

Nagamachi Samurai District

Nagamachi is a well-preserved neighborhood of samurai houses. The cobblestone streets and tiled earthen walls are characteristic of wealthier samurai districts in Kanazawa during the Edo period (1603–1867). Explore the area's picturesque canals and beautifully restored homes for a sense of what life was like for samurai of that time.

During the Edo period, the Kaga domain (present-day Ishikawa and around) was extremely prosperous. This wealth enabled samurai of even moderate rank to build large, beautiful homes. The historic Nagamachi neighborhood was once home to some of these samurai families. The ruling Maeda family had all their samurai retainers reside in Kanazawa, so similar neighborhoods were once common around the city.

After the domains' lords ceded authority to the emperor in 1869, samurai families lost their source of income and privilege, and were ultimately forced to abandon or sell their homes. A few former-samurai houses and estates are open to the public today. One highlight is the Nomura Residence, once the estate of wealthy retainers to the Maeda family. Heirlooms on display include a full suit of samurai armor. The house has been awarded two stars in the Michelin Green Guide, in part for its inner garden with tranquil streams and a miniature waterfall.

Not every Nagamachi family was so prosperous. At the Ashigaru Museum, two restored homes of the foot-soldier class show the contrasting austerity in which lower-ranked samurai lived.