

Kurumamon Gate

Kurumamon Gate provided access to the castle town from both the Senba River and the Saikoku Kaido, a major road that ran between Kyoto and the far western end of Honshu. It was therefore the main entryway for supplies to the castle. *Kuruma* means “vehicle,” and refers to the carts full of goods and supplies that entered the castle through this gate. Kurumamon also had a waterside entrance for boats arriving on the Senba River, and this is where the castle’s daimyo lords would embark to travel downriver.

Kurumamon Gate had a specialized design that differed from that of the other castle gates. Instead of two double-doored gateways separated by a single inner courtyard, it had three gateways, the waterside entrance, and two courtyards. The outermost gate, connected to the bridge, faced west. A small guardhouse stood beside it. The middle gate, which faced south, opened onto the same large courtyard where boat passengers and cargo entered by means of the waterside doors. At the far northern side of the courtyard, the tall innermost gate (also south-facing) was topped by a watchtower. Another small guardhouse stood just beyond the inner gate.