

Khubbayza



Subdistrict: Haifa

Population in 1948: Approximately 336

Date of occupation and depopulation: 12–14 May 1948

Attacking force: Irgun (Etzel)

Settlements established on village land before 1948: None

Settlements established on the built-up village site after 1948: None

Khubbayza was a Palestinian village in the Haifa Subdistrict, situated in the hilly region of Bilad al-Rawha. Its inhabitants were displaced during the Nakba after the village was attacked and occupied by the Irgun between 12 and 14 May 1948.

Location and Area of Khubbayza

Khubbayza was situated approximately 29.5 kilometres southeast of Haifa, 15 kilometres from Umm al-Fahm, and seven kilometres from Kafr Qara. It stood at an elevation of approximately 175 metres above sea level. Its lands covered a total area of 4,854 dunams.

The village stood on hilly terrain that sloped towards the southwest, approximately one kilometre south of Wadi al-Sindiya. Two secondary roads—one extending from the northern side of the village and the other from its southern side—connected it to the main road linking the Mediterranean coast with Marj Ibn ‘Amir.

During the British Mandate period, the village developed along a northwestern axis. Its closely clustered houses were constructed primarily of stone. Numerous springs and wells within the village boundaries supplied water for domestic and agricultural use.

Boundaries of Khubbayza

Khubbayza was bordered by the following villages and localities:

- North: [Daliyat al-Rawha](#).
- West: [Umm al-Shawf](#).
- South: Kafr Qara.
- East: [al-Butaymat](#).

The wider surrounding area also included al-Sindiya to the west, al-Kafrayn to the east, ‘Ar‘ara and Qannir to the south, and Sabbarin to the northwest.

Origin of the Name Khubbayza

The village name was derived from *khubbayza*, the Arabic name for the wild mallow plant. Its leaves have traditionally been gathered and cooked as a vegetable in Palestinian rural cuisine.

Population of Khubbayza

The population of Khubbayza was recorded as 140 in 1922. By 1931, the village had 209 inhabitants living in 42 houses. Its population reached 290 in 1945, all of whom were Palestinian Muslims. The estimated population at the time of the Nakba was approximately 336.

Refugees originating from Khubbayza subsequently settled in several places in Palestine and the diaspora, including Umm al-Fahm, Jenin, Jenin refugee camp, Nur Shams refugee camp near Tulkarm, Jordan, Syria, and Germany.

Population Figures for Khubbayza

Year	Population*
1922	140
1931	209
1945	290
1948 estimate	336
Estimated number of refugees in 1998	2,066

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

Number of Houses in Khubbayza

Year	Number of houses
1931	42
1948 estimate	67

Economic Life in Khubbayza

The villagers depended primarily on agriculture and livestock raising. Grain and vegetables were among their principal crops. In 1944/45, approximately 2,295 dunams of Palestinian-owned land were devoted to cereals, while 65 dunams were irrigated or used for orchards.

Olive trees occupied approximately 20 dunams within the broader orchard category.

The inhabitants obtained water from the springs and wells situated within the village boundaries. These water sources supported household needs, livestock, and the limited areas of irrigated cultivation.

Land Ownership in Khubbayza

Ownership category	Area (dunams)*
Palestinian-owned	2,828
Jewish-owned	2,024
Public land	2
Total	4,854

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres.

Land Use in Khubbayza in 1945

Type of land use	Palestinian land (dunams)*	Jewish land (dunams)*
Irrigated land and orchards	65	3
Olive groves	20	0
Cereal cultivation	2,295	2,021
Built-up area	11	0
Cultivable land	2,360	2,024

Type of land use	Palestinian land (dunams)*	Jewish land (dunams)*
Uncultivable land	459	0

* One dunam equals approximately 1,000 square metres. Olive groves are included within the irrigated-land and orchard category and should not be added separately when calculating the total cultivable area.

Archaeological Remains in Khubbayza

The village and its surroundings contained remains indicating earlier periods of habitation. North of Khubbayza stood Khirbat Kalba, also known locally as Khirbat al-Kalbi. Local tradition associated its name with the Arab tribe of Kalb, members of which were said to have settled in the region during an earlier period.

The available descriptions identify archaeological traces at the ruined site, although they do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that settlement continued there without interruption throughout every historical period.

Occupation and Depopulation of Khubbayza

Khubbayza may have been subjected to an early Haganah raid at the beginning of January 1948. A report published at the time referred to an attack on a village called “Habasa near Haifa.” Some later accounts identify this locality with Khubbayza, but the identification is uncertain and should not be presented as conclusively established. No casualty figure was given in the contemporary report.

Following the fighting around Mishmar Ha’Emek in April 1948 and the occupation of several neighbouring Palestinian villages, the Irgun expanded its operations in the region. Khubbayza was captured between 12 and 14 May 1948. According to the Irgun account cited in later historical studies, most of the inhabitants of Khubbayza and nearby villages fled under mortar fire.

The precise day of occupation is not firmly documented. Accordingly, 12 May may be retained

as the opening date, but the more historically accurate formulation is that the village was occupied between 12 and 14 May 1948.

Settlements on the Land of Khubbayza

No settlement was established on the built-up site or within the officially recorded boundaries of Khubbayza after its depopulation. The claim that Kibbutz Gal'ed was constructed on the village site is not supported by the principal village studies.

The nearest settlement is Even Yitzhak, also known as Gal'ed, which was established in 1945 approximately one kilometre east of Khubbayza. It was built on land historically associated with the neighbouring village of al-Butaymat rather than on Khubbayza's built-up site.

Khubbayza Today

Stone rubble is scattered throughout the village site among thorny shrubs, wild grasses, and cactus plants. Part of the surrounding land is cultivated, while other sections are used for grazing livestock.

The village's structures have disappeared almost entirely, but the rubble, vegetation, and archaeological remains continue to indicate the location of the former Palestinian community.

Sources

- [Palestine Remembered: Khubbayza, Haifa Subdistrict.](#)
- [Institute for Palestine Studies: *All That Remains*.](#)
- [Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains*, Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992.](#)
- Government of Palestine, Department of Statistics, *Village Statistics, April 1945*.
- Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1922* and *Census of Palestine, 1931*.

- Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 243.