# Kōrakuen & Akihabara

KÕRAKUEN & KUDANSHITA | KANDA & AKIHABARA | KAGURAZAKA

### **Neighbourhood Top Five**

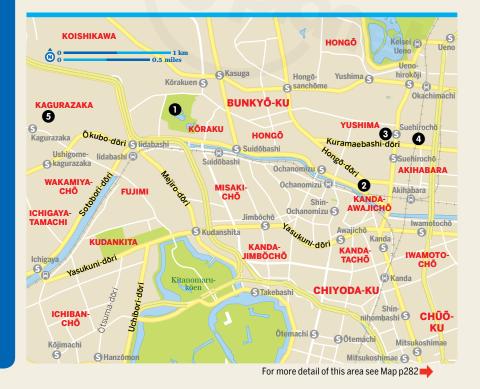
- **1** Koishikawa Kōrakuen (p138) Slipping into the beautiful verdant world of this classic traditional garden with its central pond, charming bridges and seasonal flowerings.
- **2** Akiba Kart (p146) Experiencing the blazing neon and wacky *otaku* (geek) vibe of 'Akiba' while taking a go-

kart for a spin dressed in a Super Mario *cosplay* outfit.

- 3 3331 Arts Chiyoda
  (p139) Encountering dinosaurs made from old plastic
  toys amid the contemporary
  art galleries in this former
  school turned arts-andculture centre.
- **4** 2k540 Aki-Oka Artisan (p144) Browsing a choice

selection of Japanese crafts at this beneath-the-traintracks mall between Akihabara and Ueno.

**6** Akagi-jinja (p143) Threading your way through the stone-flagged streets of Kagurazaka, with its atmospheric shops and bars, to find this thoroughly modern shrine.



## Explore Körakuen & Akihabara

Körakuen has two big hitter sights: the traditional garden Koishikawa Kōrakuen (p138) and the entertainment complex Tokyo Dome City (p146). South of Kōrakuen, in Kudanshita, are two controversial attractions: the shrine Yasukuni-jinja (p138) and its adjacent museum Yūshūkan (p138), which covers Japan's warring past. Anyone with an interest in Japanese history (or Asian geopolitics) should make a stop here. On a lighter note, there are also some pleasant strolls nearby, along the Imperial Palace moats, Hanzo-bōri and Soto-bōri. Also worth a detour: the neighbourhood of Kagurazaka (p142), with its narrow cobblestone lanes, presents a charming alternative picture of Tokyo.

Heading east, the neighbourhood of Kanda, has an interesting trio of religious buildings: the Shintō shrine Kanda Myōjin (p138), the Confucian shrine Yushima Seidō (p139) and the Russian Orthodox Nikolai Cathedral (p139). Then throw yourself headfirst into 21st-century Tokyo in Akihabara, the electronics district that has become synonymous with otaku (geeks) and their love of anime (Japanese animation), manga (Japanese comics) and J-pop culture. Akiba, as it's popularly known, also has artisan-goods shopping malls and the contemporary arts centre 3331 Arts Chiyoda (p139).

#### Local Life

- **Cosplay** Catch anime fans dressed as their favourite characters along Akihabara's Chūō-dōri on Sundays (1pm to 6pm April to September, to 5pm October to March), when it becomes a pedestrian zone.
- → Festivals The area bursts with extra creativity during Trans Arts Tokyo (www.kanda-tat.com), a contemporary arts fest held in autumn.
- → Video Games Go old-school and join enthusiasts playing Pac-Man and Street Fighter at Super Potato Retro-kan (p146).

## **Getting There & Away**

- → Train The JR Sōbu line runs east-west, stopping at Iidabashi (for Kagurazaka), Suidōbashi (for Kōrakuen), Ochanomizu and Akihabara. Rapid-service JR Chūō line trains stop at Ochanomizu and Kanda. Kanda and Akihabara are stops on the JR Yamanote line.
- →Subway Many lines converge in Iidabashi (Nanboku, Yūrakuchō, Tōzai and Ōedo lines). The Hibiya line stops in Akihabara, while the Ginza line stops at Suehirochō and Kanda.

#### Lonely Planet's Top Tip

Check electronics prices in your home country online before buying big-ticket items in Akihabara; they may or may not be a good deal. If you do buy, have your passport handy since travellers spending more than ¥10,000 in a single day at selected shops can get a refund of the consumption tax (8%). For a list of duty-free shops offering this service, see www.akiba.or.jp.



- Kanda Yabu Soba (p143)
- → Botan (p143)
- Ethiopia (p139)
- → Kado (p139)

For reviews, see p139.



- → Imasa (p143)
- N3331 (p144)
- Craft Beer Server Land (p144)
- → Mugimaru 2 (p142)

For reviews, see p143.



2k540 Aki-Oka Artisan (p144)

to Shop

- → mAAch ecute (p145)
- Mandarake Complex (p145)
- → Kukuli (p142)

For reviews, see p144.

