

What is Fair Trade and why does it exist?

Fair Trade refers to a fair partnership between people who sell goods in North America and people who produce goods in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of the world. A fair trade partnership provides low-income artisans and farmers with a living wage for their work. Food and craft products are labelled "fair trade goods" if they follow certain standards:

- The workers and producers are paid a fair wage.
- Workers and producers have safe and healthy working conditions.
- Equal employment opportunities are available to all people, particularly the most disadvantaged.
- Production practices are environmentally sustainable and are often organic (no use of pesticides, herbicides...).
- A fair share of the profits goes to the producers, and not to corporations who distribute or package the goods.
- Financial and technical assistance is provided to producers whenever possible.

Fair trade food products exist because large quantities of certain foods are produced in the southern countries of the world, often in the less-developed nations. The production and distribution of these foods is often controlled by large corporations in the more-developed nations, who sell the products at high prices, and who keep a large percentage of the profits for themselves. Producers are not always paid fair prices for their work, and their working conditions are poor because of the intensive use of fertilizers and other chemical products used to increase productivity for the controlling corporations.

Here are some examples of food products grown in Latin America that may be available as fair trade products:

- ✚ Coffee (Guatemala, Colombia)
- ✚ Rice (Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay)
- ✚ Bananas (Central America and the Caribbean)
- ✚ Fruit Juices (Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, Ecuador)
- ✚ Cocoa (Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua)
- ✚ Sugar (Paraguay, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Peru)
- ✚ Honey (Mexico, Chile, Nicaragua, Guatemala)

