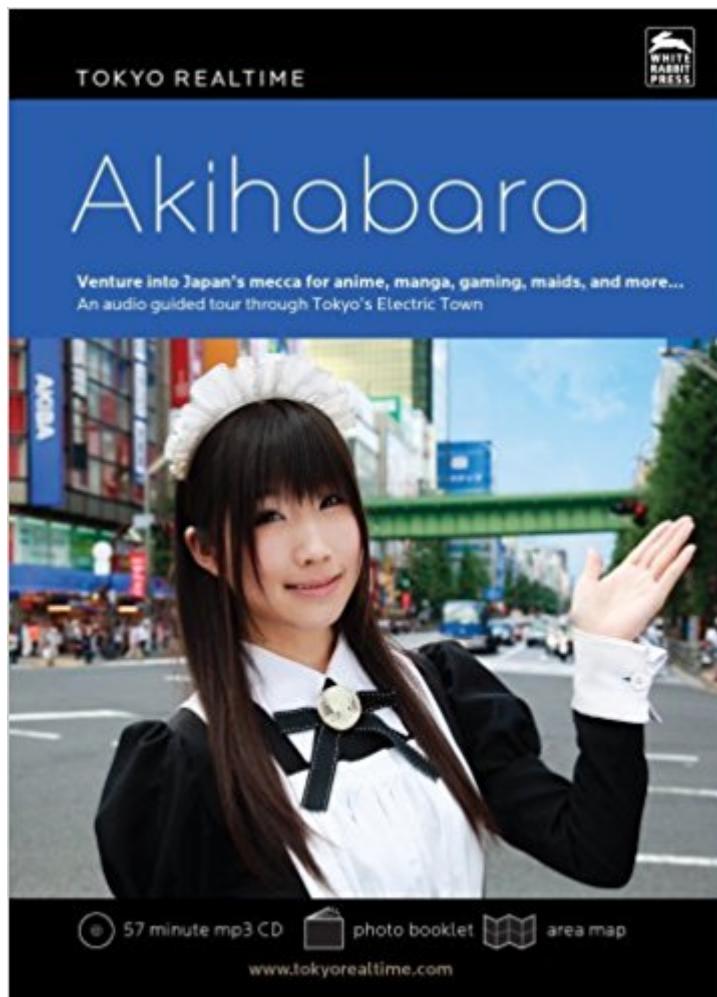


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# Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara



## Synopsis

TOKYO REALTIME is a series of audio guided walking tours revealing new sides to Tokyo's most interesting neighborhoods. Interweaving narration and interviews within a soundscape of location ambience, they deliver a seamless mix of adventure and cultural insight while navigating real-world spaces. Simply transfer the audio program to any portable mp3 player, go to the starting point on the included map and press play. Each tour includes:<sup>\*</sup> CD with mp3 audio<sup>\*</sup> an area map printed on waterproof paper<sup>\*</sup> a full-color booklet of area photography About the Tour With TOKYO REALTIME: Akihabara, visitors and residents alike can experience a unique behind-the-scenes tour of Tokyo's Electric Town, a subculture hotspot for anime, games, manga, maids and more. Assisted by his sentient GPS Navi, Akihabara expert Patrick W. Galbraith, author of The Otaku Encyclopedia, guides visitors through all the must-see places. Patrick provides historical background and cultural insight along the way, as well as breaking down insider jargon such as otagei, moe and itasha. This Akihabara audio tour features guest commentary by: \* Patrick Macias, author of Cruising the Anime City & editor of Otaku USA Magazine<sup>\*</sup> Danny Choo, pop-culture blogger & Tokyo Stormtrooper<sup>\*</sup> Kaichiro Morikawa, Meiji University professor & author of Learning from Akihabara<sup>\*</sup> Takaya Kobayashi, Chiyoda Ward council member<sup>\*</sup> Kristina Dryza, consumer trend researcher<sup>\*</sup> Mei-chan, an otaku and former little sister at a sister cafe

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Producer Max Hodges has assembled a crack team of uber-geeks from Japan and abroad to navigate Akihabara's alleys and decode its mysteries. The audio guide is an illuminating portal into

the neighborhood's colorful history and vibrant currents of contemporary pizzaz. --Roland Kelts, author of *Japanamerica*Patrick W. Galbraith reveals an Akihabara that even a long-term resident like me didn't fully understand. --Jean Snow, Editor-in-Chief, [snow-mag.com](http://snow-mag.com)Tokyo Realtime tours deliver a seamless mix of adventure and cultural insight. --Japan National Tourism Organization

Born in the US, Patrick W. Galbraith came to Japan in 2004 and is now a Ph.D. candidate in the Graduate School of Interdisciplinary Information Studies at the University of Tokyo. His research focus is the impact of material conditions on fantasy, specifically how shifts in modes of capitalism and consumption impact otaku culture. His primary ethnographic field site is Akihabara. In 2007, Patrick co-founded the first regular, English-language tour of the area. He is the author of *The Otaku Encyclopedia* and contributes regularly to *Metropolis Magazine*, *Otaku USA* and *Otaku2.com*.

