

高知城

国指定重要文化財

Important Cultural Property
Kochi Castle

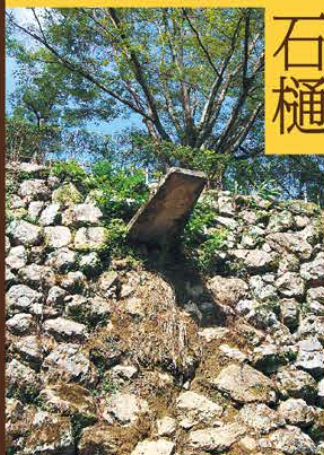


The Unique Kochi Castle



Kochi Castle is the only castle in Japan still in possession of all its original Edo period architecture in the main citadel. Originally the site of Odakasa Castle (built in the mid-1300s), Chosokabe Motochika moved here from Oko Castle (in present-day Nankoku City) in 1587, only to relocate to Urado Castle three years later due to difficulties caused by flooding from the nearby rivers. Yamauchi Katsutoyo relocated here from Kakegawa (in present-day Shizuoka Prefecture) thanks to his achievements in the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600. In autumn 1601, he set about building the castle.

Katsutoyo appointed Dodo Echizen, a famous castle builder, as chief magistrate, and proceeded with the castle's construction using stones and wood from the surrounding villages. However, because of construction difficulties, the third citadel of the castle was not completed for 10 years, by which time Katsutoyo had already been succeeded by the second lord, Tadayoshi. In 1727, the castle was mostly destroyed in a large fire, leaving behind only the main Otemon Gate. Restoration efforts were started immediately, but due to economic struggle the restoration process took more than 20 years. The castle was abandoned during the Meiji Restoration and completely demolished save for the main citadel and Otemon Gate. The castle site is now a public park. Its nickname is 'Hawk Castle' from the shape of the tower's eaves.



石樋

Stone Gutters

Preventing damage caused by Kochi's large amount of annual rainfall is just as important as fortifying the castle against attacks from enemies. There are many underground water canals running through various areas of the castle grounds, which all drain from 16 stone gutters in the castle walls. Stone gutters on the main citadel are still active. It is possible to see the structure of an uncovered water canal and a stone gutter on the third citadel.



防御

Castle Defense

There are many strategic points around Kochi Castle that tell us of its importance as a base of military operation. At several places, the stone walls form L-shapes in order to eliminate blind spots and allow arrows to be shot from all directions. There are walls with circular, triangular, and square-shaped holes, which are called yazama-bei. Invaders can be shot at from these holes. The castle tower is equipped with stone dropping holes and iron spikes placed around the walls. Due to these devices, it was almost impossible for attackers to invade the castle tower.

Kochi Castle Points of Interest



Stone Walls

The castle's stone walls were designed by Anoshu, a group of technical specialists from Omi (in present-day Shiga Prefecture). Taking into consideration the large amount of rainfall, the walls are built using the nozurazumi method, making them difficult to collapse and allowing efficient drainage. The walls may appear haphazardly built, but they are actually piled up in a very sturdy fashion.

Also, be sure to see the beautifully interconnected stonework, using the uchikomihagi method on the walls on the north end of the Cedar Terrace and at the site of the Iron Gate. On the third citadel, the walls that Chosokabe Motochika built were recently excavated and can be seen.

Moat

The moat currently surrounding the castle is about one-third of its original length and only half as wide. Also, the earthen walls on the inner bank of the moat were removed. All these changes make the scenery very different from back then. Water for the moat used to be drawn in from the Enokuchi River which runs north of the castle.

