Trade Association coordinators. Allocations based on the following, a farmer must:

- Own land suitable for the number of trees applied for
- Demonstrate capacity to care for and nurture trees
- Be ready to prepare land for a collective tree planting day. All trees must be planted on the day they are delivered.

Priority is given to farmers who:

- Have lost trees to Israeli destruction
- Farm small areas
- Are women landowners interested in farming
- Young starter farmers who have inherited or acquired land

£20 pays for 5 olive tree saplings (3 years old) to be planted in Palestine. Contact us (details below) to participate

[www.zaytoun.org/plant\\_a\\_tree.html](http://www.zaytoun.org/plant_a_tree.html)