

Bayt Susin



Bayt Susin - Depopulated Palestinian Village of the Ramla Subdistrict

Bayt Susin was a depopulated Palestinian village in the Ramla Subdistrict, located approximately 17 kilometers southeast of Ramla. It stood on a hilltop on the southern slopes of a mountainous area at an average elevation of about 300 meters above sea level.

The village overlooked broad areas to the west and south. Two watercourses descended the slopes and met below the village. Bayt Susin was also located near

a network of roads serving several urban centers, while a secondary road connected it with the main Jaffa-Jerusalem highway.

Item	Information
District	Ramla
Distance from Ramla	Approximately 17 km southeast of Ramla
Elevation	Approximately 300 m above sea level
Natural Setting	A hilltop on the southern slopes of a mountainous area, overlooking the west and south, with two watercourses meeting below the village
Population in 1944/1945	210 inhabitants
Estimated Population in 1948	244 inhabitants – a later estimate, not an official census
Occupation and Depopulation Period	A failed assault on 22–23 May 1948; final occupation on 28 or 30 May according to differing sources
Military Operation	Operation Ben-Nun in the context of the battles for al-Latrun; an earlier account links the village to Operation Nachshon in April
Military Unit	Sheva' / Seventh Brigade
Total Land Area	6,481 dunums
Israeli Settlement Established on Village Lands	Ta'oz, established in 1950

Bayt Susin Through History

Crusader sources referred to the village as Bezezin. In 1596, Bayt Susin belonged to the nahiya of Ramla in the liwa' of Gaza. Walid Khalidi's account, as reproduced by PalQuest, gives an estimated population of 308 and records taxes on wheat, barley, olives, goats, beehives, and other agricultural products.

Edward Robinson passed through Bayt Susin in 1852 and described it as a small and ancient village. During the British Mandate period, the Palestine Index

Gazetteer classified Bayt Susin as a hamlet.

Location and Built Environment

Bayt Susin stood on a hilltop overlooking the countryside to its west and south. Its built-up area was divided into two sections. The larger section had a rectangular plan running from north to south, while the smaller section stood about 250 meters to the southwest.

The houses were constructed of stone. A mosque stood near the smaller section, and the villagers obtained water for domestic use from a spring in or near the village.

Population of Bayt Susin

Year	Population	Nature of Figure
1596	308	Historical figure derived from Ottoman-period records as reproduced by later sources; not a modern census
1922	47	Official Census of Palestine, 1922
1931	70	Official Census of Palestine, 1931
1944/1945	210	Official British Mandate statistics
1948	244	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered; not an official census
1998	1,496 refugees	Later estimate of refugees and descendants; not an official village census

Number of Houses

Year	Houses	Nature of Figure
1931	14 occupied houses	Official census
1948	48 houses	Later estimate published by Palestine Remembered

Land Ownership in Bayt Susin

Bayt Susin had a total land area of 6,481 dunums. Palestine Remembered presents the simplified ownership categories as follows:

Total	6,481
Ownership Category	Area in Dunums
Palestinian	5,453
Transferred to Zionists	0
Communal/Public	1,028

The official 1944/45 land statistics classify the same area as 5,453 Arab dunums and 1,028 public dunums, with no land listed under Jewish ownership.

Land Use in 1944/1945

Total	5,453	1,028	6,481
Land Use	Arab	Public	Total
Cereals	5,108	7	5,115
Plantations and Irrigable Land	94	0	94
Built-up Area	8	0	8
Non-Cultivable Land	243	1,021	1,264

A total of 5,209 dunums was classified as cultivable or cultivated land, representing approximately four-fifths of the village territory.

Economic Life in Bayt Susin

The village economy depended primarily on agriculture and animal husbandry. Cereals constituted the principal crop, with 5,115 dunums classified under cereal cultivation in the 1944/45 land-use statistics.

A further 94 dunums consisted of plantations and irrigable land. The historical account also records olive trees on approximately two dunums in 1943. Livestock raising formed another important component of the village economy.

Water Resources

Residents obtained domestic water from a spring in or near the village. Historical geographical descriptions also refer to two watercourses descending the slopes and meeting below the village site.

Education in Bayt Susin

In 1947, residents of Bayt Susin and neighboring Bayt Jiz jointly financed a school that served children from both villages. The school was associated physically with Bayt Jiz but was shared by the two communities.

The Mosque and Religious Life

Bayt Susin had a mosque near the smaller section of the village, and its population was predominantly Muslim. The principal historical sources reviewed here do not independently verify the existence of a church, so an isolated database entry referring to one has not been treated as sufficient evidence.

Archaeological Remains and Khirbas

Several khirbas and archaeological sites near Bayt Susin contained the remains of walls and building foundations, cut stones, rock-hewn cisterns, caves, a basin, and burial grounds. The principal sources do not provide enough evidence to assign a precise period to all of these remains.

