

Key information on Geneva

As Geneva is in Switzerland, this section describes the key statistics about this lovely country that you will be arriving in shortly!

Also see www.myswitzerland.com for some great information on the country.

- Official languages of Switzerland: French, German, Italian and Romansh.
- Population: Switzerland, 7.6 million; Geneva Canton, 400.000; City of Geneva, 180.000.
- Area of the Canton, 282 km²; Altitude, 375 m (1,227 ft) above sea level
- Average temperatures: winter 10°C (50°F); summer 23°C (73°F). www.meteoswiss.ch.
- Central European timezone: Greenwich G.M.T + 1 (summer time + 1 hr. From the last weekend of March to last weekend of October).
- Electricity: 220 volts.
- Currency: Swiss franc (CHF): 1 CHF divided into 100 centimes.

General information about Geneva

The Geneva Tourism office is a great way to get maps and to get acquainted to the city once you arrive:

Bureaux d'information Genève Tourisme

18, rue du Mont-Blanc

1201 Genève

Tel.: +4122 909 70 00

Fax: +4122 909 70 11

www.geneve-tourisme.ch

Other useful websites for getting acquainted with Geneva

- www.geneva.ch
- www.ville-ge.ch (in French)
- www.cagi.ch (Geneva Welcome Center)
- www.geneve-ville.ch (all about Geneva)
- www.geneve-ville.ch/fr/outils/maps.htm (map & search option)

- www.mappy.com (Mappy)
- www.viamichelin.com/viamichelin/fra/tpl/hme/MaHomePage.htm (Michelin)

Coordination Group for the welcoming and housing of young people in Geneva

The Coordination Group for the welcoming and housing of young people in Geneva (CAHJ) provides information on accommodation, cultural activities and general information on the Lake Geneva region for young adult travellers. It is a non-profit organization, in cooperation with the Geneva Tourism Office.

<http://www.unige.ch/cite-uni/cahj/accueil.html>

Hospitals and medical information

- Emergency/Ambulance: 144
- Police: 117
- Fire: 118

Hospital information

University Hospital of Geneva
Rue Gabrielle-Perret-Gentil 4 (ex-rue Micheli-du-Crest 24)
1211 Genève 14
Tel.: 022 372 33 11
www.hug-ge.ch

Hôpital Cantonal de Genève
24 rue Micheli-du-Crest
1205 Geneva
Tel: 022 372 3311

If you are in need of urgent medical care while at the ILO, it has its own medical centre (7134).

If you are not at the ILO, you can go to the Hôpital Cantonal (Bus 5 or a taxi) or call SOS Doctors at 022 748 49 50 (www.sos-medecins.ch).

24-hour service medical centres

There should be a “permanence médicale” in each area of Geneva. For more information, go to: www.permanence-medicale.ch

Permanence de Cornavin
1-3 rue du Jura
Tel: 022 734 51 50

Permanence Vermont - Grand-Pré
9a, rue de Vermont
Tel: 022 345 45 50

Emergency dental clinics

60 avenue Wendt
Tel: 022 733 98 00

5 chemin de Malombré
Tel: 022 346 64 44

Public transport

There are three main focal points of public transportation in Geneva:

- Gare Cornavin (Cornavin Train Station)
- Rive (downtown at one end of the main shopping street, rue du Marché)
- Bel-Air (at the other end of the main shopping street)

To check a map, timetables and prices of the buses and trams in Geneva, go to the official website of the Transport Public Genevois (TPG), at www.tpg.ch. The TPG office is at the train station (Gare Cornavin).

Monthly TPG Passes: If you are 25 years old or less, you are entitled to a significant discount off the monthly bus pass. If you are over 25, you can calculate how often you expect to use the public transportation before deciding to purchase a bus pass, but if you are going to be a regular user, it is probably worth the investment.

Regular TPG Tickets: You can buy tickets directly at nearly every bus/tram stop. You will find machines that accept change and prepaid cards that you can buy at the TPG office.

These machines do not give back coins if you overpay, but keep your tickets and you can be refunded the difference at TPG offices. If you don't have a bus pass, be careful with the zones you will be travelling, as the prices of the tickets vary, depending on where you are travelling. Do not skip buying your tickets as there are frequent checks with spot fines of CHF 70 or more.

Noctambus (Night Bus): Friday and Saturday nights, after midnight, a late night bus service gives you the option of staying out later than the last bus/tram (which runs until around midnight, for the most part). These Noctambus follow special routes, and are a great alternative to expensive cabs. For information on schedules, routes and price, go to www.noctambus.ch.

Here are a few other useful websites related to public transportation, in and around Geneva:

- Railway network, departing from Geneva: www.sbb.ch/en/index.htm
- Railway network for France, departing from Geneva : www.sncf.com
- Information about the Demi Tarif (half-price rail tickets): www.cff.ch/pv/halbtax2_f.htm
- Geneva airport: www.gva.ch/fr/default.htm
- Network facilitating the use of various forms of transportation in the Geneva area (including neighbouring France and the canton de Vaud): www.unireso.ch

Banks

There are 2 UBS ATMs in the ILO building, one located on R2 next to the little store (Naville) and one on R3 North next to the UBS.

The main banks in Switzerland are: UBS, Credit Suisse, Banque cantonale de Genève (BCG), Banque Migros, Poste. Exchanging money is easy, as there are several exchange houses on rue du Mont-Blanc. It's worth comparing the rate your ATM card/bank charges you to the exchange houses rate, as there isn't always a big difference. Migros exchange is reputed to be quite good.

Shopping and grocery stores

Stores in Geneva are usually open from 8:00 until 19:00 on weeknights, with late night shopping on Thursdays until 21:00. On Saturdays the closing time is 18:00, and on

Sundays most shops are closed.