As a person who loves to discover Japan by just walking wherever and discovering new locations, I know of people who are not comfortable with the idea of going to Japan without a tour guide because of their lack of knowledge of the language or culture or other fears they may have. This is where I recommend the Tokyo Realtime audio releases as you are given a personal tour of an area in Japan and literally have your own personal tour guide but with no human guide but the use of your audio player. The version I will be reviewing today is "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" by Patrick W. Galbraith (best known for his book "The Otaku Encyclopedia: An Insider's Guide to the Subculture of Cool Japan" and "Otaku Spaces"), a researcher of otaku culture at the University of Tokyo.I. IS IT A BOOK OR AN AUDIO BOOK?"Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" is not a travel book, nor is it an audio book. You get slim cardboard to house the CD (which comes with files including the main audio MP3 file), an 18-page booklet with photos of Akihabara and included is a bi-fold of a map of Akihabara showing the tour that Patrick will take you on starting from JR Akihabara Station's Electric Town Exit and going through 18 spots and ending at Gachapok Kaikan (he notes that these are locations that DO NOT allow photograph). Patrick also recommends that the best time to take the tour is on a weekday afternoon but also noting that people recommend Sunday afternoon, when the city is packed. But also recommends that evening trips to Akihabara lack excitement because shops close early.II. DO I POP A CD IN MY CD PLAYER?No, this is not an audio CD. It's a CD that contains files. The main file TRT\_Akihabara.mp3 is what you want to drag into your iTunes or to your computer and to your tablet, smartphone or MP3 player. There is also a very short preview of the "Tokyo Realtime: Kabukicho" release. But all you want is to get the MP3 into your device and then

listen to it while you are in Akihabara and start in JR Akihabara Station's Electric Town Exit.III. HOW DOES IT WORKIf you are in Akihabara at the JR Akihabara Station's Electric Town Exit, hit play and listen to Patrick as he gives you the tour of the area while a female voice which he calls NAVI gives you directions. I recommend that you photo copy or scan and print the map that is included, so you can fold it and look at it while on your tour, not messing up the original map that comes with the CD.It's important to note that the sounds of Akihabara of a live tour is not included (as it would be too loud and people's voices would be heard - which one can easily find out for themselves by watching one doing a walk through of the city on YouTube). But there are sounds from the city and music is featured in the background, along with sound effects. But what Galbraith and Navi does is point you to the directions of locations you will be visiting (which are done well, so you don't get lost).So, for the first place you will walk and visit is the Radio Center. Patrick gives you information about the Radio Center and then visiting the second floor of the building.And then visiting Radio Kaikan, a building with the neon lights (near Maid Row) and going inside. He tells you to take the escalator and the fourth floor, reminding listeners that photos are not allowed. He then gives you a tour of the area with history of that site. And then going to the fourth floor to visit Kaiyodo, the sixth floor for Volks, the first floor for the rental box.He gives you the time necessary to get up there, so he includes dialogue of Akihabara and tidbits while you move from area to area.The areas that you will visit are as follows:STARTING POINT - JR Akihabara Station's Electric Town Exit- Radio Center- Radio Center Second Floor- Radio Kaikan- Kaiyodo- Volks- Rental Showcase Shop- Gamers- Crosswalk #1- Street Idols- Super Potato- @Home Cafe- Canned Oden- Mandarake- Crosswalk #2- Toranoana- Don Quijote/AKB48- Crosswalk #3FINAL DESTINATION: Gachapon KaikanAlso, you will hear comments from Patrick Macias (author of "Cruising the Anime City" and editor of "Otaku USA" Magazine), Morikawa Kaichiro (Professor at Meiji University and author of "Learning from Akihabara"), Danny Choo, Kobayashi Takaya (Chiyoda Ward council member), Kristina Dryza (Consumer trend researcher) and Mei-chan (otaku and former little sister cafe worker).IV. BUT WILL THIS INFORMATION BE RELEVANT 5-10 YEARS FROM NOW?Yes and no. A lot of these locations have been around for a very long time and things change quite frequently in Akihabara, so you're not going to see the Gundam Cafe, AKB48 Cafe and Giftshop or Good Smile Cafe (or other major maid cafe) on this map, because no one knows how long those cafe's will be around in the area. Although, I do recommend visiting those areas if you can and pausing the music player, while you visit and sample those locations.But Galbraith planned on this as the selections chosen for the "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" tour are locations with deep history or been around for more than a decade.JUDGMENT CALL:For those who need a tour of Akihabara

and want to learn the history of the city will definitely find "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" to be worth the time and money! I have been to the area but really haven't heard the history behind certain buildings, the city and how Akihabara became what it is. But you get a good amount of tidbits during this 57 minute tour. The locations selected were carefully chosen and yes, you're not going to find everything on here but a lot of locations that Otaku do visit are on this area. If you want to go to Sofmap or Gundam Cafe, you'll see it while walking. With this 57 minute tour, spend another few hours immersing yourself within the city and enjoying the various places that you can visit. There are not many books in America that showcase Akihabara completely but along with "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara", for the otaku and gamer, I also recommend The Akiba: A Manga Guide to Akihabara. Overall, "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" is a fantastic audio tour of select areas of the city. Because of those selections, this is a book that will for the most part be relevant for many years to come. So, if you are looking for a tour through Akiba, Patrick W. Galbraith's "Tokyo Realtime: Akihabara" is highly recommended!

Akihabara is a wonderful place to explore, from personal experience it can be intimidating and become, simply a shopping destination. Even though I am not currently in Tokyo or Japan, I picked up a copy of Tokyo Real Time's Akihabara Tour. After purchasing the Kabukicho tour, I was excited to continue my love affair with Japan. As a Japanese anthropologist, these tours can be enjoyed as a tour or as I did, extraordinary adventure into urban Tokyo from anywhere. In many ways, it reminded me of the work of Dr. Theodore Bestor, but with outstanding production values, great humor and a cast of characters that could only be found in Akihabara. The production value took an impressive step forward, considering the already excellent Kabukicho tour. If you have any interest in Japan, this product is necessary purchase. If you are planning a trip or even living in Tokyo, this tour will reveal a world often hidden and unexplored. For me, it was an amazing ethnographic piece that also served as a fun adventure while commuting.

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