Occupation and Depopulation of Bayt Susin

The sources differ over the date of Bayt Susin's occupation, and it is important to distinguish an April account from the more detailed military chronology of May

1948.

Walid Khalidi reproduces an account attributed to Israeli historian Benny Morris according to which Bayt Susin was occupied and depopulated on 20 April 1948 in the aftermath of Operation Nachshon. Khalidi, however, also discusses other evidence that conflicts with this date.

Palestinian historian 'Arif al-'Arif states that an attempt to capture Bayt Susin on 22–23 May failed after the attacking force encountered unexpectedly strong resistance from local inhabitants and Arab forces in the al-Latrun sector.

Al-'Arif places the final occupation approximately one week later, on either 28 or 30 May, during the battles around al-Latrun. Another account reproduced by Khalidi indicates that the Sheva' or Seventh Brigade captured Bayt Susin and neighboring Bayt Jiz during this phase, while the capture of the two villages was announced on 28 May.

PalQuest explicitly links the fall of Bayt Susin and Bayt Jiz to Operation Ben-Nun, part of the military effort around al-Latrun and the attempt to establish an alternative supply route between the coastal area and forces in Jerusalem.

Occupation Chronology

Stage	Date	Details
Account of an Earlier Occupation	20 April 1948	An account reproduced by Khalidi and attributed to Benny Morris links the occupation and depopulation of Bayt Susin to the aftermath of Operation Nachshon; this conflicts with the detailed May chronology.
Failed Assault	22–23 May 1948	'Arif al-'Arif records an unsuccessful attempt to capture the village after the attacking forces encountered resistance from local inhabitants and Arab forces.
Final Occupation	28 or 30 May 1948	Al-'Arif places the fall of Bayt Susin on one of these dates; the capture of Bayt Susin and Bayt Jiz was announced on 28 May.

Stage	Date	Details
Military Operation	Late May 1948	Bayt Susin and Bayt Jiz fell to the Sheva' / Seventh Brigade in the context of Operation Ben-Nun and the battles for al-Latrun.
Destruction	After occupation; precise date unknown	The sources do not establish a precise demolition date, but later field documentation records that most of the site had been leveled.

Military Operation and Unit

Military Operation: Operation Ben-Nun, in the context of attempts to capture the al-Latrun area and establish an alternative supply route toward Jerusalem. An earlier account associates Bayt Susin with Operation Nachshon in April, but this conflicts with the later chronology of a failed assault on 22–23 May followed by the village's final occupation at the end of the month.

Military Unit: Sheva' / Seventh Brigade. The principal sources identify the brigade in connection with the capture of Bayt Susin and Bayt Jiz together; a specific battalion is therefore not stated here without independent village-level verification.

Cause of Depopulation

The depopulation of Bayt Susin was connected to the military assaults in the al-Latrun sector. Palestine Remembered classifies the cause as a direct military assault, while the historical chronology documents failed and subsequent attacks culminating in the occupation of the village in late May 1948.

Destruction of Bayt Susin

The precise date on which Bayt Susin was destroyed is not known. Historical material reproduced by Khalidi notes that many villages captured in the Jerusalem corridor during this period were subsequently leveled, while later field documentation confirms that most of Bayt Susin's built-up area had been

bulldozed.

Israeli Settlement on Bayt Susin Village Lands

The moshav of **Ta'oz** was established in 1950 on Bayt Susin's lands, southeast of the former village site.

Bayt Susin Today

According to the field documentation used by Walid Khalidi, with photographs published by PalQuest dated June 1990, the village site had been largely bulldozed and leveled. Grass and thorns covered the remaining rubble.

Traces of a fig tree remained visible near the center of the site, while fragments of house walls survived along the southern edge among carob, pine, and cedar trees. Cactuses and bushes grew along the northwestern edge, and the areas to the north and east had been planted with trees.

This description reflects historical field documentation from 1990, preceding the publication of *All That Remains* in 1992. It should therefore not be treated as a direct field verification of conditions at the site in 2026.

Sources

- PalQuest – Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question: Bayt Susin.
- PalQuest – Bayt Jiz, particularly the material on Operation Ben-Nun and the capture of Bayt Susin and Bayt Jiz.
- Palestine Remembered – Bayt Susin, Ramla District.
- Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*.
- 'Arif al-'Arif, material on the battles around al-Latrun and Bayt Susin as reproduced by Khalidi and PalQuest.
- Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine, 1922*.

- E. Mills, *Census of Palestine 1931: Population of Villages, Towns and Administrative Areas*.
- Government of Palestine, *Village Statistics, 1945*, reproduced by Sami Hadawi.