



FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™

FAIR TRADE COFFEE COOPERATIVE PROFILE

COMAL, Guatemala



Photo: Erik Hagen

About the Co-op

Date Established: 2002

Number of Members: 496

Annual Production: 132 containers

About the Coffee

Varieties: Bourbon, Caturra

Elevation: 1,400 - 1,600m

Processing: Wet processing, Sun drying

Cup Characteristics: Good body and acidity

Harvest Season: Nov-Mar

Export Season: Mar-May

Organic Production: In transition

Organic Certification Agency: Mayacert

Comercializadora Maya Alternativa (COMAL) is an association of six cooperatives of small-scale farmers located in the mountainous Huehuetenango region of northwestern Guatemala. The cooperative was founded in 2002 with the goal of establishing an efficient system of alternative trade that cared for the environment, encouraged women's participation, and improved the lives of its members. COMAL became Fair Trade certified through Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International in the same year. Of the co-op's 496 indigenous members, 107 are women.

With revenue from Fair Trade sales, the cooperative has been able to:

- Ensure quality by employing two agronomists that provide technical assistance
- Diversify farmers' income and improve nutrition through crop diversification
- Provide pre-harvest financing
- Sponsor a micro-credit program for women's' groups
- Establish a scholarship fund for members' children
- Finance the construction of six community clinics
- Reduce migration to urban areas among its younger members

"Because we receive the Fair Trade price, people in my community are happy; they feel empowered to manage their lives, and they are less likely to migrate to urban areas."

—Alfonso Morales Jiminez,
COMAL President