Food shopping: The two main grocery stores are Migros (good prices) and Coop (slightly more expensive than Migros). Denner is another option and is slightly less expensive than Migros and Coop, though they do not sell many fresh food items (such as fruit and vegetables, meat, etc.). You can also go to France for cheaper groceries, especially meat and dairy products. You may require a car to do this. Don't forget France uses Euros, not CHF.

Note: Grocery stores usually close around 19:00, but that may vary so you should check the schedule of whichever supermarket is most convenient to you. On Sundays, only the train station and airport (bus 10) have open grocery stores (Migros opens 8:00-20:00), as well as a few gas stations.

24H (24 hour) stores are not, as their name might suggest, open 24 hours a day, but they are open until quite late at night. These are located in the Rive area (one is at the Rive 12/16 tram stop, another is at the 12/16 Terrassière tram stop) and around the train station. Prices in these stores can be higher than usual because they are open at odd hours.

Shopping centres

- Manor (previously called Placette, which is near Gare Cornavin) (Bus 3, 10 or 5)
- Centre commercial des Eaux-Vives
- Centre commercial de Balexert (Bus 9 and 10 or trams 14 and 16)
- Centre commercial de Meyrin (Bus 9)
- Centre commercial Les Cygnes (diagonally across from Cornavin)
- Centre commercial la Praille (bus 4)
- Centre commercial des Charmilles (bus 11)

France

It is cheaper to do your grocery shopping in France, but you have to remember that France is on the Euro and you should bring your passport and extra money as the bus will charge you a fee to take you into France (this trip isn't covered by your monthly pass). You can shop in Ferney-Voltaire, which you can get to on the F bus. There is a small supermarket called Lidl just after you cross the border. After the first roundabout, you can go straight and then turn left to find a store called Ed. After the second roundabout, you'll find Champion, which is a bigger supermarket, on your right. Ferney is probably the most well-

known destination for cheap grocery shopping, but you can also find supermarkets in the French towns of Thoiry and Saint-Genis-Pouilly. There's a Migros-Val Thoiry in Thoiry, which you can get to by taking Bus 9, getting off at Blandonnet and then taking bus Y to Migros-Val Thoiry (it's the last stop). There's a Champion in Saint-Genis, which you can also get to by taking Bus 9, getting off at Blandonnet, and then taking Bus Y. You should keep your receipts because you may be questioned by Swiss customs officers when you cross the border back into Switzerland. Buses F and Y don't run very often, so make sure you check the round trip schedules before you go.

Cell phones

You can buy pay-as-you-go cell phones, or sign up just for the pay-as-you-go if you already have a cell phone that works in Switzerland. The main providers are:

- Swisscom (slightly more expensive but with great coverage)
- Orange (good deals but sometimes unreliable coverage)
- Sunrise (sometimes cheapest provider, but with the worst service, which remains good, but it's the least reliable of the 3)
- Migros and Coop also sell pay-as-you-go phones

There are provider stores all around town or you can find out about your options by asking at any post office, as they sell pay-as-you-go recharges. To buy a cell phone or a SIM card, you will need your passport.

Phone Cards

Switzerland's country code is 41.

Most public pay phones accept only phone cards, which are not the same as international calling cards. Pay phones can be found all around Geneva and at the ILO. From 17:00 to 08:00 (am), cheap rates apply to all local and most international calls. You can find phone cards at the post office, at all kiosks (or small shops, like Naville in the ILO), at train and gas stations, and most hotels. There are telecards shops that specialize in selling the cheapest cards to call your specific country. You can find specialized telecards shops around Cornavin, at Place Montbrillant, 4 Passage du cinema Rialto; near the Plainpalais stop at 7 Rue de Carouge; and at Place des Eaux-Vives, at 12 Terrassière, Carrefour de Rive. It is also worthwhile considering the internet phone services that allow you to make calls for free or for extremely cheap, such as Skype.

Internet access

There are a couple of places around Geneva to access the internet. Some are free (such as wireless spots around Lac Léman), some are not; a few options are listed below.

Free internet locations: <http://www.espritdegeneve.ch/home.php?lang=en>

- Arcanium: Internet cafe with 20 computers, webcams, printer and scanner. Open Monday, Tuesday 10:00-24:00, Friday-Saturday 10:00-01:00 and Sunday 14:00-24:00. At 58 rue Liotard, 1202 Geneva.
Tel: 022 344 92 50
- Charly's Check Point: Internet cafe for network games, printing, fax and telephone services. Open Monday to Saturday from 09:00-24:00, Sundays 14:00-22:00. At 7, rue de Fribourg, 1201 Geneva.
Tel: 022 901 13 13
- Cyber Cafe Genève - Ifage: Internet cafe open Monday to Friday from 07:00-21:00. Located at 19, Place des Augustins, 1205 Geneva.
Tel: 022 807 30 87
- Cybercafé 3000: Internet cafe with over 40 computers, webcams, printers, scanners and staff available to give advice. Open from 11:00-21:00 every day at 2, rue Henri Christiné, 1205 Geneva.
Tel: 022 320 74 55
- ispot: <http://www.ispot-communications.com/>
- Laundrenet: Internet cafe and laundrette also offering services such as washing, drying and ironing. At 83, rue de la Servette, 1201 Geneva.
Tel: 022 734 83 83
- Open Video: DVD chain store in Geneva with several outlets. The store in Pâquis also has an Internet cafe at 19 rue de Berne, 1201 Geneva.
Tel: 022 731 13 21
- Le Web Tarterie: Bar, restaurant and cybercafé. Can organise parties and karaoke evenings for up to 120 people. At 21, avenue de Verdun, 74100 Annemasse, France.
Tel: 04 50 43 98 29