

Fair Trade Honey

Asociación Rural de Interés Colectivo Productores Indígenas Serranos de Chiapas Chiapas, Mexico

We are happy about having a strong presence in the United States. Here in Motozintla, coffee and honey are our main economic influences. Although our market fluctuates locally, since Fair Trade, we are now working on a price base that's competitive and reliable.

*Fortunato Samayoa Fernandez
President of the Cooperative*

High in the mountains of Chiapas, Mexico beekeepers have formed a Fair Trade Certified cooperative and the whole community prospers from the honey harvest. The hives have been tended by Mayan communities for generations. Although there is a centuries-old beekeeping tradition here, honey production has only recently been recognized as a viable and stable income opportunity in the global market. It creates meaningful employment, the beekeepers can develop the quality of their hives and send their children to school. By protecting the hives and native plant forage areas, Fair Trade encourages biodiversity and helps the forests thrive, too.

In years past, middlemen, or “coyotes,” took a majority of the beekeepers’ income. With Fair Trade, the middlemen are removed and the cooperatives work autonomously and directly with customers. The beekeepers are able to improve standards for their families, their communities and their honey, and protect precious rainforests and habitat.

The hives are isolated, deep within organic perimeters, and the bees forage only on native plants—wildflowers and, for one brief week every year, organically cultivated coffee blooms. As the season progresses and the flowers change, the honeys’ character changes too, deepening in color and flavor.

While they look forward to business opportunities and a new sense of stability, the cooperative’s members are inspired by their past ... the Mayan beekeeping culture is surviving and thriving in the early 21st century.



ABOUT THE COOPERATIVE

Date established: 1997

Fair Trade Certified since: 2008

Number of active members: 46

Average hives per member: 70

Annual production (in metric tons):
150 tons

Harvest season: December - May

Honey type: Multifloral

Other products grown: Coffee

Organic certification agency: NOP,
Mayacert