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The Yarmuk Railway





The Yarmuk Valley Railway

The line through the Yarmuk Gorge was opened in 1905, as part of the link from Damascus and the Hedjaz Railway to Haifa. The construction of this section, under Heinrich Meissner, was very difficult because of the narrow, winding valley and eventually required 14 bridges and seven tunnels. During the British mandate period, (1920 – 1948) the first station after the line crossed from Syria into Palestine was at El-Hamma (Hamat Gader) but the customs post was established at the more accessible Samakh station, where a turntable allowed for exchange of Syrian and PR (Palestine Railways) locomotives.

In 1946, Jewish saboteurs blew up the second bridge and traffic was cut off, never to be restored, despite one attempt to repair it. After the 1967 war, the section of the line from Hamat Gader to the remains of the bridge remained in Israeli hands, but as a closed military area, was not accessible to the general public. In October 2018, a trip was arranged to this section and the photos shown here were taken by Amichai Sirota.





