

# Kōrakuen & Akihabara

KŌRAKUEN & 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-and-culture centre.
- 4 2k540 Aki-Oka Artisan** (p144) Browsing a choice

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

- 5 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.



For more detail of this area see Map p282 →

## Explore Kōrakuen & Akihabara

Kōrakuen 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](http://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](http://www.akiba.or.jp).

### Best Places to Eat

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

For reviews, see p139. ➔

### Best Places to Drink

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

For reviews, see p143. ➔

### Best Places to Shop

- ➔ 2k540 Aki-Oka Artisan (p144)
- ➔ mAAch ecute (p145)
- ➔ Mandarake Complex (p145)
- ➔ Kukuli (p142)

For reviews, see p144. ➔