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tall soy latte with a double shot of peace

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welcoming the fair trade revolution

There are many of us, waiting, trapped in our own dress rehearsals, pinned before mirrors, practicing. Our purpose: to save the world. In one bold stroke we want to see change, but little do we realize transformation dwells in the details.

Shuffled between sleep, work, yoga and endless responsibilities, we are left little time to orchestrate a mass revolution. Little do we realize the first step toward justice sits at the bottom of our coffee mugs, drifts alongside our tea and melts inside our chocolate. The question: "Is it Fair Trade?"

Fair Trade is not a product or a brand. Fair Trade is a movement. The honesty in a cup of coffee and the peace in a pot of tea are inherent in their earthly origins. Once harvested, they lie victim to the toxins and corruption of the global market, bought and sold with the cheapest labor and lowest environmental conditions. Returning to the integrity behind purchasing a cup of peace is the mission of Fair Trade.

In an economic reality that bends in favor of big business, Fair Trade levels the playing field and aligns the interests of small farmers with the industry. Ninety percent of the world's coffee is provided by small family farms from all regions across the globe, at devalued prices.

Buying Fair Trade allows these farmers and their families to tap into the world market directly because it guarantees fair payment for their commodities instead of driving competition between them and big corporations.

Coordinated by the Fair Trade Federation, this association directly links low-income producers with consumer markets worldwide and aims to educate consumers about the importance of purchasing fairly traded products. In regard to coffee, this ensures payment close to \$1.30 a pound of coffee instead of the market value of just hardly \$.60. Instead of connecting farmers to the market through a dozen links with each link digging for profit, Fair Trade cuts out the middlemen. With this fair price, coffee farmers can develop their communities, put their kids through school, create scholarship programs and advance their lives.

The reason to buy Fair Trade doesn't end here. In addition to fair prices and wages, these products are of the highest quality. Shade-grown and organic, Fair Trade provides quality prices for quality products. A farming community licensed by TransfairUSA as a Fair Trade provider operates on a co-operative, democratic basis. This community of farms grows only organic and shade-grown coffees, translating to better roasts and

environmental protection. Each Fair Trade co-op functions on sustainable farming methods, nurturing their land and ecosystem.

As the hottest and fastest growing segment of the coffee industry, the Fair Trade label can be found behind the counter at the coffee bar or stacked on the shelves at your grocery store. Purchasing a product with the guarantee that it was traded for a fair price penetrates the injustice big business has used to homogenize the world.

We can transform the global market by transforming our habits, one cup at a time. Some of these habits include buying Fair Trade-certified products (such as coffee, tea, chocolate, bananas and now vanilla), spreading awareness of Fair Trade in our communities, getting Fair Trade in the news, or choosing a Fair Trade brew for our workplaces and our homes. It's the simple question, "Do you carry Fair Trade?" that will change the world. With this question your grocer or barista will know you are interested in buying your \$3.75-latte with a clean conscience. Many times this question will at least intrigue your barista if they have not come across it before, inspiring them to voice their own questions. This simple step empowers a community of families in South America or Asia or Africa, as you begin to act on your sympathies toward saving the world.

We've all watched a stone strike a pond or felt the reverberant ripple through our existence. Similarly, change will cascade through our lives as we make the adjustments and allow the changes to settle into our life's practice. Gradually, trustingly, we will progress forward as we systematically deconstruct our misconceptions and de-condition our forced habits. As our morning coffees rush into afternoon teas, the change will be evident in the details that color the scene and fill our hearts, driving our transformation. What's in your cup?

transfairusa.org
maketradefair.com