

COOPERATIVE TAMOUNTE

Promoter: **ENDA Maghreb**

Type of activity: **conservation and
development of
sustainable biodiversity**



The **Women's Agricultural Cooperative Tamounte** produces and sells **Argan Oil** and its related products (food and cosmetics).

The Cooperative has been established in 2003 as part of a wider program of conservation and administration of important areas in terms of biodiversity in the region promoted by numerous bodies such as ENDA Maghreb.

PROJECT PURPOSES

- improvement of life conditions in rural female community
- empowerment in a long-term perspective of ground products (argan)
- participation of rural female community in local programs for development



PRODUCTS

The products destined to **food supply** industry include the oil and amlou. The **Argan Oil**, with its honey and sandy like colour, is a concentration of nutritional elements useful to fight ageing processes. It is 100% biological as the plants grow within areas free of chemical treatments. Rich in fatty acids, it is a valid help to fight cholesterol; it is tasty and easily digested; its use range from seasoning of Moroccan salads and other more elaborated salad dishes to the preparation of the tajine. However, its most common use is when it is offered with bread as a starter, together with mint tea, for breakfast, as an afternoon snack or any other time during the day. The **Amlou** is made of argane oil, skinned and toasted almonds and honey. It is an energetic cream wich can be used as a spread on bread for breakfast or as an afternoon snack (just like the Oil of Argane and the mint tea, it can be offered and tasted anytime throughout the day).

The products destined to the **cosmetic** industry play an important part within the Berber Women's



tradition. The products used for face, hair and nails are valued for their hydrating, nourishing and reinvigorating skin effects.



INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

- ENDA Maghreb
- Association Chouala pour l'éducation et la culture
- Association Imin'tlit pour le développement
- WWF
- DDC Direction du développement et de la coopération Suisse
- Direction Régionale des Eaux et Forêt du Haut-Atlas
- Direction Provinciale de l'Agriculture
- Commune rurale d'Imin'tlit



The Cooperative is involved in the **Projet Arganier**, financed by the **Kingdom of Morocco (Agency for Social Development)** in partnership with the **European Community**.

HOW TO HELP

The best way to show appreciation and support for the Co-op is **to visit it** while travelling in Morocco in the Essaouira area. It is not necessary to plan your trip in advance; you can take your time and upon arrival you'll be shown all the steps of the Argan manufacturing process. After the visit you could be asked to stay and share a tajine with the residents of the co-op or enjoy a nice tea with some home made bread and Amlou and Argane Oil or even asked to spend the night as a guest of one of the women working there. For practical purposes, anyway, **you have better announce your arrival**, in order to be sure that the director - or any other girl currently speaking French and/or English, are available to explain the whole process.

Bear in mind that this is a Women co-op: the male traveller will be able to visit and enjoy a guided tour and even take part of the work of the community, but it is likely that a better complicity is achieved with female travellers.

Whilst helping out it is important to remember that the centre is a place where women meet up to perform a series of tasks they would normally do at home, together with other women. They bring the raw material (walnuts), they work for several hours and they will get paid according to the amount of work they perform with money gained with the sale of the Argan finished product. If you decide to help, it is important to help not only one woman but share your time with everybody as a good gesture. Breaking the walnuts is a tough job and requires good practice; be prepared to hit your knuckles few times while you practice.. it takes women an average of 8 hours to produce 1 litre of oil.

Inside the rooms where women work the use of cameras is not always appreciated, especially by the oldests; however, some women are particularly keen to be photographed whilst working and when this happens it tends to put everyone in a particularly relaxed mood.

Inside the co-op you'll find a shop where **you can buy some products** and get a look at a series of brochures in different languages. A good way to help is obviously purchasing the products, but **advertising** would also help to support not only an immediate gain but also a more sustainable strategy for the future of the cooperative.



All travellers may send a **report** of the visit directly to Djemme (info@djemme.com) as this would help to keep the information given up to date.

HOW TO GET TO IMIN'TLIT



By car from North (Essaouira), upon arrival at Smimou (39 km from Essaouira) take the crossroad in the city centre towards sx and go ahead towards Imin'tlit (17 Km); here you'll see the Cooperative's board well in sight.

By public transport, from Essaouira's main bus station take the first southbound bus (direction Tamarar, Agadir) and ask the driver to drop you off at Smimou; in the city centre (near the crossroad) take a local collective taxi and ask to be taken to Imin'tlit (it could be a long wait unless you're prepared to pay for the missing passengers).





CONTACTS

Coopérative Féminine Tamounte

Douar Ait Ahmed -
Commune rurale d'Imin'tlit
Province d'Essaouira - Maroc
tél/fax +212 524 476092
email cooperative.tamounte@gmail.com
web site www.tamounte.net

