
Travel Guide Geneva

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Quick view

Geneva – a brief overview

Highly international yet proudly individual, Geneva is a city of contrasts. Bankers and high-wealth shoppers cross paths with students, foreign expats dine alongside locals, and the historic streets of the Old Town sit just metres from the designer boutiques and five-star hotels decorating the banks of Lake Geneva.

Visitors can explore the city's importance to international affairs at the United Nations, Red Cross Museum and particle physics institution CERN, while those after less cerebral pleasures can swim in the lake in summer, kick back with a boozy fondue in winter and flex the credit cards all year round.



Switzerland

General knowledge

Country overview

Mixing expansive greenery, slick cities and buckets of fresh air, Switzerland is a stylish tourist destination offering countless outdoor adventures and contemporary urban breaks. The ancient capital Berne provides superb opportunities for sightseeing, shopping and traditional folk entertainment, while Zurich leads the way in arts, design and nightlife.

Top ski resorts include Zermatt, Verbier and celebrity-studded St Moritz, while white-capped mountain peaks set against blue skies make a wonderful backdrop for summertime hiking. Small, mountainous and wealthy, Switzerland is renowned for its enviable quality of life in a country that ticks along like clockwork.

Geography

Landlocked Switzerland shares borders with France to the west, Germany to the north, Austria and Liechtenstein to the east and Italy to the south. It has the highest mountains in Europe, together with waterfalls, rivers and lakes set amid green pastures.

The highest peaks are Dufourspitze, 4,634m (15,203ft), on the Italian border; the Dom, 4,545m (14,911ft); the Matterhorn, 4,478m (14,691ft); and the Weisshorn, 4,506m (14,793ft).

General knowledge

Key facts

Population: 7.996.026

Population Density (per sq km): 194

Capital: Berne

Language

There are four official languages in Switzerland (German, French, Italian and Romansh).

Currency

Swiss Franc (CHF; symbol SFr) = 100 cents (called *centimes* in French, *rappen* in German and *centesimi* in Italian). Notes are in denominations of SFr1,000, 200, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of SFr5, 2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10 and 5 centimes.

Electricity

230 volts AC, 50Hz. Standard European round two-pin plugs and Swiss three-pin plugs are used.

General business opening hours

Business hours are typically Monday to Friday 0800-1200 and 1400-1700, while in Geneva the business day can start 30 minutes earlier.

Public holidays

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

Note

There are additional regional holidays which are observed in certain cantons only.

2020

New Years' Day: 1 January 2020
Ascension: 21 May 2020
Republic Day: 1 August 2020
Christmas Day: 25 December 2020

2021

New Years' Day: 1 January 2021
Ascension: 13 May 2021
Republic Day: 1 August 2021
Christmas Day: 25 December 2021

All information subject to change.

**Travel etiquette**
How to fit in**Social Conventions**

It is customary to give flowers to the hostess when invited for a meal, but never give chrysanthemums or white asters as they are considered funeral flowers. Informal wear is widely acceptable.

First-class restaurants, hotel dining rooms and important social occasions may warrant jackets and ties. Black tie is usually specified when required.

**Health**
Health**Main emergency number: 112**

No immunisations are required to enter Switzerland, although it is advisable to make sure your tetanus, diphtheria and polio vaccinations are up to date before

travelling. A certificate of immunisation against contagious diseases (including Yellow Fever) is required before the traveller can enter the country if they have been in an infected area within 14 days prior to arrival in Switzerland. Rabies is present, but extremely rare. However, if you are bitten, seek medical advice without delay.

Contractual physician of Lufthansa

„SOS MEDECINS“
Tel. +41-22-7484950
HOPITAL DE LA TOUR
Switzerland
Tel. +41-22-719 61 11

Please note that Lufthansa accepts no responsibility for the treatment nor will it bear the cost of any treatment.



Phone calls & Internet

Telephone/Mobile Telephone

Dialing Code: +41

Telephone

Phonecards are available for use in payphones. SIM cards are available for mobile phones and the Swiss network supports many data-roaming packages.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with most international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good.

