

GENEVA & sightseeing on google maps



1. Le Jet d'Eau

The Jet d'eau is Geneva's trademark, a water fountain in the harbor that shoots half a cubic meter of water per second up to a height of 140 meters.

Originally it pumped drinking water from the city water supply, but in 1951 the present Jet d'eau was installed in a partially submerged pumping station to pump lake water instead of city water.

Since 2003, the fountain has been operating during the day all year round, except in exceptional circumstances such as frost or strong winds. Except in winter, the fountain also operates in the evenings and is illuminated.



2. *** Old Town

If you walk around the Old Town don't miss a chance and make a small turn into promenade de la Treille, a long terrace over parc des Bastions.

It was created during 16th century as observatory for the army but the promenade we see today was created in early 18th century with a double row of trees in front of the mansions you can see at the back (one of them is Hotel-de Ville) (pic 2). Not much to do here except enjoying the view over Bastions park (pic 3) or relaxing at the loooong bench, it's 120 meters long, probably the longest bench in the world...

If you lucky you may catch an event here, music concerts etc but I never managed to see something at any of my visits there but none of them was during the summer months.

There's also a statue (pics 4) of Charles Pictet de Rochemont(1755-1824), a local diplomat from an aristocratic family who prepared the declaration of Switzerland's permanent neutrality.



3. *** Flower Clock-Jardin Anglais

If you're at the Jardin Anglais and aren't sure what time it is, there's an unusual and pretty way to tell the time.

Constructed to celebrate Switzerland's long watch-making tradition, this clock made of flowers actually works. It must be an interesting job for the gardener whose duty it is to water the clock...

Returning back to the city from Jet d'Eau I walked along the shore of Geneva lake (pic1), on my left I noticed a small peaceful park. It's Jardin Anglais (English Garden) that was built in 1854 in british style and houses some small paths to stroll into, some fountains and sculptures (pic 3) and of course some benches to relax before you continue exploring Geneva. During the summer months you may catch a festival in the park with concerts etc

But the most interesting attraction of the park is the beautiful floral clock(L'Horloge Fleurie) (pic 4) which usually has some tourists posing in front of it :) The clock (don't forget that Switzerland is famous for its clock industry) was created in 1955 with 5metres in diameter (seconds hand is about 2,5m long) consisting of 6,500 plants. Nothing more to add about it, I guess the gardeners must be busy most seasons, for me it was just a nice way to check the time :)

Finally just next to the park I noticed the National Monument (pic 5) that is a reference to Geneva's accession to Swiss Confederation in 1814



4. Cathédrale Saint-Pierre

Once a catholic church St.Pierre Cathedral is the main place of worship of Geneva's protestants since the advent of the Reformation in 1536.

It was built between 1150 and 1230 with many roman and gothic elements. Of course it must have been changed through the next centuries under several additions, restorations including a monumental porch in neo-classical style (18th century).

No surprise the major changes happened during reformation (16th century), don't forget that John Calvin (who helped reform the church in Geneva) adopted the cathedral as his home church. When I got inside I felt disappointed, not only because (as expected due to reformation) all the statues, paintings and altars taken away but because the cathedral was full of noisy tourists that were yelling, I guess they were there just because the cathedral is mentioned as a major attraction.

There's no entrance fee for the church but you have to pay **4chf to access the towers for the view**. I walked up the narrow steps (they seemed endless, be patient) and enjoyed the panoramic view over Geneva but as it wasn't a clear day I couldn't see really far but I checked both towers anyway as I love high spots/view points in every city. North Tower seems to have a bit better views if you have to visit only one.

Major excavations on the area brought to light foundations of ancient buildings (3rd century BC) and ruins of proto-christian churches. A visit to the International museum of Reformation (ground floor of Maison Mallet, opposite the cathedral) will satisfy those who want to learn more about what was below the cathedral.

The cathedral is open in summer Monday to Friday 9.30-18.30, Saturday 9.30-17.00, Sunday 12.00-18.30

In winter (October to may) Monday-Saturday 10.00-17.30, Sunday 12.00-17.30

Some days there are live organ performances inside, check their site for timetable, adult tickets cost 16chf.



