

## **Nihonmatsu Castle**

Kasumigajo Castle Park occupies the former grounds of Nihonmatsu Castle, which stood on a spur of the Adatara massif from 1414 to 1868. The castle was home to a series of daimyo before being assigned to Niwa Mitsushige in 1643. Civic planning by Mitsushige and his descendants laid the foundations for the city of Nihonmatsu as it is today. The Niwa family governed from the castle until 1868, when it was destroyed in the Boshin War. Today, the park contains preserved and reconstructed walls, buildings, and gardens that shed light on the castle as it was in centuries past.

The highest point of the park is the *honmaru* (main compound), which was the first part of the castle to be completed. It is surrounded by stone walls, some of which date to the late sixteenth century. The *tenshudai* (keep foundation) inside the *honmaru* never housed an actual keep, but offers panoramic views of the land around Nihonmatsu. The lower levels of the park contain other features including the Senshintei tea house, which is the oldest surviving structure on the site, as well as the recreated Minowa

Gate and a Japanese-style garden dating from the mid-seventeenth century.

The castle grounds are also used for seasonal community events, among them the Sakura (Cherry Blossom) Festival and the Chrysanthemum Doll Festival. Nihonmatsu Castle may no longer be standing, but the site remains central to the city's civic life.