

BCD Travel Recommends: Geneva

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The world's most international city

Switzerland ranks near the top among countries with highest quality of life in the world. The country's most cosmopolitan city is Geneva, which is also one of Europe's priciest. The city surrounds Lake Geneva with stunning views of the Alps and Jura mountain chains and is characterized by its strong French culture, evident in both the language and the cuisine.



Geneva is a major banking center and houses the top 200 international companies' headquarters, including the likes of the United Nations, International Red Cross, and the World Health Organization. The city is also the capital of watch making, one of the world's oldest technologies, with companies like Patek Philippe, Rolex and Piaget carrying forward a 450-year tradition.

Getting around Geneva:

From the airport

Geneva International Airport is located 5km (3 miles) from the city center. From the ticket machine in the baggage recovery area at the airport collect a free 'Unireso' ticket which will enable you to use public transport in Geneva city for 80 minutes. Transports Publics Genevois operates a bus route to the city center, which takes about 35 minutes. CFF trains leave regularly from Cointrin railway station at the airport and takes approx 6 minutes to reach the city. Taxis to the city center cost about SFr30-35 (approx. USD \$30) taking 15-20 minutes. The paper includes case studies highlighting how multinational corporations have tackled consolidation, what they gained and what pitfalls the organization encountered along the way.

Story highlights:

- Pick up a Geneva Transport card for free public transport access
- Wander along the cobbled streets of the Old Town
- Visit the funky Schtrumpfs building and discover some unconventional sights
- Geneva doesn't come cheap, but there's plenty to see on a budget
- Sample some Swiss delights of fresh perche, cheese fondue and chocolate!

Around the city

Geneva is a compact city and is easily conquered on foot, but there are a number of transportation options when you need them. Driving is not recommended in the city due to the limited and expensive nature of parking.

Top tip: Pick up a Geneva Transport Card, available to all visitors staying at a hotel, youth hostel or camping sites in Geneva. The card allows you to use the public transport network for free during your entire stay.

The local bus system covers virtually every square meter of the city and the intercity bus covers points outside the city.

The central train station, Gare Cornavin, has numerous rail links all over Switzerland and beyond. Be wary of pickpockets in and around the station.

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Ferry shuttles cross the lake, operating during daylight hours and departs every 10-30 minutes. Alternatively, pick up a free bicycle behind Gare Cornavin and at Quai du Mont-Blanc. The steep slopes of the Old Town and lack of bike paths in the city are a deterrent for most cyclists, but the paths along the lake are excellent.

Don't miss...

Lake Geneva, Jet d'eau and gardens — Stroll along the promenades around the lake and discover the spectacular flower clock in the gardens of Lake Geneva. If you have time, take a boat cruise on Lake Geneva, with views of castles, monuments and of course the Jet d'eau, the tallest water fountain in the world.

The Old Town & St Pierre Cathedral — Wander along the cobbled streets of the Old Town and visit the boutiques tucked away in the charming alleyways. Stop by the Romanesque Saint Pierre Cathedral, designed in the mid-12th century and took an additional 150 years to complete. For the best panoramic views of Geneva head for the Cathedral tower.

The United Nations — Take a tour of the United Nations, the world's single largest conference center for multilateral diplomacy and top-level international politics. Visit one of the surrounding museums, including the Red Cross Museum or the Ariana Museum devoted solely to seven centuries of glass and ceramics from Europe and the East.

The Salève — For a quick and easy escape to the countryside, ride the cable car to the top of this mini-mountain and enjoy the breathtaking views of the city below and the Alps in the distance. The more adventurous can also sign up for a tandem parasail or paraglide flight.

Schtrumpfs building — Boris Chappuis, Branch Manager for BCD Travel Geneva recommends a visit to one of Geneva's more curious sites - the Schtrumpfs (the French word for "Smurfs") building, which is located in the funky Les Grottes neighborhood. The area is a modern architectural landmark, designed by three architects determined to create the most unconventional building possible. The result is a Gaudi-style mix of colors and designs, which must be seen to be believed!

Geneva's nightlife is unlikely to blow you away, but there are numerous bars and clubs around. The liveliest places are in Carouge – try Le Chat Noir one of the best jazz and blues club in Geneva. The city also has top-notch classical music and opera. Pick up a local guide to see what's on.

Where to eat:

Genevan specialties include freshwater fish, longeole (an unsmoked sausage flavored with cumin and fennel) and the cheese fondue, usually made from a mix of Gruyère and Vacherin. Other cheese based dishes include 'raclette', which is basically melted cheese scraped from a huge lump held near a fire until a layer melts. Here are some of our top picks:



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Les Armures

1, rue des Puits Saint Pierre

Tel: +41 22 310 9172

www.hotel-les-armures.ch/en/geneva-restaurant.php

A surprisingly unpretentious and affordable restaurant located on the cobbled streets of the Old Town. The brasserie-style restaurant has three different floors — the lower you go, the more animated the scene becomes. Three different fondues are offered and considered to be among the best in Geneva. Other specialties include raclette and several pizza and pasta dishes.

Edelweiss

Place de la Navigation 2

Tel: +41 22 544 5151

http://www.manotel.com/en/restaurants/edelweiss_menu.php

For an entertaining dining experience, complete with live traditional Swiss music and yodeling, Boris recommends Restaurant Edelweiss. This is the most famous folkloric alpine-style restaurant in Geneva. Housed in an authentic Swiss chalet, the restaurant is located in the cellar of Hotel Edelweiss and is artfully rustic in decor. Menu highlights include cheese fondue, dried meats and chocolate fondue for dessert.

La Perle du Lac

Rue de Lausanne 126

Tel: +41 22 909 1020

www.laperledulac.ch

La Perle du Lac has been serving French cuisine since 1930 and is located alongside the lake in an enclosed pavilion, boasting a charming open-air terrace and lush garden. Specialties include fish and seafood, such as lake perch fillets and osso bucco des lotillons (angler fish), as well as excellent Swiss wines. Entrees include delicacies such as dorado fish on rhubarb compote with orange butter and veal filet mignon served with mushroom mousse.

Shopping:



With a myriad of boutiques and department stores, Geneva offers something for everyone. Before you leave, don't forget to sample some of the finest chocolate from Geneva's renowned chocolate-makers. **Rue du Rhône** is lined with exclusive shops, where you can find prestigious watches, jewels and designer clothes, such as Cartier, Rolex, Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Bulgari.

For a traffic-free shop visit **Rue du Marché**, where you can find fashion stores, electronics, bookshops and several department stores. If you are after a Swiss watch that won't break the bank, then head to the Swatch shop.

The biggest shopping mall in town is **Balexert** containing over 100 boutiques, numerous restaurants and entertainment options, including a bowling alley and cinema.

Grand Rue is particularly good for antiques. Here you will also find a throng of small shops selling chocolates, cheeses, and wines. Around the railway station of Rue des Alpes there are numerous shops with typical Swiss souvenirs such as chocolate, cuckoo clocks, Swiss Army knives and more.

Geneva's largest outdoor flea market is the **Plaine de Plainpalais**, open every Wednesday and Saturday, where you can find almost anything and is a great alternative to the high-priced goods found in retail shops.

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