

Sumpu Castle Park

The park grounds were once the location of Sumpu Castle, built by Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) in the late sixteenth century. All that remains of the original castle are some stone retaining walls, the stone foundations of the main tower, and portions of the moats. Two of the turrets and the main gate have been rebuilt according to plans used in the seventeenth century. A statue of Tokugawa Ieyasu stands near the center of the park, across from mandarin orange trees that he is thought to have planted himself. In the northeast quadrant of the park is Momijiyama Garden, a traditional strolling garden. The park has many open spaces and two play areas, and food stalls along the southern perimeter.

History

Ieyasu built Sumpu Castle in the late 1580s. In 1590, he shifted his base to Edo (now Tokyo), remaining there until he retired from the office of shogun in 1605. He then returned to Sumpu, and although in retirement, he retained power—effectively ruling Japan from Sumpu Castle until his death. Ieyasu ordered major renovations to the structure in 1607, making the castle's keep bigger and covering its roof tiles with precious metals. It was an impressive location for receiving foreign envoys.

In 1635, a fire which started in the town burned most of the castle to the ground. Only a few structures were later rebuilt. In the late nineteenth century, the castle grounds were given to the military, which was a common fate for castles throughout Japan at the time. The grounds were leveled and used for army barracks. The former castle grounds were transformed once again after World War II when the city purchased the site and turned it into a space for sports and public recreation.

Higashi Gomon and Tatsumi Yagura

Higashi Gomon was the gate used by important people to enter the castle. It was a key defensive point, along with the adjacent Tatsumi Yagura turret. Both have been restored based on plans dating from 1638, when much of the castle was rebuilt. Exhibits inside and outside the buildings explain the history of the castle and display artifacts from over the centuries.

Hitsujisaru Yagura

This corner turret and strategic defensive site was recently rebuilt for the first time in over 150 years. The building itself functions as an exhibit on traditional Japanese construction, with open floors and ceilings that reveal beams and joinery.

Stone Base of the Main Keep (*Tenshu*)

Archaeological excavations have revealed the stone foundations of the original main keep (*tenshu*) built in the late 1580s, and the much larger *tenshu* built in the first decades of the 1600s. The site offers a rare chance to see a variety of stone walls, including their interior construction.

Momijiyama Garden

This traditional Japanese garden has a central pond, winding paths, and a number of wooden buildings and natural features. Four types of landscapes are represented: a

village, a seascape, a mountain hamlet, and a mountain path. Notable elements are a miniature Mt. Fuji and the pine-lined Miho no Matsubara coastline.