石垣



堀



A Brief History of Kochi Castle

- 1601 Yamauchi Katsutoyo comes to Tosa, takes residence in Urado Castle and begins construction of a new castle on Mt. Odakasa.
- 1603 Completion of the main citadel and the stone walls of the second citadel. Lord Yamauchi moves into the castle on August 21. Mt. Odakasa is renamed Mt. Kochi.
- 1610 The characters of Mt. Kochi's name are changed to reflect the meaning 'high wisdom' (高智), instead of 'in the middle of rivers' (河中).
- 1611 Completion of the third citadel. The castle is now mostly completed.
- 1727 A large fire in the castle town destroys most of the castle except for Otemon Gate.
- 1729 Fukao Tatewaki is appointed to oversee the reconstruction of the castle.
- 1749 Restoration of the castle tower, watch towers and gates are completed. This castle tower still stands.
- 1753 Restoration is near completion, 25 years after commencement.
- 1846 Repairs on the castle tower.
- 1874 Kochi Castle is opened to the public as a park.
- 1934 Kochi Castle is designated as a National Treasure (redesignated as an Important Cultural Property under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties of 1950).
- 1948 Commencement of general repair work on all castle buildings.
- 1959 Completion of repair work. Designated as a Historical Site.
- 2001 400th Anniversary Festival.
- 2010 Repairs on the stone walls of the third citadel are completed.

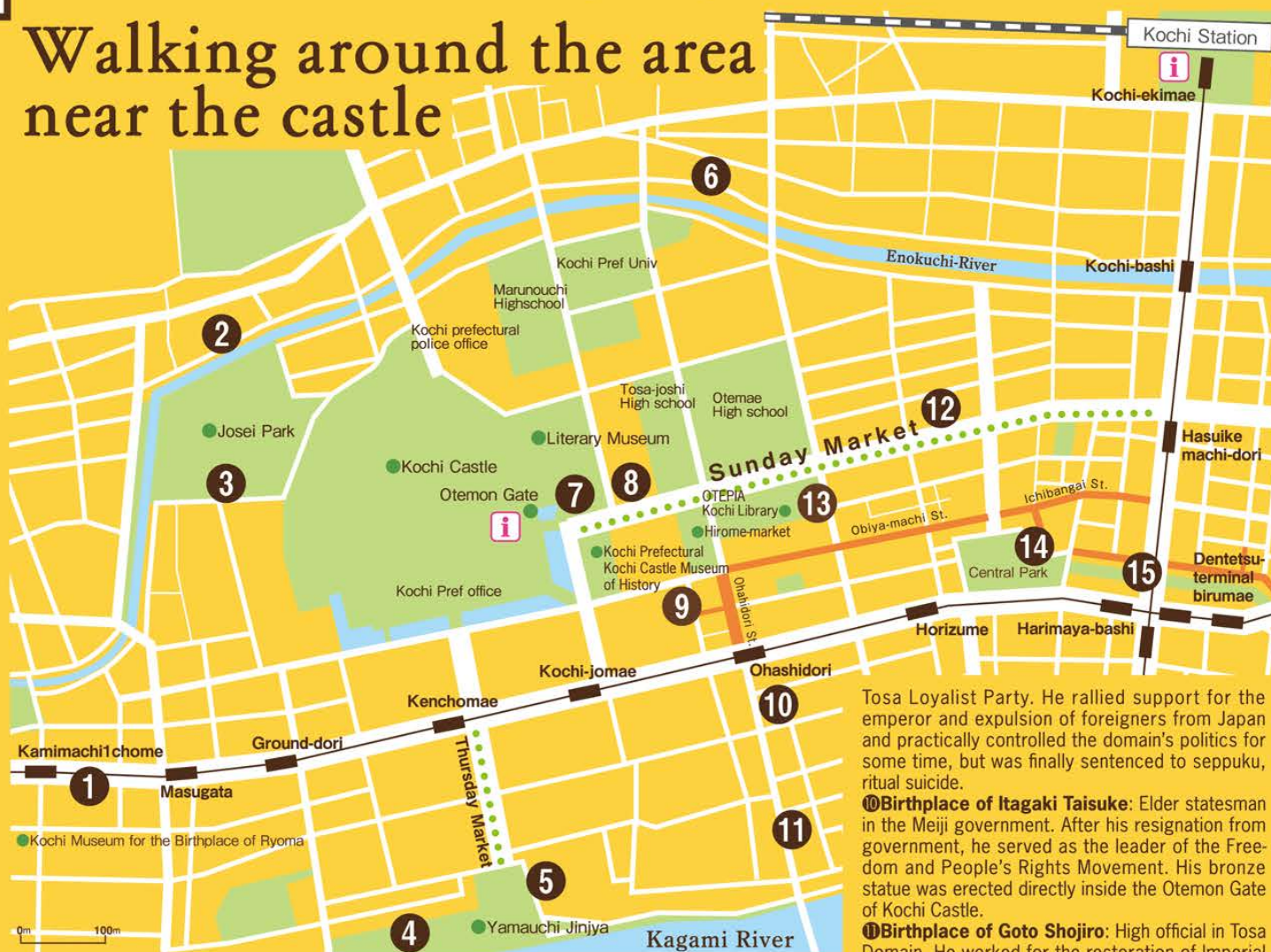
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Group discounts available Open: 9am to 5pm Closed: December 26th to January 1st

