

Armor

Inuyama Castle was on the frontline of many significant battles which at times resulted in conquest of the castle. The four sets of armor displayed here were reportedly used during the nearby Battles of Komaki and Nagakute, a series of battles fought in 1584, and were passed down through generations of local residents before being entrusted to Inuyama Castle.

These battles pitted two of Japan's greatest military commanders, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616), against each other. Ieyasu had a base at nearby Mt. Komaki, and his forces were spread out across the mountain when Hideyoshi led his army of 120,000 soldiers to Inuyama and took the castle.

The armor worn by samurai of these times was made of a combination of materials including metal, leather, and plant fiber. The chest plates and arm and leg guards had to be strong enough to protect against a range of weapons, including bows and arrows, swords, and guns. They also had to be lightweight and flexible enough to accommodate riding on horseback and traveling and fighting on foot. The helmets of high-ranking samurai often featured elaborate decorative elements.