

Shingu Castle Ruins

The ruins of Shingu Castle are located in a municipal park in Shingu in Wakayama prefecture. It is a popular picnic spot, especially during the cherry blossom season, from late March to early April. Little remains of the castle other than stone walls and steps.

The castle that once stood here was constructed between 1619 and 1633. Plans for the castle began during the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568–1603), a time of political upheaval after years of civil war. It is located on a site overlooking the city and the Kumano River and was built to defend the area in the event of renewed fighting. It was completed in the early years of the Edo period (1603–1868), a time of relative peace and stability. The Mizuno family, which ruled the area on behalf of the shogunate, lived in the castle for ten generations. The family's wealth was associated with whaling. They used the castle grounds as a base for their business, shipping whale oil, used as lamp fuel, along the river, out along the coast and on to Edo (modern-day Tokyo). The castle stood for almost 250 years, but during the Meiji era (1868–1912), most of Japan's castles were turned over to the government and dismantled. Shingu Castle was demolished by 1875.