

Hama:

Jewel of El-Assi River

> Hama - Fadi Kestaly

Hama is an old city, inhabited since 4000 BC. It was conquered successively by Canaanites, Armeans Persians and Romans. The Muslims conquered it in 638 under the leadership of Ubayda Ben El Jarrah, and it was the capital of the Ayyubid emirate. Its most famous governor was Abu El Fida Moayid-eddine Ismael, who was a geographer and historian. It has been visited by thousands of travellers including Ibn Battuta.

Located a200 km to the north of Damas, Hama is 270 m above sea level. It is famous for its wooden water mills on El-Assi River. They carry water in small cases to a higher basin, from where it is distributed through channels to the entire city. The water produces a pleasant musical sound as if flows. There are 16 water mills in the city; the diameter of the largest reaches 21m. The oldest depiction of the water mills goes back to a painting from the 4th century BC.

Hama's sites

Al Adhm Palace: now a museum for the craft industry. Built by Asa'ad Pasha Al-Adhm in 1740, with its prestigious dome, it overhangs El-Assi. In the centre of its esplanade one finds

a magnolia tree more than one hundred years old. Many television historical series were filmed in its splendid living room, such as "Addaher Bebres" and "The Children of Al-Rashid".

The fortress is located at the centre of the city. Currently, it is a public park.

The National Museum: located to the north of the fortress with the oldest discoveries from the city.

Hammams: dating back to the times of the Ayyubids and the Ottomans, such as Hammam Derouicha in the district El Morabit.

Khans: Khan Rostom Pasha located at El-Morabit Street. It was built by Rostom Pasha in 1556, and Khan Asa'ad Pasha, located close to Bab El-Balad, founded by Asa'ad Pasha Al-Adhm in 1751.

Hama's mosques

The Large Mosque: It has traces of three civilizations (Pagan, Christian and Islamic)

Al-Nouri Mosque: built by Nour-eddine Zenki, it goes back to 1163.

Abi El- fida Mosque: dating back to 1326. It shelters the grave of Abi El-Fida.

Finally, Hama is famous for its cotton fabrics, gilded embroideries, dairy products (curdled milk, cheese) and a sweet made of cheese. ■



Watermill

الناعورة



حديقة الحسن
Al-Hussun Park