Internet

Internet access is available in Internet cafés and phone booths operated across Switzerland, found in most major town and cities. In the case of phone booths, charges are payable by phonecard or credit card, whilst cafés are mostly independently run. Internet coverage is good across Switzerland.



Getting around Geneva

Public Transport

Transports Publics Genevois (TPG) (tel: 0900 022 021 ; www.tpg.ch) offers a typically efficient and well-integrated service of buses, trams and 'mouette' shuttle boats, with ticket machines at all stops. Overnight visitors receive a Geneva Transport Card for free travel upon check-in, while day-trippers can buy a one-day Unireso pass at the rail station, TPG sales offices and tourist information offices.

Taxis

Taxis in Geneva can be hailed, ordered by phone or found at authorised taxi ranks. Metered fares include a tip. Taxi-Phone SA Genève (tel: (022) 331 4133), provides a 24-hour daily service, while AA Geneva Central Taxi (tel: (022) 330 2202) is also reliable.



Top 10 sights

Top 10 sights in Geneva

Jet d'Eau

The symbol of the city, proudly marking its location at the western end of Lake Geneva, this impressive fountain throws water 140m (459ft) into the air.

Quai Gustave Ador
Geneva
Switzerland

Opening times:
Daily 1000-1600 (Nov-Feb)
Mon-Thurs 1000-sunset
Fri-Sun 1000-2230 (Mar-Apr)
Daily 0900-2315 (May-mid Sep)
Mon-Thurs 1000-sunset
Fri-Sun 1000-2230 (mid Sep-Oct)

The Reformation Wall

Located in the leafy Parc des Bastions in the university district, this 18m-high (59ft) sculpted wall honours the four protestant reformers who shaped the city.

Promenade des Bastions 1
1204 Geneva
Switzerland

St Peter's Cathedral

The top of the north tower of this 12th-century cathedral sports fine views over the city and lake, while the vaults below the building reveal an archaeological site with pre-Christian remains.

Place du Bourg-de-Four 24
1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 311 7575

Opening times:
Mon-Sat 0930-1830
Sun 1200-1830 (Jun-Sep)
Mon-Sat 1000-1730
Sun 1200-1730 (Oct-May)
Vaults open daily 1000-1730.

www.saintpierre-geneve.ch

Maison Tavel

This is the oldest private house in the city, dating from the 12th century. It now showcases Genevois life through the ages.

Rue du Puits-St-Pierre 6
1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 418 3700

Opening times:
Tue-Sun 1100-1800

www.ville-geneve.ch/mah

Palais des Nations

More than 100,000 tourists visit the European headquarters of the United Nations every year. Hour-long tours take in the principal chambers of this impressive building, finished in 1937.

Avenue de la Paix 14
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 917 4896

Opening times:
Mon-Fri 1000-1200 and 1400-1600
(Sep-Mar)
Mon-Sat 1000-1200 and 1400-1600
(Apr-Jun)
Mon-Sat 1000-1600 (Jul-Aug)

www.unog.ch

Red Cross Museum

This heart-wrenching multimedia exhibition outlines the humanitarian work of the International Red Cross from its founding in 1863 to the present day.

Avenue de la Paix 15
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 748 9511

Opening times:
Daily 1000-1800 (Apr-Oct)
1000-1700 (Nov-Mar)

www.redcrossmuseum.ch

Patek Philippe Museum

Many of the world's finest watch brands, including Patek Philippe, are manufactured in Geneva and the nearby Jura. This fascinating collection showcases timepieces from the 16th century to the present day.

Rue de Vieux-Grenadiers 7
1205 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 807 0910

Opening times:
Tue-Fri 1400-1800
Sat 1000-1800

www.patekmuseum.com

CERN

A tour of this world-famous particle physics laboratory takes in the Large Hadron Collider (the world's most powerful particle accelerator) while a permanent exhibition attempts to unravel the mysteries of the universe.

Route de Meyrin 385
1217 Meyrin
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 767 4052

Opening times:
Mon-Sat 1000-1700

www.cern.ch

Botanical Gardens

Perfect for a stroll in all seasons, this 28-hectare (69-acre) area features 16,000 plant species from all corners of the world housed in greenhouses, an arboretum and landscaped gardens.

