

Tour
Information



Christmas in Lake Annecy





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to France.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

French consulate: PO Box 57, 6A Cromwell Place, London SW7 2EW; Tel (020) 7838 2000/1. Information Service: Tel (0891) 887 733, Fax: (020) 7838 2046. Opening hours: 0900-1130 (and 1600-1630 for visa collection only) Mon-Fri (except British and French national holidays).



Tickets

You will be issued with a return train ticket.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggage**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggage.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Lyon, transfer by coach to Talloires (approx. 2 hours) and the Hotel Les Grillons.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Les Grillons Hotel, Talloires

The 3-star Les Grillons Hotel is located on the edge of the lakeside village of Talloires about 10km south of the town of Annecy. The hotel is located on the lake and facilities include extensive grounds, swimming pool (seasonal opening), bar, restaurant and comfortable rooms with bath, hairdryer, safe, TV, telephone and wi-fi. Rooms at the Bristol Hotel do not include tea/coffee making facilities, so we suggest you bring a travel kettle if required. It is possible to order coffee/tea at the bar, open 0800-2400.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.hotel-grillons.com/>



Food

General de Gaulle once asked, with a certain amount of pride, how it was possible to rule a country which produced 365 different kinds of cheese; the alpine region of Haute Savoie makes an important contribution to this selection. *Tomme de Savoie*, *Beaufort*, *Abondance*, *Reblochon*, *Bleu de Sassenage*, and the goat's *Picodon d'Ardeche* are enjoyed with bread and fruit, or used as an ingredient of one of the many cheese-based dishes of the area. Try a *Fondue Savoyarde*, a *Raclette* (potatoes with melted cheese and dried meats), or a *Tartiflette* (potatoes, bacon, onions topped with Reblochon cheese). Fresh lake fish such as trout or perch are popular around Lake Geneva.

Traditional desserts include *Tarte aux Myrtilles* (bilberry tart), *Nougat de Montelimar* and *Marrons glacés* (chestnuts candied in sugar syrup).

Almost all restaurants offer two types of meals: *a la carte* (extensive choice for each course, generally more expensive) and *le menu* (a set meal at a fixed price).

The bill (*l'addition*) will not be presented until it is asked for, even if clients sit and talk for half an hour after finishing their meal. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Generally speaking, mealtimes in France are strictly observed. Lunch is as a rule served from noon to 1330, dinner usually from 2000-2130, but the larger the city, the later the dining hour.



Drink

Wine is by far the most popular alcoholic beverage in France, and the choice will vary according to region. The Savoie vineyards extend over 2,000 hectares and mainly produce white wine, among which the AOC quality label *Vins de Savoie* and *Roussette de Savoie*.

In elegant restaurants the wine list will be separate from the main menu, but in less opulent establishments will be printed on the back or along the side of the *carte*. The waiter will usually be glad to advise an appropriate choice. If in doubt, try the house wine; this will usually be less expensive and will always be the owner's pride.

This tour is on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis and includes;

- Christmas Eve four-course dinner
- Christmas Day lunch and dinner



Destination

Our Lake Annecy by train tour offers the opportunity of a relaxing break in the attractive lakeside village of Talloires in one of the most beautiful areas of France. Take in the glorious lake and mountain scenery, enjoy the excellent food served at the hotel Les Grillons, admire pretty lakeside villages and elegant spa towns, and experience the excitement of cable cars and rack railways at Chamonix and the breath-taking views of the French Alps.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Annecy

One of the largest lakes in France and the cleanest in Europe, Lake Annecy is surrounded by glorious mountain scenery and attractive towns and villages, including one of our bases, the pretty village of *Talloires* famed for its gourmet restaurants including the Michelin-starred *Père Bise*.

Annecy is one of the most attractive and charming towns in the French Alps, set at the northern tip of *Lac d'Annecy* and surrounded by mountains. Its small medieval quarter is laced with canals, flower-covered bridges and arcaded streets. Perfect for leisurely and relaxing browsing, there are nonetheless some major sights - the formidable 12th Century *Palais de l'Isle* and the turreted *Château d'Annecy*.

For more information about Annecy, visit:

<http://en.lac-annecy.com/>

For more information about Talloire, visit:

<http://www.talloires-lac-annecy.com/>

Chambéry and Aix-les-Bains

Once the capital of Savoy, the dignified town of Chambéry has a distinctly Italianate feel that betrays its history as part of Italy. Highlights here include its much-loved and extravagant Fontaine des Eléphants, Chateau of the Dukes of Savoy dating back to the 14th century and 17th century country house, Les Charmettes, once home to the philosopher Rousseau.

Aix-les-Bains is a gracious spa town located on Lac du Bourget and is famed for its thermal baths.

