

## **Iga Ninja: Clothing and Equipment**

In popular culture, ninja are often shown wearing black uniforms and face masks, but in reality they usually dressed in simple farmer's clothes. Dressed as farmers, ninja could operate in public without attracting attention, and their clothes were comfortable and gave freedom of movement. At night, ninja might wear navy blue or brown clothing to hide in the shadows.

In order to travel freely as spies outside their village, ninja typically disguised themselves in one of seven ways: in addition to dressing as a farmer, they might dress as anonymous mendicant monks of the Fuke school of Zen, who wore woven reed hoods that look like upside-down baskets and played the flute for alms. If they were headed into the mountains, they might dress as *yamabushi*, or mountain ascetics. For espionage missions in town, they could dress as monks, whose straw hats effectively hid their faces, or as traveling Noh actors, merchants, or street performers.

Ninja created their own specialized gear by modifying farm implements. It was unlawful for anyone but the samurai to carry swords and firearms, but sickles, knives, and other tools could be applied as deadly weapons. Ropes and chains were useful for climbing and fighting enemies at a distance. During their heyday, Iga ninja were known to be especially skilled at using explosives.

At the Danjiri Museum, you can rent a modern interpretation of traditional ninja garb to wear as you explore the city of ninja.