

Roofed Passage (*Watari Yagura*)

(1) Entrance to the Castle

Before the Moon-Viewing Tower was added in 1634, the entrance on the ground floor of the Roofed Passage was the only way to access the castle. The massive stone stairs at its entrance lead up to a hallway that connects the Great Keep and the Northwest Tower. The stairs are now covered by a wooden frame that includes handrails to improve safety, but this was only added once the castle was opened to the public.

(2) Curved Ceiling Beam

One of the ceiling beams on the second floor of the Roofed Passage has been left in the natural shape of the tree from which it was made. It was thought that leaving the timbers in their natural shape would allow the beam to flex and bend more easily during an earthquake. Similar curved beams can be seen at other castles, such as Hikone Castle and Kanazawa Castle.

The small bronze plaque on the beam describes the history of preservation efforts at Matsumoto Castle.

Items on Display

A small display on the second floor of the Roofed Passage contains roof tiles and nails that were removed during the deconstruction and restoration of the castle in the 1950s. Of the 84,672 tiles that were stripped from the castle roof at the time of the repairs, 22,396 were salvaged and reused.

Each time a lord of the castle made repairs to the roof, they used tiles decorated with their own family's crest. As a result, the crests of different families can be found side by side on the tiles of the castle roof.

Southeast Wing (*Tatsumi Tsuki-yagura*)

(1) The “Hidden” *Ishi Otoshi*

Viewed from outside, the Southeast Wing has an overhang that appears to be a defensive feature called an *ishi otoshi*. Normally, the overhang would have been open at the bottom, creating a space through which defenders could shoot bows and muskets. In this case, the opening is covered by floorboards.

The overhang was structurally necessary to ensure that the walls of the Southeast Wing and the Moon-Viewing Tower lined up. Had the structure been built during wartime, the floor likely would have been left open, but such defensive features were no longer a priority in the seventeenth century.

(2) Pillars from Wartime and Peacetime

The establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603 ushered in an era of relative peace, and daimyos no longer needed to prepare for the constant risk of invasion. This shift can be seen when comparing wartime and peacetime structures of the castle. At the

threshold between the Great Keep and the Southeast Wing, pillars from each structure are positioned side by side. The pillars in the Southeast Wing were not built to withstand an attack, and they are only about half as thick as those of the Great Keep.

(3) *Katōmado* Window and *Mizukiri* Rain Gutter

The bell-shaped window in the Southeast Wing is called a *katōmado* window. This design originated in China and was often used in Zen Buddhist temples. *Katōmado* windows eventually became incorporated into castle architecture and samurai residences.

An opening called a *mizukiri* was added to the windowsill to prevent rainwater from pooling and damaging the sill. The *mizukiri* directs rainwater out onto the roof through a small pipe.

Items on Display

Containers for gunpowder and other objects from the Matsumoto Castle Firearm Museum are displayed on the second floor of the Southeast Wing. More information about some of these objects can be found on the Collections page.

Moon-Viewing Tower (*Tsukimi Yagura*)

(1) The Defenseless Tower

The Moon-Viewing Tower was added to the castle during the Edo period (1603–1867), a period of lasting peace. As a result, the tower lacks the defensive features of the older portions of the castle. Instead of sturdy walls, three sides of the Moon-Viewing Tower have been fitted with sliding wooden doors that can be removed to provide an outlook over the surrounding castle grounds and a sweeping view of the distant mountains. When gatherings were held, the floor was covered with woven tatami mats.

The Moon-Viewing Tower is said to have been built to host the third Tokugawa shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604–1651), who had planned to stay at the castle while traveling to Zenkōji Temple. However, a rockslide forced Iemitsu to take a different route, and he never passed through Matsumoto.

(2) Vaulted Ceiling and Vermillion-Lacquered Veranda

The Moon-Viewing Tower contains many elegant touches that would not have been included in a time of war. For example, the tower is encircled by a vermillion-lacquered veranda with handrails that gently curve upward at the corners, and the beams of the vaulted ceiling have been stained using a dye made from persimmon juice to give the wood a reddish glow.