

Tips from our experiences in Geneva, July 2022

If you search for “most expensive cities in Europe”, Geneva will consistently show up near the top of the list and sometimes in the #1 position. Food and drink in both restaurants and at the supermarket was at least twice as expensive and sometimes four times the price we pay in Carcassonne.

Chocolate: Most chocolate shops were charging between 150 and 180 Swiss Francs (similar equivalent price in euros or dollars) per kilogram while at the shop below, near the main train station, we paid 93 Swiss Francs per kilo. Friendly service with the chance to choose each chocolate piece individually (dark, milk, white, with/without nuts, alcohol, or fruit) or to ask for a mixture in a box or in a bag.

La Chocolaterie de Genève, Rue des Alpes 25, 1201 Genève, Suisse

Restaurant/Take Out : For a good value, it was recommended that we eat at the roof top restaurant of the Manor Department store. We never made it above the ground floor because of its excellent full-service supermarket and huge selection of ready-made meals.

Manor Genève, Rue de Cornavin 6, 1201 Genève, Suisse

Smaller, but still a good value, especially with their house brands was Coop with several locations throughout the city.

Wine bar: On average we paid 50 to 60 Swiss Francs for a bottle of wine at a restaurant and less than half that at the supermarket. With meals we chose Swiss wines — white, red, rosé — and we were never disappointed. We went to the Bacchus Wine Bar twice because of their excellent service and wines.

Chez Bacchus, Bar-à-vins, Cr de Rive 7, 1204 Genève, Suisse

Wine glass serving size: On menus, wine by the glass was marked as “1 dl” meaning a serving size of 1 deciliter or more familiar to us as 10 cl or 100 ml. In France we are used to serving sizes of 125 to 150 ml.

Hotel school lunch: The school’s website lists the *Menu du Jour* at a price of 61 Swiss Francs but when we sat down we were handed only the à la carte menu. What we did not initially understand is that in order to pay 61 Swiss Francs for this 3-course meal you can choose any dessert but you must order the one specific starter and one specific main course that the server told us about when we arrived; otherwise, you pay the individual prices. We all chose from the à la carte menu and for comparison purposes, my 3-course meal was 63 Swiss Francs while Bill’s cost 78 Swiss Francs. Bottles of wine were around 50 Swiss Francs each. We would definitely recommend this restaurant.

Public Transportation Pass: This free wallet-sized card is issued by your hotel, one in the name of each overnight guest, and is valid throughout your stay, including for the day you leave the hotel. You do not scan it or otherwise need to validate it on the bus/tram/etc. You only need to show it if an inspector asks to see your ticket.

In addition, there used to be a free one-way ticket from the airport into town but that apparently is no longer available.

Seeing the Junction: After we got off the tram we walked down *Avenue de la Jonction* and turned left at *Rue de la Truite* onto the foot bridge that crosses the Arve river. Upon exiting the bridge, take a short left and then follow the path uphill to the paved ramp that continues winding its way upwards towards the railway bridge. Pass by a restaurant on the right and when the paved path

splits, go right towards the river and descend until you arrive at the bridge. We saw a few small yellow signs with a hiker icon to point the way. Many trains went by but the passenger walkway is wide and was used by other hikers and even parents with baby strollers. We continued across the bridge and since there were no trams (although there were buses) it was a 30-minute walk to the chocolate shop noted above.

Lake cruise: We chose the “Lunch on the Lake” cruise from CGN that left the Geneva Mont-Blanc dock at 10:45 AM and returned there at 6:35 PM. To dine onboard you must have a First Class transportation ticket plus a choice of a 1-course or 3-course meal that comes automatically with a table reservation. Those combined tickets cost 90 Swiss Francs or 110 Swiss Francs per person. The meal was excellent as was the service. A bottle of Prosecco was 49 Swiss Francs while a bottle of Swiss house red was 59 Swiss Francs.

Our ship, the Simplon, has a capacity of 850 passengers and roughly half of those boarded with us as one big crowd being funneled onto a single file ramp. Tickets were not requested at that point and no instructions were given as to where you were supposed to go: fore, aft, upstairs, or downstairs. The dining room was very near the ship’s entrance and I asked a crew member if we were to sit at one of those tables. She checked our names off of her dining list and then said to return between noon and 12:30 PM. When we walked upstairs, which felt much more open with large windows and great views, we saw a few tables there also set up for lunch just as every table had been in the dining area. I walked back downstairs, asked the same woman if we could sit above, which was not a problem, and then we stayed there for the duration of the cruise.

Money: Since Switzerland does not use euros, we withdrew some Swiss Francs from a bank’s ATM using our American bank’s debit card. We never really needed the cash since we were able to use our American credit card at shops, restaurants, and even the beach bar would have accepted it. We could have used our French bank’s debit card as well, but the fees would have been higher than with either our US debit or credit cards.