

Itajiki Yagura Turret

A two-story wooden turret on the southern rampart of Kushima Castle affords views of the castle's moats and Omura Bay. In the Edo period (1603–1867), there were likely six such *yagura* turrets. Foot soldiers stationed in the turret would keep watch over the land and water approaches to the castle.

Turrets were a key part of the castle's defenses, along with inner and outer moats. They were built on the outer walls, with defensive features such as concealed holes for dropping stones, and narrow slots for shooting arrows or firing rifles. The stone ramparts fan out towards a wide base in a style known as *ogi-no-kobai*, developed by military commander Kato Kiyomasa (1562–1611), who was considered one of the greatest castle designers of the time. The curved walls provided stability against earthquakes and were difficult for invaders to climb.

The Itajiki Yagura turret was built in 1992 and is typical of a castle watchtower of the seventeenth century. The turret is surrounded by cherry trees that bloom in spring, and overlooks the inner moats, which are planted with thousands of irises.