Chemin de l'Impératrice 1, Chambésy
1292 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 418 5100

Opening times:
Daily 0800-1930 (Apr-Oct)
0930-1700 (Nov-Mar)

www.ville-ge.ch/cjb

Mont Salève

Technically in France, this mountain is just a 20-minute bus ride from Geneva city centre. Ride the cable car to the top for an outstanding panorama of the city and lake.

74160 Archamps
France

www.saleveautrement.ch



Shopping in Geneva Shopping in Geneva

Key Areas

Shopaholics looking to indulge should head to the Rue du Rhône for a vast array of high-end clothing designers, watch shops and jewellers. Nearby Rue de la Confédération and Place du Molard house high-street brands and several fine chocolate shops.

The Italianate district of Carouge is best for artisan boutiques and independent stores, while the Old Town throws up antiques, second-hand books stores and gourmet delicatessens.

Markets

Check out Geneva's main flea market at the Plaine de Plainpalais on Wednesdays, Saturdays and the first Sunday of the month. The central Place du Molard hosts a daily flower market, while the Place de la Fusterie showcases artisan handicrafts on Thursdays.

Shopping Centres

Rather than malls, Geneva's better shopping experiences come in its opulent department stores, including Globus (Rue du Rhône 48), with its eye-popping food hall, and the luxurious Bon Génie (Rue du Marché 34).



Restaurants Restaurants in Geneva

From Michelin-starred restaurants to traditional Swiss brasseries and international flavours, Geneva enjoys a diverse palate.

Le Chat-Botté

Part of the famous Beau-Rivage hotel, this restaurant offers contemporary French cuisine in sophisticated surroundings.

Quai du Mont-Blanc 13
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Price: Expensive

Chateauxvieux

Sample seasonal produce cooked with creative flair at this two-Michelin-starred restaurant in the hills above Geneva.

Chemin de Chateauxvieux 16, Satigny
1242 Geneva

Price: Expensive

Switzerland

Café Papon

In the heart of the Old Town, with a large outdoor terrace, this restaurant serves modern European dishes with a touch of class.

Rue Henri Fazy 1 Price: Moderate
1204 Geneva
Switzerland

Les Armures

This Genevois institution serves arguably the best fondue in town.

Place du Bourg-de-Four 24 Price: Moderate
1204 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: (022) 311 7575

Chez Ma Cousine

Ideal for a quick, tasty lunch, this popular little place serves only spit-roast chicken.

Place du Bourg-de-Four 6 Price: Cheap
1204 Geneva
Switzerland



Nightlife Nightlife in Geneva

While at first glance it may be hard to see beyond the slick banker hangouts of the city centre, there are gems to be found if you dig a little deeper.

La Tour du Molard

Those in the know head to this 16th-century tower, once part of the city walls, now housing a bijou wine bar.

Place du Molard 2
1204 Geneva
Switzerland

Apothecaire Cocktail Club

Ask the talented mixologists to create your perfect cocktail at this trendy bar in the banking district.

Boulevard Georges Favon 16
1204 Geneva
Switzerland

Au Chat Noir

Live music, DJs and open-mic events are on the bill at this popular nightspot in pretty Carouge.

Rue Vautier 13
1227 Geneva
Switzerland

Grand Théâtre de Genève

For a cultured night out, take in a performance at this 1,500-seat theatre which stages a season of home-grown opera and ballet productions.

Boulevard du Theatre 11
1211 Geneva
Switzerland

Palais Mascotte

Cabaret, burlesque and comedy are on offer at this fun late-night place in the slightly shady Pâquis district.

Rue de Berne 43
1201 Geneva
Switzerland



Calendar of events Calendar of events

Geneva International Motor Show

The Geneva International Motor Show is an annual auto exhibition dating back to 1905. It often features modern supercars, alternative-powered motors and concept cars. There is also a chance to browse a selection of accessories and parts. Look out for car premieres that have come straight out of the factory.

March 5 - 15, 2020

Venue: Palexpo.

