

Ayn Hawd :



Subdistrict: Haifa

Population in 1948: Approximately 754

Estimated date of occupation and depopulation: 15 July 1948

Military operation: A limited operation during the Ten Days between the first and second truces; some compilations associate the village with Operation Shoter

Attacking forces: A combined force drawn from the Israeli Navy and the Golani, Carmeli, and Alexandroni brigades

Settlements established on village land before 1948: None

Settlements established on village land after 1948: Nir Etzion

Settlement established on the built-up village site after 1948: Ein Hod

‘Ayn Hawd was a Palestinian village in the Haifa Subdistrict, situated on the western slopes of Mount Carmel approximately 14.5 kilometres south of Haifa. The village overlooked the coastal plain and the Mediterranean Sea and was connected by a secondary road, about one kilometre long, to the coastal highway.

- The village’s inhabitants were Muslims and maintained a mosque in its centre.
 - An elementary school for boys was established in 1888 during the Ottoman period.
- In the late nineteenth century, ‘Ayn Hawd had approximately 50 inhabitants whose livelihoods depended principally on agriculture.
- The village’s stone houses were divided, as the community expanded, between eastern and western quarters.
- The village was surrounded by several springs, some of which were located within the built-up area itself.

Boundaries of ‘Ayn Hawd

‘Ayn Hawd was bordered by the following villages and localities:

- North and northwest: [al-Tira](#).
 - West: [‘Atlit](#).
- Southwest: [al-Mazar](#).
 - South: [Ijzim](#).
- East: Daliyat al-Karmil.
- Northeast: [Khirbat al-Damun](#).

Architecture of ‘Ayn Hawd

In the late nineteenth century, ‘Ayn Hawd was described as a small village situated at the end of a spur. Its built-up area had a generally rectangular outline, with houses extending from east to west. Most of the houses near the village centre were built of stone and stood close together, while those farther from the centre were more widely spaced.

As the village expanded, it developed two principal quarters, one eastern and the other western. The village also had a coffeehouse and a *diwan* that served as a communal meeting place, particularly during winter, when agricultural work was less demanding.

Economic Life in ‘Ayn Hawd

The inhabitants earned their living from agriculture, livestock raising, quarrying, and the production of lime. Grain and olives were among the principal crops. In 1943, olive groves occupied approximately 845 dunams, and some of the harvest was processed in a manually operated olive press.

‘Ayn Hawd was also known locally for its distinctive carob fruit, which was used to make molasses. Carob trees covered a substantial area, while eucalyptus and pine trees were also planted on village land.

The villagers marketed wheat, carob, sesame, and other produce in Haifa and Acre. Building stone extracted from three local quarries was another source of income. In 1944/45, approximately 4,422 dunams were devoted to cereals, while 1,503 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards.

Land Ownership in ‘Ayn Hawd

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian-owned	6,656

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Jewish-owned	0
Public land	5,949
Total	12,605

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in ‘Ayn Hawd in 1945

Type of land use	Palestinian land (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	1,503
Olive groves	845
Cereal cultivation	4,422
Built-up area	50
Cultivable land	5,925
Uncultivable land	6,630

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. Olive groves are included within the broader agricultural categories and should not be added separately when calculating the total area.

Education in ‘Ayn Hawd

‘Ayn Hawd had an elementary school for boys established in 1888, during the Ottoman period.

It was among the village’s principal public institutions.

Population of ‘Ayn Hawd

The village had an estimated population of 350 in 1922 and 650 in 1945. Its population at the time of the Nakba is estimated at approximately 754. The inhabitants were Palestinian

Muslims.

Population Figures for ‘Ayn Hawd

Year	Population*
1596	44
Late nineteenth century	Approximately 50
1922	350
1931	459
1945	650
1948 estimate	754
Estimated number of refugees in 1998	4,630

* The 1948 and 1998 figures are demographic estimates rather than contemporary census counts.

Number of Houses in ‘Ayn Hawd

Year	Number of houses
1931	81
1948 estimate	133

Public Facilities in ‘Ayn Hawd

The village contained a centrally located mosque, a boys’ elementary school, a coffeehouse, a communal *diwan*, and a manually operated olive press. Springs in and around the village supplied water for domestic and agricultural use.

Archaeological Remains in ‘Ayn Hawd

- The village was associated with architectural remains traditionally described as dating from the Crusader period.
- Khirbat Hajla, southeast of the village, contained building foundations, dressed stones, rock-cut features, and cisterns hewn into the rock.

Occupation and Depopulation of ‘Ayn Hawd

‘Ayn Hawd was subjected to several attacks before its final occupation. According to the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin*, a force of approximately 150 fighters attacked ‘Ayn Hawd and neighbouring ‘Ayn Ghazal on the evening of 11 April 1948. The attack was repulsed, as was another, more serious assault the following month.

An Associated Press account reported that forces entered ‘Ayn Hawd and ‘Ayn Ghazal on 20 May. The inhabitants of ‘Ayn Hawd, however, appear to have remained in the village after that attack.

The precise date of the village’s final occupation varies in secondary accounts. Walid Khalidi’s reconstruction places it at approximately 15 July 1948, during the Ten Days between the first and second truces. The operation involved naval covering fire and a combined land force drawn from the Golani, Carmeli, and Alexandroni brigades. The frequently cited date of 1 July is not supported by the principal village studies.

According to the account cited by Khalidi, the villagers may have experienced a fate similar to that of the inhabitants of nearby al-Tira: expulsion towards the Jenin–Nablus–Tulkarm area or detention in prisoner-of-war camps. Khalidi attributes this part of the reconstruction to historian Benny Morris. Most of ‘Ayn Hawd’s inhabitants became refugees, while a small number remained in the surrounding area.

Settlements Established on the Land of ‘Ayn Hawd

Nir Etzion was established on land belonging to ‘Ayn Hawd in 1949. In 1954, the settlement and artists’ colony known as Ein Hod was established within the surviving built-up village itself.

The two places should therefore be distinguished: Nir Etzion stands on village land, whereas Ein Hod occupies the original village site and incorporates many of its buildings.

‘Ayn Hawd Today

Unlike many Palestinian villages depopulated during the Nakba, much of ‘Ayn Hawd’s built environment was not demolished. The original village was converted into an artists’ colony and tourist destination under the name Ein Hod. A number of Palestinian stone houses remain standing and have been renovated or repurposed. The former village mosque was converted into a restaurant and bar, while surrounding land is cultivated or incorporated into wooded recreational areas.

A small group of displaced villagers, principally members of the Abu al-Hayja family, remained nearby and established a new community known as ‘Ayn Hawd al-Jadida. For decades, the new village was denied official recognition and basic public services. It was eventually recognized in the 1990s after a prolonged campaign by its residents, although the community continued to face significant planning and infrastructure difficulties.

Sources

- [PalQuest: ‘Ayn Hawd](#).
- [Palestine Remembered: ‘Ayn Hawd](#).
- [Institute for Palestine Studies: ‘Ayn Hawd and the “Unrecognized Villages”](#).
- Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.