

Inn of the Good Samaritan (Khan al-Ahmar)



Inn of the Good Samaritan (Khan al-Ahmar): The Caravan Stop on the Jerusalem-Jericho Road

The **Inn of the Good Samaritan**, known as **Khan al-Ahmar** ("the Red Khan"), is a historic khan on the old road descending from **Jerusalem** to **Jericho**, about 18 km from Jerusalem, linked in Christian tradition to the parable of the Good Samaritan told in the Gospel of Luke. A Byzantine monastery and pilgrims' hostel stood here in the 6th century CE, and in the Ottoman period, in the 16th century, a khan was built where merchants and caravans travelling between the two banks of the Jordan River rested. The khan lies in an area occupied by Israel since 1967; the

occupation authorities turned it into a mosaic museum in 2009, while the neighbouring Palestinian Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar, which bears its name, faces forced displacement for the E1 settlement project. This guide covers the khan's history, its features and what it faces today.

Table of contents

1. [Quick facts](#)
2. [The name and the parable of the Good Samaritan](#)
3. [Location](#)
4. [History through the ages](#)
5. [The mosaic museum under occupation](#)
6. [The Khan al-Ahmar Bedouin community](#)
7. [The khan today \(2026\)](#)
8. [FAQ](#)
9. [Sources](#)

Quick facts

The Inn of the Good Samaritan at a glance

Arabic name	خان السامري الصالح (الخان الأحمر)
Other names	Khan al-Ahmar, Khan al-Samiri
Location	Jerusalem-Jericho road, about 18 km from Jerusalem
Tradition	Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37)
Byzantine period	Monastery and pilgrims' hostel, 6th century CE
Crusader period	Fortress on a nearby hill to protect pilgrims
Ottoman period	Caravan khan, 16th century
20th century	Police post
Since 2009	Mosaic museum set up by the occupation authorities

The name and the parable of the Good Samaritan

The khan is known as **Khan al-Ahmar** ("the Red Khan") after the colour of the iron-oxide-tinted red limestone in this part of the Jerusalem wilderness, where the road was known in the past as Tal'at al-Damm ("the Ascent of Blood"), for its red rocks and the bandit raids it was notorious for. It is called the **Inn of the Good Samaritan** because Christian tradition links it to the parable Jesus told in the Gospel of Luke (10:25–37): a man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers who wounded him and left him half dead; a priest and then a Levite passed him by, until a Samaritan came, bound his wounds, carried him to an inn, cared for him and paid for his stay. The parable became a symbol of compassion that transcends belonging.

Location

The khan stands beside the old road linking [Jerusalem](#) and [Jericho](#) through the Jerusalem wilderness, about 18 km from Jerusalem, in desert hill country between the two cities. For centuries this road was the artery connecting Jerusalem with the Jordan Valley and the east bank of the Jordan River. Nearby lie the Khan al-Ahmar Bedouin community and the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, built on the area's lands.

History through the ages

- **6th century CE:** a Byzantine monastery with a pilgrims' hostel was built on the site, probably over an earlier travellers' inn; remains of the monastery church are still visible.
- **Crusader period:** the Crusaders built a fortress on a nearby hill to protect pilgrims from robbers on the road.

- **16th century (Ottoman period):** a caravan khan was built over the monastery remains, a stop where merchants rested and fed their horses on the road linking the two banks of the Jordan River.
- **20th century:** the site was used as a police post.
- **1967:** Israel occupied the area along with the rest of the West Bank.
- **2009:** the occupation authorities turned the site into a mosaic museum.

The mosaic museum under occupation

In 2009 the occupation authorities set up a mosaic museum in the khan, one of the largest devoted to mosaics, displaying mosaics from churches and various religious sites, some dating to the 4th century CE, along with finds from excavations on the site, including pottery, coins, stone coffins and a carved Byzantine pulpit. The museum is controversial because it was established on occupied land under Israeli military and civil control and holds pieces moved from sites in the occupied territories, contrary to international law, which forbids an occupying power from removing cultural property from the territory it occupies. The monastery church has been rebuilt as a place of worship with an altar, but without a cross or any visible Christian symbol.

The Khan al-Ahmar Bedouin community

Near the khan lies the **Khan al-Ahmar community**, a Palestinian Bedouin village of some 150–200 people, more than half of them children, from the Jahalin tribe, whom Israel expelled from the Tel Arad area in the Naqab (Negev) in the 1950s. After the 1967 occupation, the settlement of Ma'ale Adumim was built on the area's lands in 1977. In 2009 residents built a school of mud and tyres with help from an Italian organisation, because building with cement was banned; it serves more than 150 pupils from the community and neighbouring communities and has received repeated demolition orders. In September 2018 the Israeli Supreme Court ruled for the community's demolition, but implementation was postponed under international pressure, while the Palestinian government approved a local council

for "Khan al-Ahmar village" within the Jerusalem governorate. The displacement targets the area as part of the E1 settlement project, which stretches over some 12,000 dunams from East Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and aims to cut Jerusalem off from its surroundings and split the West Bank. The United Nations has warned that the forced displacement of Khan al-Ahmar's residents could amount to a war crime.

The khan today (2026)

The historic khan remains under the control of the occupation authorities as a mosaic museum. On 19 May 2026 Israel's Finance Minister signed an order for the immediate eviction of the Khan al-Ahmar community and directed "Civil Administration" officials to demolish its buildings, leaving residents under threat of forced displacement at any moment, amid escalating settler attacks and settlement expansion in the West Bank since the genocidal war on Gaza. The khan, the station of compassion in the parable of the Good Samaritan, now bears witness to the suffering of the people of the land being uprooted around it.

Frequently asked questions

Where is the Inn of the Good Samaritan?

On the old road between Jerusalem and Jericho, about 18 km from Jerusalem.

Why is it called Khan al-Ahmar?

After the colour of the red limestone in the area, where the road was known in the past as the "Ascent of Blood".

What is the khan's connection to the Good Samaritan?

Christian tradition links it to the inn to which the Samaritan carried the wounded man in the parable told in the Gospel of Luke.

When was the khan built?

The Ottoman khan was built in the 16th century over the remains of a 6th-century Byzantine monastery and pilgrims' hostel.

What is the situation of the Khan al-Ahmar community today?

Its residents, from the Jahalin tribe, face forced displacement after an order for its immediate eviction and the demolition of its buildings was signed in May 2026 for the E1 settlement project.

Conclusion

On the road where the wounded man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Khan al-Ahmar has stood for centuries as a stop for pilgrims and caravans. Today, between its walls turned into a museum by the occupation and the Jahalin tents threatened with demolition around it, the khan raises the question of compassion anew before a world that sees the people of the land uprooted and walks on by.

Sources

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- See the Holy Land – Inn of the Good Samaritan

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