

Second Floor

(1) Latticed Windows

Three sides of the Great Keep's second floor are lined with vertically latticed windows through which gunners could fire down at attackers who attempted to cross the moat. Each slat of the lattices is roughly 13 centimeters wide and 12 centimeters thick to create safe cover while affording visibility.

(2) Carpentry Techniques

When different timbers are joined together to form a single ceiling beam, the spot where they connect is structurally weak. A boat-shaped bracket arm was added to the underside of each connected beam to reinforce the joint. Many of the pillars have also been partially repaired over time, and various methods for joining and reinforcing the pillars and beams can be seen throughout the Great Keep.

Matsumoto Castle Firearm Museum

The second floor of the Great Keep houses the Matsumoto Castle Firearm Museum. The museum's collection was donated by Akahane Michishige and Kayoko, a local husband-and-wife duo of firearm enthusiasts. Of the 141 firearms in the collection, 37 pieces are displayed at the castle alongside other armaments. More information on some of the pieces can be found on the Collections page.

Various Types of Firearms

The museum collection includes a wide variety of firearms, such as matchlock muskets produced at the renowned gunworks in Kunitomo (now Nagahama, Shiga Prefecture); a massive, high-caliber matchlock weighing 16 kilograms; and firearms incorporated into other weapons. There are also panels explaining how firearms played a decisive role in several famous battles, such as the Battle of Nagashino in 1575.

Firing Mechanisms

One of the displays describes how matchlock firing mechanisms were manufactured. Different types of mechanisms have been disassembled to show how their intricate parts fit together.

Armor and Equipment

The collection includes the typical armor and equipment used by a samurai gunner in the sixteenth century. The set of armor shown here depicts a fully equipped warrior ready for battle: a sword at his waist, a bullet case dangling from his hip, a gourd-shaped gunpowder canister slung over his shoulder, and a ramrod at his back. Adding in the musket itself, the full kit would have weighed just under 20 kilograms.

Events Related to the Firearm Museum

Musket-Firing Demonstration

Twice a year, in spring and autumn, the Matsumoto Castle Gun Corps holds a firing demonstration on the castle grounds. Seeing and hearing the guns as they are loaded and fired, it is easy to imagine what a battlefield of the sixteenth century might have looked like.

Annual Guided Tour

A special tour is held every year. Participants are taught the history of matchlock muskets and Matsumoto Castle, after which they are given the opportunity to handle real muskets under the guidance of the Matsumoto Castle Gun Corps.

For more details on these activities, please see the Event Information page.

Excavations of the Ninomaru Goten Site

Between 1979 and 1984, archaeological excavations were conducted at the site of the Ninomaru Goten in the second bailey. The Ninomaru Goten was an administrative center and the residence of the castle lord, and the objects found in the excavation provide a picture of daily life at Matsumoto Castle.

Salt Pot

This ceramic pot was used to prepare and store a type of baked salt that was considered a luxury good. The inscription on the pot indicates it was produced in the southwestern part of Osaka Prefecture, which was a center of salt production until the Meiji era (1868–1912). Based on the characteristics of the ceramics, the pot is thought to date to sometime after 1726.

Food Remains

A large variety of animal remains were excavated from the Ninomaru Goten site, including the remains of shellfish and bones from fish, mammals, and birds. Some of the fish found at the site, such as yellowtail and sea bream, were caught in either the Sea of Japan or the Pacific Ocean and transported to Matsumoto.

Old Coins

A total of 119 coins were found during the excavations. The lord of Matsumoto Castle, Matsudaira Naomasa (1601–1666), received special permission from the shogunate to mint coins in Matsumoto beginning in 1637, but none of these coins were unearthed at the Ninomaru Goten site.