

spring

Full blooms of cherryblossom  
The harmony of Hikone castle and cherry blossom is superb.



## Hikone Castle: Charms of each season

An old castle with history and  
romantic adventure which  
attract people visiting Hikone

Hikone castle is located at the western direction from JR Hikone station, has a castle tower made of white wall with the remaining castle frame which is mostly the same as the one in old time, and is surrounded by double moats. It is competing with Himeji castle for the best castle in the whole country. The castle floating in the moon light is particularly beautiful and considered one of eight beautiful spots of Lake Biwa. It took about 20years for Naotsugu and Naotaka, sons of Ii Naomasa, the first Lord of Hikone clan, to complete all the castle towers in 1622.

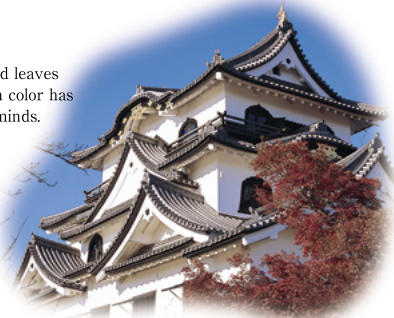


summer

Boundless deep green  
The castle is covered with vivid greenery,  
showing its power in its beauty

autumn

The mountain covered with red leaves  
The castle tinged with autumn color has  
special taste and it calms our minds.



winter

Light snow filled with spirit  
There is a calm world expanded on the castle with a white veil.



## Close up "Ii Naosuke"

Flowering Life Ii Naosuke is  
"the father of opening the country"  
Tracing his youth in Hikone.

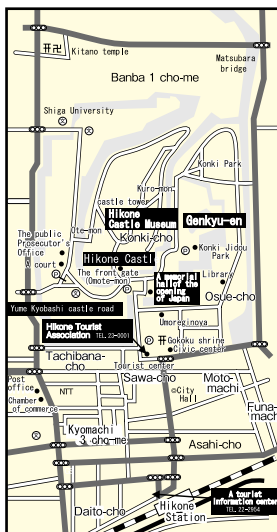
Umoregi-no-ya period of Naosuke

Naosuke was born on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1815 as the 14th son of Naonaka the 11<sup>th</sup> Lord of Hikone clan, at Keyaki-Goten (the present day "Genkyu-Rakuraku-en" ). Naosuke, who did not have any chance such as succeeding other family and being raised by a vassal, got out of Tsukigoten and moved to a house in Osue-cho facing the middle moat, after his father's death. He composed a Waka (a 31-syllable Japanese poem), "*Yononaka-wo Yosoni Mitsutsu-mo Umoregi-no Umore-te Oramu Kokoro-naki Miwa*" (Even though I live a simple life as a hermit, looking out of the corner of my eyes at the world, my mind has never been buried and I will train myself and fully develop my personality.) and he named this house "Umoregi-no-ya" . Naosuke made up his mind that he would live forever at Umoregi-no-ya and die there. However, he did his best to work for "what he should do" such as Zen, Kokugaku (the study of ancient Japanese literature), Waka (classic Japanese poetry), Noh Kyo-gen, (Japanese traditional play) Iai (the art of drawing a sword), tea ceremony and so on even if he was disappointed. When he was 32 years old, he became a successor by chance, due to his brother Naomoto's death. He was appointed as a load of the clan when he was 35 years old. Then he as a "Tai-ro" signed a U.S.-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce. However the Ezo group attacked him and his 46 years life was closed at Sakurada-mon-gai in Edo castle.



The bronze statue of Ii Naosuke is standing at Konki Jido Park. It is near a "Flowering life monument"

Umoregi-no-ya  
reminds a vestige in  
the old days. A tea  
room, Jyuro-ken, also  
remains in the house.



"Ii Naosuke portrait" drawn two months before the Sakuradamogai Incident. He wrote his 31-syllable Japanese poem on it, and dedicated it to Seiryoji temple.

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# A National Treasure Hikone Castle



It is registered in the temporary list of world cultural property



# Dignity of the castle tower is that of a National Treasure



The greatest castle of all castle architectures which boasts special beauty and design.

The main castle tower consists of several Hafus (gables) combined skillfully and shows a harmony of beautifully curved lines. The threefold castle tower rises on a solid stone wall called "Gobou-Tsumi". It is said that the castle was transferred from Otsu castle, built by Kyougoku Takatsugu and was completed around

1607. The size of castle was not as big (height: 21m) as it was during the 18th man-goku era where it yielded 180 thousand *koku* of rice at that time. (1koku=approximately 180.39 liters) The castle is not only beautiful but fully functional as well. The castle was appointed as a national treasure in 1952. The current existing castle towers beside Hikone castle include Himeji castle, Matsumoto castle and Inuyama castle.

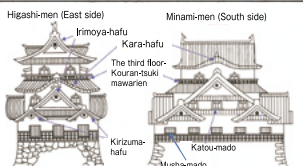
## Characteristics of inside



### Kakushi-beya : hidden room

There are total four hidden rooms in the east and west side of the second floor and the south and north side of the third floor. Each hidden room has an area in which four to five people can enter. This is a result of making various hafu (gables) but it is not clear whether there was an intention at that time to make a hidden room.

## Characteristics of outside



### Varied Hafu (gable)

There are changeable roofs made free use of rounded Kara-Hafu (gable), Chidori-Hafu and Kirizuma-Hafu.

### Kato-Mado (window)

Beautifully curved windows were made to resemble that of temple windows.

### Kouran Tsuki Mawari-en (balustrade)

This balustrade is blocked with double and triple Hafus, and it is impossible to go around.

