

From the Fields of Beit Ummar to the World

The Complete Success Story of "Sahber" Palestinian Cactus Juice

1. The Root of the Idea: Resilient Agriculture

In April 2017, out of the deep-seated challenges faced by Palestinian farmers—especially those residing in rural areas and camps—the idea for the "**Sahber**" (Cactus) Juice project was born. The prickly pear cactus, a plant culturally and historically integrated into the landscape of Palestine, was identified as the ideal crop. Requiring minimal water, resistant to high heat, and naturally robust, it serves as an excellent crop for the future. The project focuses on producing a premium, 100% natural, additive-free energy drink with zero added sugar directly from this hardy plant.



Figure 1: Planting the Roots of Resilience in Beit Ummar

Mousa Abu Maria, representative of the Center for Freedom and Justice (CFJ), working diligently on the rugged hillside of Beit Ummar to plant cactus paddles. This hands-on groundwork laid the physical foundation of the agricultural fields, reclaiming the land and securing raw materials directly from local farms.

2. Razan Abu Ayyash: Merging Design with Women's Empowerment

As the farming expanded, the manufacturing process required professionalization. **Razan Abu Ayyash**, a local graduate specializing in Design, stepped in to lead this transformation. Combining her creative eye with intensive technical and food-

processing training—both locally and internationally, including in Germany—Razan took charge of upgrading the production standard, building a sanitary processing environment, and directly empowering local women.



Figure 2: Professional Manufacturing and Women's Empowerment

Razan Abu Ayyash (in white laboratory coat with the 'Sahber' emblem) meticulously inspecting the bottling consistency of the premium cactus juice. Beside her, locally hired women wearing specialized safety aprons and gloves manage the preparation stations, showing a transition toward skilled, dignified, cooperative female-led local employment.

3. Cultural Pride: Connecting Youth and Elders to the Land

The project is more than an economic venture; it is a cultural movement. It preserves the cultural landscape of Palestine and encourages the younger and older generations alike to protect their environment. By showcasing local icons in traditional heritage, the brand bridges generations and builds a profound sense of regional identity and collective pride.



Figure 3: Embracing Heritage and Identity

A Palestinian elder from Beit Ummar, wearing traditional heritage attire (thobe, kufiya, and agal), proudly holding a freshly bottled 'Sahber' Cactus Juice. This image symbolizes the deep generational link between the soil of Palestine and the innovative future crafted by the town's youth.

4. The Packaging Evolution: From Local to Global Standards

A key pillar of the design upgrade led by Razan was transforming how the product is packaged. Initially, the juice was stored in industrial-sized generic white plastic containers suited mostly for regional wholesale. Under professional design direction, the product evolved into premium individual glass bottles featuring a polished, multilingual label that clearly markets the juice as a natural, highly nutritional Palestinian energy drink.



Figure 4: The Strategic Leap in Product Packaging

The physical evidence of packaging development shown side-by-side: from the large bulk generic plastic jerrycans previously used for transport, to the highly refined, 330ml branded glass bottles of 'Sahber Kaktusfeige' juice lined up on the display shelves.

5. Reaching Global Markets: The International Connection

The refinement of the juice enabled its successful entry into European markets, specifically Germany. Refined and marketed as a premium health drink, "Sahber" is praised by international consumers for its rich content of vitamins, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and essential amino acids (proline), making it highly favored as a natural sports and recovery energy drink.



Figure 5: Sahber on display at a German International Food Fair

A bottle of Sahber Cactus Juice prominently showcased on an exhibition counter in Germany, with product leaflets written in German explaining the health benefits and introducing Razan Abu Ayyash as the designer behind the initiative. In the background, European visitors learn about the story of Beit Ummar.

Key Community Benefits:

- **Sustainable Livelihoods:** Creates fair-trade jobs for local farmers and women in Beit Ummar, Surif, Jericho, and the Rashaida region.
- **Heritage Preservation:** Protects and revives culturally valuable cactus farming across rural landscapes.
- **International Reinvestment:** Proceeds from German sales are reinvested directly back into local health, education, and development projects in Palestine.