



VIEW NORTH: THE TRAIL LEADING DOWN TO MONTFORT FROM THE SOUTH PASSES A SMALL FARM (CENTER RIGHT). NOTICE THE WHITE CAR AND SMALL BUILDING FOR PERSPECTIVE.

BELOW (VIEW NORTH): DETAIL OF THE ABOVE PHOTO. LARGE OAK TREES (TOP LEFT) ARE TYPICAL AND COVER MUCH OF THE REGION. THE SAME TREES ARE VISIBLE IN THE ABOVE PHOTO (BOTTOM LEFT).





VIEW WEST: THE CASTLE (CENTER RIGHT) LOOKS DOWN ON NAHAL KEZIV WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA (TOP) IN THE DISTANCE. ALSO PICTURED IS THE COASTAL TOWN OF NAHARIYA (TOP LEFT), 8 MILES (13 KILOMETERS) TO THE WEST.

MONTFORT CASTLE

(SEE MAP ON PAGE 46)

Montfort is a ruined twelfth-century Crusader castle 10 miles (16 kilometers) south of the border between Lebanon and Israel. The name derives from two French words that mean “strong mountain.” The castle rests on the southern edge of Nahal Keziv, a 39-mile (62.7-kilometer) perennial stream that provides the water for the residents of western Upper Galilee today. The entire area is part of the Keziv Nature Reserve and is one of the most beautiful places in Israel (see chapter 5, “Upper Galilee,” on page 47).

The Muslim leader Saladin defeated the Crusaders in 1187 AD at the Battle of Hattin (see “Horns of Hattin” on page 195). Following the battle, the Muslims took over Jerusalem and other sites, including Montfort. Because the castle was inland, away from the main roads, the Muslims did not use it as a military site.

After Saladin’s victory, England’s King Richard I (1157–1199 AD), also known as Richard the Lionheart, started the Third Crusade to recapture the Holy Land. His effort met with mixed success. Jerusalem along with Judea and Samaria remained under Muslim control, while the Crusaders continued to rule the coast and Galilee, making Acre their capital (see “Acco/Ptolemais” in *Blessed Pilgrimage*, vol. 4). Montfort was sold to the German-speaking Teutonic Knights in 1220 AD. They made it their headquarters while renovating the castle and expanding its fortifications.

In 1271 AD, the castle fell to the Mamluks (see “Historical Sketch” in *Blessed Pilgrimage* vol. 2), who “slighted” many of the buildings over a period of twelve days to reduce their administrative and military value. After 1271 the castle fell into ruin and was never inhabited again.



VIEW NORTH: THE TRAIL TO THE CASTLE FROM THE SOUTH PASSES THROUGH THIS ROCK CAVERN.

BELOW (VIEW WEST): THE CASTLE WAS PRIMARILY AN ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS WITH NO MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE.





VIEW WEST: THE CASTLE'S DOMESTIC WING.

BELOW (VIEW NORTH): THE CASTLE'S INNER GATE TOWER.