Bol d'Or Mirabaud Regatta

The annual Bol d'Or Mirabaud Regatta is Europe's largest regatta in enclosed waters and sees participants race across Lake Geneva. Setting off from Geneva, boats travel the length of the lake to a turning point off the French southeastern extremity at Bouverat before making the return sprint back to Geneva. A spectacular sight, each year over 500 boats participate in the regatta which is followed by a big party and celebrations after the event.

June 12 - 14, 2020

Venue: Port Noir, Lake Geneva.

Fête de la musique (Music Festival)

Geneva's music festival takes over the streets and squares for three days every summer. Music is everywhere, with more than 50 stages in various venues and locations throughout the city. It presents an exciting and varied programme of

performances with acts from around the world. Visitors can hear everything from classical concerts through to rock, rap and hip hop at this popular family-friendly event.

June 19 - 21, 2020

Venue: Various venues in Geneva.

Musiques en Été (Musical Summer)

Taking place in various venues throughout the summer months, Geneva's Musical Summer presents a programme of musical performances and recitals for all to enjoy. The emphasis is on classical and orchestral music and is popular with older music fans.

June - August 2020

Venue: Various venues throughout the city.

Swiss National Day

The Swiss National Day is a patriotic celebration of the union of the three states – Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden – that was formed in 1291. There is a distinct pyrotechnic flavour, with bonfires, fireworks and a paper lantern parade through the streets of Geneva. Speeches and national songs naturally play a key role, but there is also dancing, eating and drinking – with local wine and sausages high on the menu. This is a national holiday and people from surrounding towns and villages tend to join in the festivities.

August 1, 2020

Venue: Reformation Wall and Parc des Bastions.

Fêtes de Genève (Geneva Festival)

Geneva's summer street party begins with a pre-festival warm-up from mid-July, with the main 10-day event following in early August. The streets of the centre burst into life with floats, parades and parties, street theatre and entertainment, plus a programme of concerts featuring national and international performers. Operatic and folkloric shows are among the attractions while, mainly for children, there is a clown parade and a funfair. Up to 1.5 million visitors pour into the city to join in with the merriment that culminates in a spectacular fireworks display. Each year a guest-of-honour country provides its own mini exhibition. Fêtes de Genève is the biggest tourist event in the country, and is highly recommended.

August 2020

Venue: Various streets in central Geneva.

Festival Tous Ecran (Geneva International Film Festival)

Held in Geneva, this annual film festival bridges the gap between television and cinema through its innovative screening programme. Dedicated to bringing films by new writers and directors to the big screen, Cinéma Tout Ecran always presents an exciting and challenging range of flicks. There are a number of prizes awarded by an international jury, as well as seminars and question and answer sessions with many of the directors.

November 2020

Venue: Various cinemas and venues in Geneva.

Fête de l'Escalade (Escalade Festival)

Fête de l'Escalade comprises of a traditional weekend festival and a race ('Course de l'Escalade') through the streets of Old Geneva in which everyone from children and fun runners to top athletes can take part. Thousands of runners leave in groups, every quarter of an hour throughout the day, passing Saint Pierre Cathedral to finish in the Parc des Bastions. The Cooking Pot Race ('La Marmite') in the evening, a torch-lit event that ends with the smashing of chocolate pots, is the highlight of the day. The following weekend, to commemorate the historic victory of Geneva over its neighbour, the duc Charles-Emmanuel de Savoie in 1602, there are street parades with people dressed in 17th-century costumes. The festival begins with a procession from Rue des Chaudronniers to the Temple of St-Gervais.

December 2020

Venue: Streets of Geneva's Old Town.



Hotels Hotels in Geneva

One glance along the shores of Lake Geneva and you'll take in more five-star hotels than you thought possible for onesmall city. But there are options for the more modest traveller, too.

Hotel d'Angleterre

One of several five-stars along the lake front, this offers old-school luxury at its most opulent.

Quai du Mont-Blanc 17
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Category: Expensive

N'vY

New on the scene, this ultra-modern design hotel is bang on trend.

Rue Richemont 18
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Category: Moderate

Edelweiss

Traditional Swiss mountain décor in a plum city centre location.

Place de la Navigation 2
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Category: Moderate

Cristal

Near the station, this modern and minimalist design hotel is ultra convenient.

Rue du Pradier 4
1201 Geneva
Switzerland

Category: Moderate