

## **Taketa Castle Town**

Walking through Taketa means following in the footsteps of the people who lived there more than 400 years ago. The layout of the former castle town is almost unchanged from the original plan imagined by Nakagawa Hideshige (1570–1612), the first lord of the Oka domain (modern-day Taketa).

The town developed below Oka Castle, a stronghold built on the flattened top of a hill. The first fortress on the hill was established in the twelfth century, but when the Nakagawa family began governing the domain in 1594, they constructed a stone castle of their own and began planning the castle town that would become Taketa. At its center were merchant houses, while samurai lived in the hilly outskirts.

In addition to the general shape of the town, many buildings have survived from the time when the Nakagawa family governed. Homes, storehouses, and other buildings from the 1800s line the streets, and fine residences built for the warrior class can be viewed along Bukeyashiki-dori (Samurai Residence Street) on the southern edge of town. Other noteworthy historic structures include the former homes of painter Tanomura Chikuden (1777–1835) and composer Taki Rentaro (1879–1903).