### Teppo-Zama (embrasure)

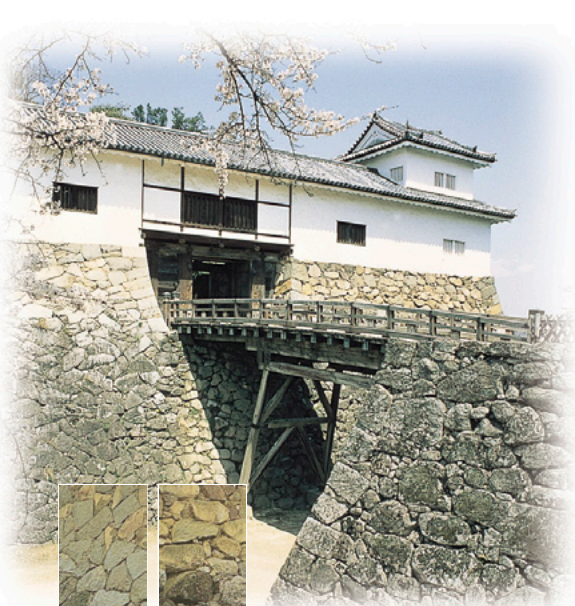
There are embrasures used to fight a defensive battle with guns against an enemy attack. They are covered with plaster in order to not be seen from outside. In the case of emergency, the wall is broken through and the embrasures can be used. There are also for arrows which have the same specification as ones against guns. There are a total of 75 embrasures used against enemy attacks.

### Gobou Tsumi (piling)

It seems rough at a glance but it is in fact a solid stone wall. This method of piling stones is also used for the eastern half of the tenbin-yagura stone wall beside the castle tower.

### Structure of the north side wall of the 1st floor

The outside of the main castle tower is where enemy attacks are defended against by the double wall which is filled with stones between the walls. That is a device to increase the effect of bulletproofing.



Otoshi-Tsumi Gobou-Tsumi  
(A method of piling stones)

### Tenbin-Yagura (an Important Cultural Asset)

It is located at the place where one climbs up a slope from Omote-mon and reaches the top of it. It is a building which is symmetrical and balanced in respect to the middle of Roka-bashi, a corridor bridge (In case of emergency, it could be demolished.) It is said that Tenbin-Yagura was built by transferring Ote-mon from Nagahama castle. The right side of the stone wall was made by Gobou-Tsumi, used at the time of the castle construction and left side of the stone wall was made by Otoshi-Tsumi, used for reconstruction at the latter term of Edo-period.



### Ninomaru Sawaguchi Tamon-Yagura (an Important Cultural Asset)

It is a tower made of white wall expanded to left toward Sawaguchi. It was burnt down by a fire in 1767 and the current building was reconstructed from 1873 to 1875.



### Nishinomaru Sanjyu Yagura (an Important Cultural Asset)

It is a tower at the west side of Nishinomaru and a profound *Horikiri* between *Deguruwa* overhanging toward the west. It is an important point of protection against an enemy from the west side.



### Taiko-mon Yagura

It is a gated tower to protect the front entrance of Honmaru and was named for the taiko drum that was put in place as a signal inside the castle. The back face of building was opened and there was a corridor with Kouran, which were very rare structures used in Yagura.

### Old Saigo Yashiki Nagaya mon (gate)

It is a gate of the owner's residence. It is a magnificent structure in which high dignity is shown by installing a bay window at both side of the gate.

### Umayu (stable)

It is a stable with a beautiful roof of *Kokerabuki*. Twenty-one horses of a lord and so on were put in the stable. Stables inside the castle area are rarely seen in Japan, Hikone castle is the only place this can be seen.

The charm of Hikone castle is not only the main castle tower as a national treasure, but is also the towers which are surrounded by double moats which have been kept to match their appearances at Edo-period. When you travel around each of the highlighted spots of inside of the castle area, take enough time, you will be able to feel its history and romantic adventure.



## Highlights insides the castle

Towers designated Important Cultural Assets, the Daimyo's garden, The palace... They release brilliance across space and time

### Genkyu-en (scenic beauty)

It is an old daimyo's garden at the northeastern side of the castle and was built by Naoki, the forth lord of the clan, taking 7 years to complete after it began construction in 1677. It has been thought that the name originates from a garden that belonged to the Court of China called "Genkyu". It is a noted garden that has been passed from the beginning of the Edo period to the present. It is a various wandering garden such as "Rinchi-kaku" built like sticking a big pond out, a building called "Hoshoda", 9 bridges connected the islands in a pond and an inlet from the middle of a big pond spring. You can taste the smell of flowers, the chirring of cicadas in chorus, red leaves, a snow scene, the elegance of each season as if you are a *daimyo*.

### Housho-dai (Tea room)

It is a wabi taste of Sukiya-construction on an artificial hill inside Genkyu-en. It is the best spot to see a beauty of Genkyu-en, and the taste of powdered green tea is special. (9:00-16:00, 500yen for tea with a Japanese sweet)



### Iroha Matsu (Pine Street)

There are pine trees (Matsu) planted in front of Ninomaru Sawaguchi Tamon Yagura, along the middle moat. At first 47 pine trees were planted and they have been called "Iroha Matsu" following the number of Iroha, 47 Japanese old alphabets.

### Rakuraku-en (scenic beauty)

A building part in "Keyaki-Goten", which is Hikone clan's another residence is called "Rakuraku-en." Hikone's Lord at the end of Tokugawa Shogunate, Ii Naosuke was also born there.

### Hikone Castle Museum

It is located across Omte-mon Bridge and was originally Omote-goten of Hikone domain. It was built in 1987 in memory of 50 years city organization. Many artistic handicrafts are displayed, and a private room "goza-noma" and a tea room, made of wood for a chief of Noh stage are restored. You can enjoy the museum itself as a display building. Noh plays are held on a Noh stage every year and you can see the world of "yugen".

