

Natural and Delicious: the Putney Co-op Blog

Friday, February 12, 2010

Friday Product Spotlight: Ajiri Kenyan Tea

If you shop the tea section at the Co-op right now, one product will stand out from the rest. That's because **Ajiri Black Tea** comes in handcrafted packaging, made from dried banana leaves. Each box is different, and not surprisingly, so is their company.



The tea itself is purchased by Ajiri from the Nyansiongo Tea Factory in the Kisii Highlands of Kenya. Over 10,000 small scale farmers grow the tea on 1-2 acre "shambas," in the rich red soil of the highlands. Ajiri tea is high in antioxidants, fresh, bold and flavorful.

The packaging boldly states the mission of the company: "100% of profits support orphan education in West Africa." The story of Ajiri is compelling; it was founded by a Kenyan man and three women from Buck County, P.A. (two sisters and their mother), as a way to employ local women and help solve the problem of educating orphans. West Africa has been hard hit by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and many families have lost one or both parents. Following the recent global financial crisis, funding to many African aid organizations was pulled, shutting down the lifeline of medicines and supplies to villages all over the continent. With a vision to help Kenyans empower themselves financially, founders Sara Holby and Nick Miyogo set out to employ a local women's group to make the beads, twine and decorative boxes for the tea company. Ajiri means "to employ" in Swahili. You can read the full version of their story [here](#).

It is so encouraging to find a company like Ajiri, to take the idea of "fair trade" to a new level; one where people can use the global

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trade market to their benefit, to become more autonomous and make a better future for their children. If you wish to donate directly to the Ajiri Foundation, visit their [website](#)



(women and children of the ONACAR Women Group)

Posted by Putney Food Co-op at 9:51 AM

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