

'Anin Women's Cooperative

The 'Anin women's cooperative is in the Jenin district of the PFTA. The cooperative has 6 members and makes hand-rolled sun-dried couscous and homemade za'atar. The couscous is certified organic, and all products are certified fair trade. 'Anin village is located on the Green Line, and most farmers lost land and trees to the occupation, and more recently to the Wall, which was built inside Palestine and not on the border. Their land was confiscated outright, or is inaccessible to them behind the Wall.

Khitam Issa story

Khitam's voice is one of a confident woman who says that four years ago, before she started working with PFTA's women's cooperative, she felt that she had no role in society. To make ends meet, Khitam's husband risks his life and crosses Israeli checkpoints to work inside the settlements that have eaten up half of their village. Sometimes he is gone for days at a time. Today, Khitam and five other women in her village of 'Anin are part of a cooperative that picks and cures olives and makes couscous and other traditional delicacies for export to the U.S. and Europe. Every morning in August and September they wake up at dawn to start preparing the wheat for the couscous.

"We make everything with our own hands. First we clean the wheat and then we boil it. After grinding it we add the flour and roll it with our hands until it is ready to be steamed again and then we put it in the sun to dry."

When we buy couscous we may never think about who made it or how it was made but for Khitam making couscous has turned her family's life around. "Now I can lift some of the financial burden in the family. I feel very happy that my 16-year-old daughter, Ranad, can stay in school. This year Ranad will finish her senior year, and hopes to apply for a university scholarship from Canaan to study to become a doctor." When Khitam was asked what she would like the world to know about her couscous she said: "I make it with my own hands, with love from Palestine."



Khitam and son Yassir, 13, take a break in the field during the olive harvest in 2008.