5. Palais des Nations**United** - Nations at parc de 'Ariana

Thousands of visitors take the tour of the Palais des Nations. But you need to have your transport with you, pass through security check, obtain a visitor's photo id badge, be patient as an individual visitor if there are lots of preregistered groups etc

With all that in mind I decided to walk a bit around at parc d'Ariana (pic 3), find a nice bench opposite Ariana museum (pic 4) and read about League of Nations, the intergovernmental organization that was founded after WWI to maintain peace, preventing wars etc (yeah right...). Palais des Nations was built in 1929 as headquarters of the League, now the Headquarter of the European part of United Nations, second in size after the UN Headquarters in NY. Funny to read that Switzerland became a member of United Nation only in 2002!

Anyway as a visitor you can go there (only as part of a guided tour, cant tour around freely) and check some areas like the Human Rights and Alliance of Civilizations Room, the Salle des Pas Perdus, Assembly Hall, Council Chamber etc

From September to March it's open Monday to Friday 10.00-12.00 (tours at 10.30 and 12.00) 14.00-16.00 (tours at 14.30 and 16.00)

From April to June it's open Monday to Saturday 10.00-12.00 (tours at 10.30 and 12.00) 14.00-16.00 (tours at 14.30 and 16.00)

From July to August it's open Monday to Saturday 10.00 to 16.00 (tours start at 10.30) **The entrance fee is 12chf**



6. Old Arsenal

l'Ancien Arsenal (Old Arsenal) is a popular spot for tourists, it's a medieval arcade that was built in 1625 as a granary but transformed into arsenal in early 18th century until 1877. In our days it houses the State Archives (les Archives d'Etat), it is closed for the public but the visitors come here to see the five old cannons in the arched courtyard (there's no entrance fee). The sign on the wall reads:

Two of these cannons were among the artillery material of Geneva requisitioned by the Austrians in February 1814 and moved to Vienna. Following a personal initiative of the lieutenant of Geneva Joseph Pinon (1775-1839) these canons and other guns were restored to the Republic at the beginning of 1815.

On the inner wall behind the cannon there are some murals (by Alexandre Cingria from 1949) that show historical moments of Geneva. What's more on the top of the exterior walls you can see some more frescoes (late 19th century) showing old history moments, from Julius Caesar to medieval era etc



7. Reformation Wall

This is one of Geneva's most famous landmarks, set in the Parc des Bastions. It features the main founders of the Protestant faith. The monument was designed by a Lausanne architect at the turn of the century. It was inaugurated in 1909 for the 400th anniversary of the birth of John Calvin. It represents John Calvin, William Farel, Theodore Debeze and John Knox. At their feet are smaller figures with various other protestant leaders from other European countries, including Oliver Cromwell.



8. Basilica of Our Lady Notre Dame

Basilique Notre-Dame de Geneve is a nice catholic church that is located opposite the main train station. It was built between 1852 and 1857 in neo-gothic style to serve the Geneva Catholics that gave most of the donations anyway but could enjoy their church only for some years the church closed in 1875 by the anti-clerical government.

It houses the white statue of Notre-Dame de Geneve that was given to Geneva by Pope Pius IX, and is a popular stopover for catholic pilgrims that head to St Jacques de Compostela as it is the symbolic starting point of via Gebennensis. I couldn't take many pictures of the exterior as it was a rainy day but once inside I loved how quiet it was, reflecting the motto of the church: Messenger of Peace . There are daily services (in English on Sunday)



9. *** Mont Blanc Bridge

Geneva is situated by Lac Léman. Lac Léman, or Lake Geneva in English, is the largest natural freshwater lake in western Europe, covering an area of 582km². Lac Léman, which was formed by a withdrawing glacier, is situated both in Switzerland and France, being that 60% comes under the jurisdiction of the former.

When in Geneva, there is the Rive Gauche (left or southern bank), where is situated the Old Town, and the Rive Droit

(right or northern bank) where is situated the modern part of the city and the main train station. To go from the right bank to the left bank of the Rhone, you just cross one of the seven bridges, being that the Mont Blanc Bridge is the most notorious one.



10. Château de Chillon

(It's a beautiful daily excursion, 79.2Km from Geneva, at the other side of the lake, on the same way to Yvoire)

This is a great thing to do on a cloudy day. Enjoy a lazy time on Lake Geneva and make your way to Château Chillon. The castle has a long and storied history (go to the castle to get details! ;). For example, Lord Byron carved some graffiti here. A good (and free) brochure is provided with your entry ticket.

