

## Sabastiya, hospitality and tourism

The aim of the project *"Hospitality in Sabastiya, between past and present"* is the **enhancement and development of the cultural heritage of the town of Sabastiya** (in Palestinian territories).

We would do so through the involvement of **young people, women and disables** in creating a **local sustainable economy** to improve the families' financial status. The project focuses on the distinctive features of the area such as **biodiversity**, plentiful orchards and olive trees and the extraordinary historical and **archeological** wealth, emphasizing the qualities of the local population, starting from the **hospitality for tourists**.

### The unknown cultural heritage

The ancient town of Sabastiya (Sebaste), was **rebuilt by Herod the Great** in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC: still visible today, atop the ancient acropolis, are the remains of the **old Roman city** which include the forum, the basilica, the theatre, the temple in honour of Emperor Augustus, a colonnaded street and parts of the wall.

A church in memory of the body of **Saint John the Baptist** was built during the Byzantine period, outside the walls on the Eastern side, where today stands a Mosque. We find references to the Church in some Christian sources dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD. The current construction was built by the **Crusaders** during the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and was the second biggest church after the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

### Activities of the Sabastiya project

- **Increasing the value of the extraordinary cultural heritage of the village**, by refurbishing and restoring buildings and remains with high historical and archaeological value;
- **Promotion and development of responsible tourism** at Sabastiya, a treasure to be discovered by those looking for a holiday in connection with the local population;
- In the hilly landscape of Samaria surrounding Sabastiya it is actually possible to **visit archaeological sites with rich cultural value, trek along magnificent routes**, taste typical products made in the area and breathe in Palestinian traditions in a welcoming atmosphere, with overnight stay at the **Mosaic Guesthouse Sabastiya**;
- **Empowerment of the local population** in collaboration with the Palestinian NGO **Mosaic Centre**, through active involvement of locals.

## Achievements

A mosaic workshop and a shop of typical products (olive oil soap, seasonable jam etc.), have been set up downtown. Renovation and repair of the structures have been entrusted to a local architect and his team. Locals also run the **Mosaic Guesthouse Sabastiya**, having been provided special training. While other women and disabled people are being trained for the pottery industry and for the management of touristic services.



## Become a supporter of Sabastiya!

We are looking for donors to support and continue this unique project for its historical, social and cultural value.

To learn more: [www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)

Mail: [info@proterrasancta.org](mailto:info@proterrasancta.org)

#### Association pro Terra Sancta

Bank Transfer – Banca Etica

IBAN: IT67 W050 1812 1010 0000 0122 691

BIC: CCRTIT2T84A

Bank Transfer: ATS – ASSOCIAZIONE DI TERRA SANTA

Online donation: [www.proterrasancta.org](http://www.proterrasancta.org)

**Association Pro Terra Sancta** is the nonprofit Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) of the Custody of the Holy Land. It coordinates the implementation of activities, with the scientific support of biblical archaeologists from the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. It is also responsible for preparing transparent accounts for donors, and for disseminating and communicating the results of the activities.

*Each day the Franciscans remember in their prayers all those who, in whatever form, have aided the Holy Land.*