



WHERE TO GO?

Arraba and Sanur

The Two Northernmost Throne Villages of Palestine

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During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the central highlands of Palestine were divided into 24 administrative areas. The regions were ruled by rich local sheikhs who were also appointed as tax collectors on behalf of the Ottoman government. The architecture of their impressive stronghold-like palaces that were located in their centers of control – the throne villages – reflected their social status and wealth. Despite the rural setting, some architectural aspects (e.g., scale, spatial organization, ornamentation) of these residential complexes were influenced by the urban trends of the time. This was probably caused by the sheikhs' close relations with notables from various cities.

Arraba, located 13 kilometers southwest of Jenin, was one of the throne villages and a strategically important place that served as headquarters of the Abdel Hadi family. The brothers Abdel Qader and Hussein Abdel Hadi built their palaces there.

The interior of the complex contains a series of tall, eminent gates as well as tiny doors hidden away in shadowy corners. The palace also has some secret exits that allowed the inhabitants to escape during wartime. Today visitors can explore these historical buildings that are located in the heart of the town. The place currently serves as a center for many community activities and events. The rooftop affords an impressive view of the surrounding landscape.

The powerful sheikhs and notables often struggled with each other. The Abdel Hadi clan was known for its obstinate rivalry with the Touquan clan of Nablus, as well as its ongoing conflictual relationship with the ruling clan of another throne village located nearby – Sanur.

The most imposing building of Sanur is the fortress that was built around 1700 by members of the Jarrar clan. The building is located at the very top of the hilly village surrounded by abundant olive groves.

In the eighteenth century, the Jarrar clan was in a state of continuous conflict with the governors of Acre. In 1830, when the clan refused to submit to Abdullah Pasha of Acre, the governor besieged Sanur and stormed it four months later. The palace was destroyed, and the Jarrars' power was severely diminished. Unfortunately, until now the Jarrar palace is in very poor condition as there are not enough funds to renovate the historical building. The inhabitants of Sanur hope that one day it will be restored and turned into a functioning building.

For more information, or to plan a visit, contact VisitPalestine's Tourist Information Office at info@visitpalestine.ps.

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