In 2012, Tickets are CHF 12 for adults, CHF 6 for children, Whole families CHF 28. Discounts for local guest card holders, students, seniors, (Swiss) military, and others (CHF 10). Families (2 adults with their own children or grandchildren) may enter for CHF 28. Group rates (20 or more people) available. Entry is free with Swisspass. Guided tour CHF 6 extra per person.

The ticket office is open daily, 9AM-6PM Apr-Sep; 9:30AM-5:00PM March and October; 10AM-4PM Nov-Feb. The castle closes one hour after the ticket office closes.



11. ***Botanical Garden

One of the most beautiful botanical gardens in Switzerland. Features any plant from today's commercially used plants to medicinal herbs and ornamental plants. Wonderful setting. In the garden is also many exotic animals, especially birds. The Garden is segregated by regions, and display many plants, trees, a shrubs from around the world. It's easy to get to by taking the Bus 11 to the Jardin Botanique stop (which is the last stop). There is no charge to visit.



12. Parc des Bastions

The Bastions Park (French: Parc des Bastions) is park near Old town in the center of city. It covers area of 64968 m². In the center of park is promenade in Treille and first known name for this place is "Belle Promenade". It dates back to 16th and 17th century and through all this time up to today is changing its shape, size and look.

It is worth mentioning the International Monument to the Reformation and Reformation Wall on the east side along the walls of old city. It was built in its place on 7th July 1917.

It serves for different causes during all this time and today is a popular place for leisure time.

Near the main entrance you can enjoy by playing (or just watching) life size chessboards. It is popular to have a relax at the pavilion cafe bar. Then go to the gates to Place Neuve, home to oldest and most beautiful performance and exhibition halls in Geneva.

13. *** La Tour de L'Ile



Tour de l'Île is the only surviving structure from a 13th century château that was located on the island in the middle of the Rhône River. The castle was built to augment Geneva's defences against the Duchy of Savoy and to protect the passage linking inner Switzerland with France. The castle was damaged in fires and was finally demolished in 1677, with only the tower spared. In 1897, the tower was restored and incorporated in the construction of the adjacent building, which was part of Banque Safdié for a long time, but is now Leumi Private Bank.



14. Brunswick Monument

I started to walk along the lake at quai du Mont-Blanc when I noticed a weird monument at the other side of the road. It is Brunswick Monument, which is actually an impressive mausoleum that was built for the Duke of Brunswick, Charles II d'Este-Guelph (1804-1873) which was an eccentric noble figure, linguist, musician and knight. He was expelled in 1830, moved into many European cities, made a fortune and returned in Geneva.

It was built in 1879 in neo-gothic style. Charles bequeathed his fortune to the city of Geneva in exchange of a monument, his only demand was that it would be a replica of the Scaliger Tombs in Verona! (5 tombs from 14th century, located in a court of the church Santa Maria Antica). Of course the authorities with so much money in their hands they built much more than just the monument including the Grand Theater and the Golden Gates of Parc des Bastions. The monument has the shape of a small temple and covered by a baldachin but for safety reasons they moved the August Cain's statue of the Duke on horseback next to the mausoleum



15. Place du Bourg-de-four

200m from the cathedral I ended up at another square, Place du Bourg-de-four is actually the oldest square in Old Town! It used to be a Roman Forum (probably that explains the weird name of the square) and a typical market square in medieval times. It is still a commercial center but also a popular meeting spot not only for tourists that start/end their tour through Old Town here or just enjoying an ice cream but I saw many locals too. The square was also a shelter for exiled protestants back in 16th century.

The square is full of café and restaurants with outdoor seating (pics 1-2) that get packed with people when weather is good but looks a bit depressing on a cloudy day. Apart from those on the square check also some small ones on the street below the square.