For more information about Chambéry, visit:

www.chambery-tourisme.com

For more information about Aix-les-Bains, visit:

<http://www.aixlesbains.com>

Chamonix and Mont Blanc

A busy and cosmopolitan town, Chamonix sits at the foot of Europe's highest peak surrounded by the best of mountain scenery – glaciers, snow-capped peaks and lush green meadows. It is the base for all mountain based activities, in summer and winter. Wonderful alpine views are possible from the *Aiguille du Midi cable car* - the highest cable car in Europe - which takes you as close to the peak of Mont Blanc as is possible without climbing. Or, for those who aren't big fans of heights, try the *Montenvers rack railway* which will take you to the foot of the *Mer de Glace* glacier.

Please note that the *Aiguille du Midi* cable car can get very busy at peak times so we recommend making a reservation as soon as you arrive in Chamonix to avoid disappointment and minimise queuing time. The current cost is €55 per adult round trip, which lasts 2-3 hours (not included and payable locally).

Alternatively, a trip on the historic railway built in 1908 to the *Mer de Glace* (sea of ice) offers stunning views of the 14km-long glacier which moves up to 100 metres each year, scarring and shaping the landscape. This 2-3 hour excursion offers wonderful views of the soaring peaks of this beautiful area. For the more energetic, the 2-hour walk back down more than rewards the effort. The current cost for the *Montenvers* railway is €29.50 per adult round trip (not included and payable locally).

Please note that the *Montenvers* railway and the *Aiguille du Midi* cable car are subject to seasonal opening hours.

For more information about Chamonix, visit:

<http://www.chamonix.com>

Geneva

In terms of being international and cosmopolitan there aren't many cities that can compare with Geneva. Its location is fantastic, strung along the shore of mountain backed Lake Geneva, and it is the place that many international organisations choose to base their European headquarters – you may see the United Nations, World Health Organisation and International Red Cross. More than 200 international organisations are based here and one in three residents are non-Swiss. Sights include the world's tallest fountain, the *jet d'eau*, the 16th century *St. Peter's Cathedral* in the wonderfully picturesque old town, the *UN Building* and excellent museums such as the *Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art*, the *Museum of Art and History*, the *International Motor Car Museum* and the *Voltaire Museum*.

Please note that some Swiss Francs will be required on this day for incidental expenses - these can be withdrawn from a bank cashpoint in Geneva or you may prefer to take a small amount with you. Credit cards are accepted very widely for more substantial purchases.

For more information about Geneva, visit:
<http://www.geneve-tourisme.ch/en/home/>

Lac Léman (Lake Geneva), Evian and Yvoire

The expanse of *Lake Geneva* (or *Lac Léman* to the French) forms a natural border between France and Switzerland. The awe-inspiring scenery and the gentle climate have made the shores of *Lac Léman* a popular health resort area since the first spas were built at *Evian-les-Bains* in 1839. Take a stroll along the lovely tree-lined lakeside promenade at Evian and taste the famous water from the *Source Cachat* on the *Avenue des Sources*.

Picturesque *Yvoire* is a lovely medieval fishing port of narrow cobbled streets and stone houses sloping down to the edge of the water. Sights here include the 14th century castle, church, two stone gateways, the attractive *Jardin des Cinq Sens*, and picturesque streets lined with tightly-packed houses decorated with colourful flower boxes.

For more information about Yvoire, visit:
<http://www.yvoiretourism.com>
For more information about Evian, visit
<http://en.evian-tourisme.com>

Christmas

It is traditional in France for families to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve. Most shops will be closed on Christmas Day although there will be a limited selection of bars and restaurants open. Your tour manager will have details of opening times and Christmas services.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

Reading Suggestions

Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France*.

A general introduction to French culture, landscape and history, it also features an excellent insight into the distinctive character of France's regions.

Bernard Levin, *From the Camargue to the Alps: A Walk Across France in Hannibal's footsteps*.

As the title suggests, English journalist Bernard Levin follows the Carthaginian military commander's path across France to Italy, describing history, landscape and culture on his way.



The Basics

Climate – The weather around Lake Annecy at this time of year is likely to be cold, there is the chance of snow. Our best advice is to come prepared.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – French.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Easter Monday; Labour day (01 May); Victory in Europe day (08 May); Ascension day; Whit Sunday; Whit Monday; National day (14 Jul); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' day (01 Nov); Armistice day (11 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Geneva – Swiss Franc. 1CHF = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of 1000, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 CHF. Coins are in denominations of 5, 2, 1 CHF and 50, 20, 10, 5 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Annecy has a wide variety of shops; Smaller towns have quaint boutiques and beautiful markets. Department stores are open 0900-1830 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1200-1430. Some food shops (particularly bakers) are open Sunday mornings, in which case they will probably close Monday. Many shops close all day or half-day Monday. Please note that most museums close on Mondays.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate Marseille

24 Avenue du Prado

13006 Marseille

France

+33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

Marseilleconsular.marseille@fco.gov.uk

Mon, Wed and Fri: 0900 to 1230. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +33 (0)4 91 15 72 10

British Consulate General, Geneva

37-39 Rue de Vermont (6th floor)

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