高知城管理事務所 <http://kochipark.jp/kochijo/>
Kochi Castle Administrative Office Marunouchi 1-2-1, Kochi City, Kochi, Japan 780-0850 TEL.088-824-5701

Walking around the area near the castle



- ① **Stone Monument of Sakamoto Ryoma's Birthplace:** Head of Kaientai, a trading corporation, famous for his efforts in forming the Satsuma-Choshu Alliance, as well as for drafting the Eight Point Policy for a new government. The Ryoma's Birthplace Memorial Museum is near this monument.
- ② **Terada Torahiko Memorial Museum:** Well-known physicist and essayist who was a close friend of Natsume Soseki, a famous novelist, and was the model for one of the characters in Soseki's novels such as I Am a Cat and Sanshiro.
- ③ **Chidokan Gate:** Domain-run school established in 1862. Only the front gate is left.
- ④ **Tosa Yamauchi Family Treasury and Archives:** Collection of old documents and artistic crafts as well as items possessed by Tosa lords.
- ⑤ **Yamauchi Family Nagaya Row House:** Lodgings for guards at the Yodo's residence. Designated as an Important Cultural Property.

- ⑥ **Okawasuji Samurai Residence Museum:** The only samurai residence that remains near the castle. Traditional Japanese residence built in the shoin style with a gatehouse.
- ⑦ **Site of Nonaka Kenzan's Residence:** Chief retainer in the early formation of Tosa Domain, he was responsible for maintaining harbours and building irrigation systems, as well as improving forestry, thus laying the groundwork for Tosa's economy. In the end, he was overthrown.
- ⑧ **Birthplace of Yamauchi Yodo:** The 15th lord of Tosa Domain known was one of the "four wise lords". He played a prominent role on the main political stage. Though he originally supported the movement for the Union of Court and Shogunate, his thoughts were swayed by the opinions of Sakamoto Ryoma and Goto Shojiro. He later petitioned Tokugawa Yoshinobu for the restoration of imperial rule.
- ⑨ **Monument of Takechi Zuizan:** Leader of the

- Tosa Loyalist Party. He rallied support for the emperor and expulsion of foreigners from Japan and practically controlled the domain's politics for some time, but was finally sentenced to seppuku, ritual suicide.
- ⑩ **Birthplace of Itagaki Taisuke:** Elder statesman in the Meiji government. After his resignation from government, he served as the leader of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement. His bronze statue was erected directly inside the Otemon Gate of Kochi Castle.
- ⑪ **Birthplace of Goto Shojiro:** High official in Tosa Domain. He worked for the restoration of Imperial rule and became a politician of the Meiji government.
- ⑫ **Sunday Market:** The largest street market in Japan, which has lasted over 300 years. Held from sunrise to around 4pm.
- ⑬ **Monument of Yoshida Toyo:** The highest-ranking official in Tosa Domain. A visionary, he served Yamauchi Yodo in the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate, but was assassinated by some members of the Tosa Loyalist Party by order of Takechi Zuizan.
- ⑭ **Site of Risshisha Society:** Political society established in 1874 by Itagaki Taisuke, Kataoka Kenkichi and others that played an important role in the Freedom and People's Rights Movement.
- ⑮ **Harimaya Bridge:** Bridge famous for being in the Yosakoi folk song. It was built by two wealthy merchants, Harimaya Sotoku and Hitsuya Dosei, to make visiting each other more convenient.