

Gifu Castle, known prior as Inabayama Castle, took up most of this mountain, Mount Kinka. The castle ruins cover over two square kilometers and are now preserved as a National Historic Site. Remnants of the original palace and gardens have been found near base of the mountain, but the tower standing at the top was built from concrete in 1956.

The first castle on Mount Kinka is believed to have been built by the Nikaido clan between 1201 and 1204. The warlord Saito Dosan (1494–1556) built out the castle's fortifications after taking control of the mountain in 1539. Three generations of the Saito clan ruled here until Dosan's grandson, Saito Tatsuoki (1548–1573) was defeated in 1567 by Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), who captured the castle town and renamed it "Gifu."

After defeating Saito Tatsuoki, Nobunaga rebuilt much of the castle using larger stones and the newest technology for the time. According to the Portuguese missionary Luis Frois (1532–1597) and the aristocrat Yamashina Tokitsugu (1507–1579), Nobunaga's castle was a well-designed and opulent complex, richly decorated and surrounded by beautiful gardens. In the words of Frois, it was a "paradise on earth." While the castle was built as a symbol of Nobunaga's power and authority, it was also a military fortress designed to withstand siege warfare.

While in the hands of Nobunaga's grandson, Oda Hidenobu (1580–1605), Gifu was attacked and destroyed in 1600 by forces who supported Tokugawa Ieyasu. After the battle, parts of the castle including some of the stone walls and wooden structures were reused to build Kano Castle a few kilometers to the south. The current Gifu Castle keep (fortified tower) was built in 1956.