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INDIAN HARVEST

WHOLE GRAINS | RICE | LEGUMES

The Eighth Wonder of the World

In a world full of companies – many seemingly focused solely on making money for its executives and shareholders – Eighth Wonder is unique. Going far beyond the Fair Trade ideal of “Trade, not Aid”, Eighth Wonder has a new vision for its business model; to help lift people out of poverty, to give growers of the products a share in the ownership of the company, to help save an important landmark, and bring more good into the world than it takes out.

Eighth Wonder’s undertaking is to bring unique, delectable, heirloom varieties of Philippine rice to international markets, and in so doing, give indigenous Filipino farmers the chance to sustain their traditional way of living, provide a viable wage, own part of the company, and maintain the historic rice terraces of the Philippines.

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Counter Clock-Wise

- The Philippines, in Southeast Asia.
- The “Eighth Wonder of the World”, the spectacular Rice Terraces in Luzon, the Philippines.
- A large mortar and pestle used to remove the hulls from the grain.
- Each kernel of Eighth Wonder Rice is planted, harvested and processed by hand.



The Eighth Wonder story begins high in the rugged mountains of the Philippine island of Luzon. There lies what has been called the *Eighth Wonder of the World*, the spectacular Philippine Rice Terraces.

In an impressive feat of engineering, the terraces were carved out of the hillside by Ifugao tribe people around 2,000 to 3,000 years ago, without the aid of machinery.

In an impressive feat of engineering, the terraces were carved out of the hillsides by native people over the past 2,000 years, without the aid of machinery. The terraces stretch for nearly 4,000 square miles, and provide level steps where the natives can plant rice and vegetables. Some of the slopes the terraces are built on slant at a nearly 70 degree angle. Crops are fed by an ancient irrigation system from the rainforests high above the terraces. Because of the uniqueness and cultural significance of the terraces, UNESCO (The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization) put the terraces on the 'World Heritage List of Cultural Landscapes' in 1995.

It was there – in the shadows of those terraces – the seeds of Eighth Wonder started. In the mid 70's, Eighth Wonder founder, Mary Hensley spent several years in the Philippines as a Peace Corps volunteer. Although a lifetime of memories stuck with her from those days, the highpoints of her stay were the terraces, the hard-working village people in the region, and the delicious, aromatic rice that was prepared for nearly every meal.

During a return to the islands many years later, Mary was disheartened to see many of the terraces abandon and in disrepair, and poverty prevalent among the indigenous people. Hensley, however, saw an opportunity to help. Upon her return to the U.S., Hensley set out to learn more about business, an area in which she previously had little experience. While completing a master's class on

Social Entrepreneurship at the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont, she pieced together the framework for Eighth Wonder. From that business feasibility study, the project has slowly grown into an established regional economic development project in the Philippines, using the unique rice varieties grown there as a resource.

Now, with the help of RICE, Inc., a non-governmental organization (NGO) with a mission to preserve heirloom rice and the culture of community rice production that surrounds it; provincial and municipal Philippine government agencies; and terrace farmers in the provinces of Ifugao, Kalinga and Mountain Province, Eighth Wonder is changing lives and preserving a world landmark.

Despite the relative newness of the project, Eighth Wonder has already meant much to the Philippine people and villages involved. There are many stories about farmers making more money from one transaction than they've seen in after many years of toiling to eke out a meager existence. Farmers in each village can also choose their own level of organization. Regional cooperatives have been formed in across several municipalities to help some farmers, while other farmers choose to work only within their tribal villages. Standards of living have already been raised throughout the area, even though the project is still in its early stages.

Eighth Wonder is one of those all too rare organizations in the world making a difference in the lives of people, all the while producing a superior, delicious product. Clichés like *Win-Win*, *Respect*, *Sustainability*, and *Fair Trade* really do apply, and in the case of Eighth Wonder, may be understated.

Indian Harvest is fortunate to have the opportunity to work with a company like Eighth Wonder who is bringing hope to a corner of the world where hope was previously in short supply. It's refreshing to work with an organization who believes in many of the same values we do, and is dedicated to bringing more good into the world than it takes out of it.



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