

Basima Atyani

CANAAN FAIR TRADE MEMBER OF WOMEN COOP FROM ANZA VILLAGE



THE FULL FLAVOR

Embodied knowledge is what Basima Atyani calls true education. A self-taught high school graduate, Basima got married when she was in tenth grade and later studied all subjects on her own to take the high school graduation test called *Tawjihi*. A proud mother of five boys and two girls, Basima says she would rather not eat than not to send her kids to school. This is why she makes sure that her home is completely self-sustainable. Along with growing all kinds of vegetables, Basima raises sheep and makes cheese for the people in the village. She makes her own bread with organic wheat that she cracks herself and fresh lemonade from her garden. Taking a sip from her glass she explains, “I do not peel the lemons to make

this lemonade. After picking the lemons, I wash them, take the seeds out, and blend them with sugar and water and then I strain the liquid into a big glass container. This way you get the full benefit and flavor of the lemon.”

THERE IS ALWAYS TIME

An expert in time management, this woman can multi task like no other. As the treasurer for the Anza Women’s Club she has her hands full with different projects that bring work and education opportunities for the women of her village. A member of the Canaan Fair Trade women’s cooperative, she works on making Maftoul during the summer and works as a seamstress the rest of the year. “I learned how to sew



FAIR TRADE DELICACIES FROM PALESTINE, THE LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

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when my husband was not getting paid much as a teacher. I started making traditional dresses and then moved to embroidery and handcrafts. Some women ask me where I find the time but I say there is always time. It is a question of organizing what you do with it. I do all this and I have time to meet my social obligations.”

ASSERTING IDENTITY THROUGH WORK

On top of all the work she does, Basima somehow finds time to volunteer. She is one of only two women members of the projects committee in Anza’s village council where she offers her advice as to what the community needs. “I was so happy when I brought the idea of a children’s park to the council and they got excited about it. It was just a thought but today the park is a reality and the kids play there instead of the streets. I feel so proud that I was part of the force that made this happen.” This is exactly how she says she feels when she sees her hand rolled Maftoul in the nice boxes Canaan Fair Trade exports. “When I saw our Maftoul displayed in these nice boxes in Canaan’s showroom I felt that I could fly. This work has made me feel bigger, supported, and most of all appreciated. We always think here that the world does not see us so when I see that people know about our work and value it I start to feel really powerful and able. Women here, we do not want handouts and charities; we want to assert ourselves and our identities through work. This is why I have always wanted to be part of the Palestine Fair Trade Association, because the benefits we get are the product of our hard work. I take pride in that. When I sit down with myself, I feel at ease because I always made ends meet, even in the hardest of times.”



Basima straightening the embroidered mirror she made for her friend Um Samid.