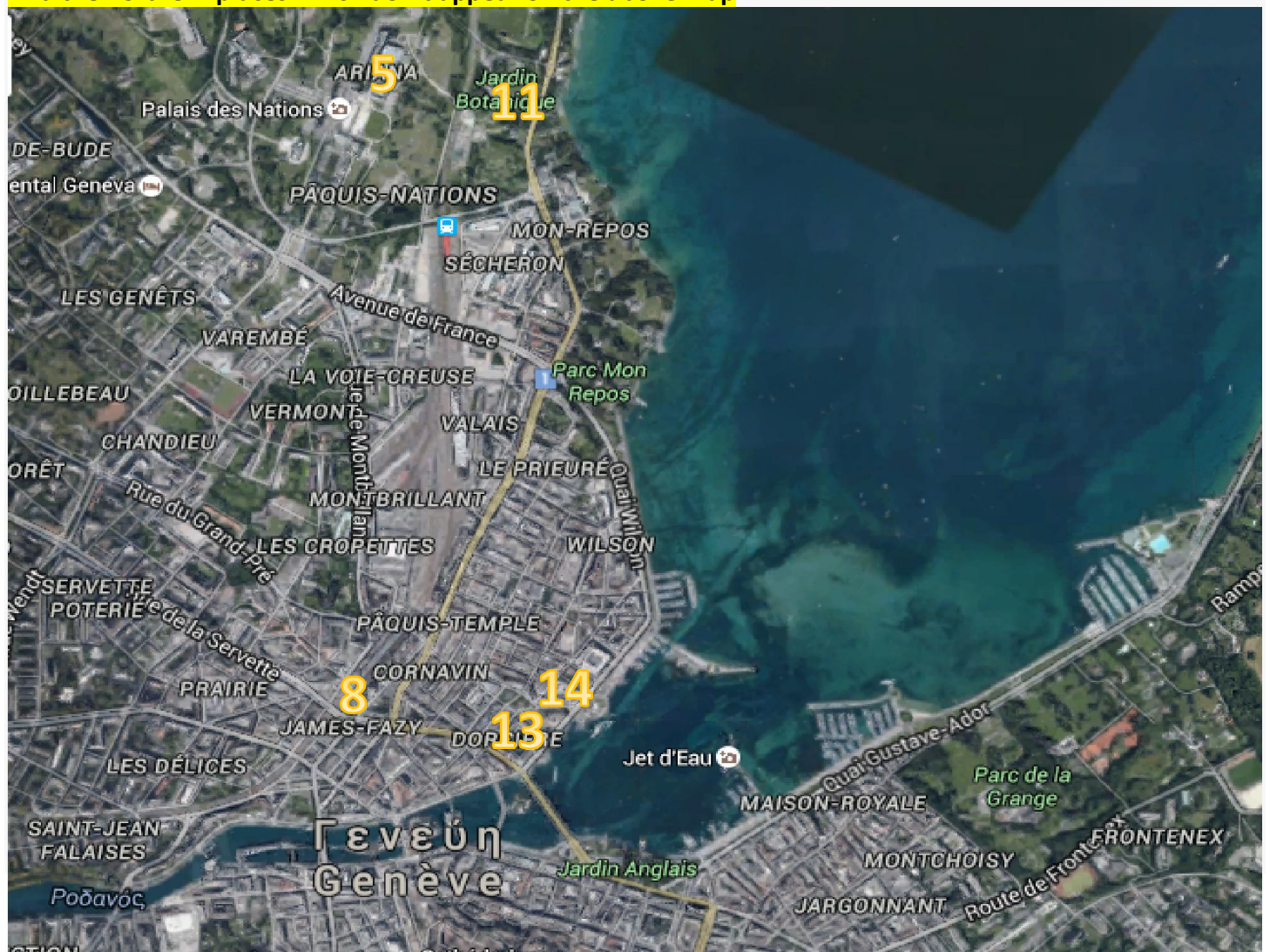
There are also many stores, unique art galleries but also tourist shops. Apart from the numerous tables and chairs there is a 18th century fountain (pic 3) but what impressed me most was a simple statue (created by Heinz Schwarz the previous century) that shows Clementine, a naked sad girl (pic 4). According to VTer Nemorino people put a flower to hold in her hand and the trees around are full of notes/messages protesting child abuse, violence against women etc but I didn't see anything when I was there but the statue was impressive anyway.

There many interesting buildings around, many of them date from 16th to 19th century, among them also the Palais de Justice (pic 5) that was built in 1707, that became a convent of the Order of St. Clare and then turned into a hospital until 1857 before starting serve the law.

Sightseeing survey at google maps, as listed s/n.



And the northern places which don't appear on the above map



You can see some of my Geneva's photos at

https://www.facebook.com/chr.gkoutz/media_set?set=a.620435907986611.1073741833.100000606228878&type=3

in a common album with photos of two more wonderful destinations

1. **Lausanne**'s old town and Ouchy's lakeside and

2. **Yvoire**, the amazing French village with the old castle and its forest walks.