



By Malak Hasan and Bisan AlHajHasan

Swim, Hike, and Discover Flora near Ein Qinya



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hile avid hikers prefer longer trails, walking from Ein Qinya to Ein Bubin is a perfect hike for beginners or for people looking for more than just a walk.

Only seven kilometers northwest of Ramallah lies the small village of Ein Qinya. The surrounding area is known for its lush landscape, fascinating stone terraces, *muntar*,* and numerous freshwater springs. It is also surrounded by Wadi al-Dileb, a nature reserve that begins west of Ramallah and ends west of Bil'in village.

On an early Friday morning, we hiked the part of Wadi al-Dileb that passes by Ein Qinya to reach Ein Bubin, a natural spring in the adjacent village of Deir Ibzi'. We parked our car near Ein Qinya's mosque and descended into the valley to the south, leaving behind the village's paved streets.

Turning right, we walked along the valley bed, passing ancient olive groves and wild plants, herbs, and flowers. Guessing their names is a favorite game of ours, and along



this trail, you will not be disappointed by the natural diversity. The area is a nature gem, and whereas the path that leads to Ein Bubin is only two kilometers long and can be completed in less than an hour, we took our time, stopping to examine the Roman structures, take photos, and drink in the surrounding beauty.

Halfway through, we reached an intersection where we turned left to ascend a steep hill. This part can be challenging for some, but we enjoyed it because we got a bird's eye view of the valley we'd just walked.

At the end of the climb, we turned left again to descend to the natural spring of Ein Bubin. It was easy to find by following the sound of trickling water and the thriving farmland that shoulders the road on both sides. Its large freshwater pool greeted us with serenity. The place is the perfect escape from a busy lifestyle, and you can enjoy it all year round: in the summer, a jump into the pool is all you need, and in the colder months, you can skip the dive and relax poolside while enjoying a warm cup of tea.



You can return to Ein Qinya by the same route or take a loop hike that we found enticing because it allowed us to see the valley from way up. Leaving the pool behind us, we took a narrow path to the left. After a short climb, we reached an unpaved road that circles around the mountain towards Ein Qinya. It led us to a huge oak tree that casts its shadow over another large freshwater pool. Here, overlooking Ein Qinya, we used an already built stone campfire site to prepare our lunch: A pan of tomato with green chili and garlic and a side dish of scrambled eggs with the wild asparagus that we'd picked along the way. We were lucky to run into one of the local shepherds who frequently visit the place with their herds, seeking food and water, and from whom you can also purchase some fresh goat's milk.

After a hearty meal and a good chat, we descended the mountain and headed back to our car. The full hike took us close to four hours, including the two stops. If you do not own a private car, you can reach Ein Qinya via public transportation; the ride from Ramallah takes less than 15 minutes.

Malak and Bisan are the founders of Ahlan Palestine, a travel blog that promotes tourism in Palestine. You can follow their adventures by visiting their social media platforms @ AhlanPalestine.

*Stone structures on fields and in olive groves. Sometimes also called farmers' castles, they were used to store tools and crops and house farmers during the planting and harvest seasons.