

SWORD

QUICK AND EASY TO DRAW WAS THE KEY

Named the *ninja-to*, it is believed that this was a short sword, not the long blade often depicted in films and television. The short length of the sword was useful in tricking opponents into how long it would take to draw and thus give the ninja an advantage - although as a general rule ninjas tried to avoid combat.

HOODED COWL

REMAINING UNDETECTED IS THE FIRST PRIORITY

The hood (or cowl) covered the head and the lower part of the face, leaving just the eyes visible. When ninjas (originally known as *shinobi*) were sent on secret missions - such as assassinations - or were hiding, it was important that their identity remained a secret.



A NINJA

COVERT AGENT, BODYGUARD
AND ASSASSIN,
JAPAN, 15TH CENTURY

SHINOBI SHOZOKU

THE OUTFIT THAT WAS ADAPTED TO CIRCUMSTANCES

Clothes would be picked to suit a particular goal and circumstance - there was not one uniform. If a task was to spy during the day in a rural area, then dressing like a farmer was appropriate to blend in. It was only on night missions that the more familiar all-black *shinobi* 'shozoku' outfit might be worn.

BOOTS

IMPORTANT FOR GETTING INTO GOOD OBSERVATIONAL AREAS

Every aspect of the ninja's outfit had to serve a specific purpose, and their footwear was no exception. Ninjas often wore boots with *ashiko*, spiked claws similar to crampons, on the bottom to make it easier to climb. These spikes also served as a useful close-range weapon.

THROWING STARS

A FIVE STAR SECONDARY CLOSE-RANGE WEAPON

Also known as *shuriken*, these were primarily used to slash and stab at opponents with their razor-sharp edges. When thrown, it would normally be to cause a distraction to enable the ninja to proceed undetected, rather than as a weapon.

GRAPPLING HOOK

THE KIT THAT PROVIDED ACCESS FOR HARD TO REACH PLACES

The *kaginawa* was a climbing device that consisted of a prolonged hook with a length of rope attached. It was used to assist in the climbing of walls and to help navigate across large gaps. It could also be used as a weapon and was useful because of its relatively large range.

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

A HIDDEN ARSENAL FOR ANY OCCASION

Due to the nature of their missions, ninjas had to be able to adapt to changing circumstances. They were assisted by tools including poison, explosive powders, poison darts and healing herbs. The exact makeup of the tools taken depended on what their assignment was.

