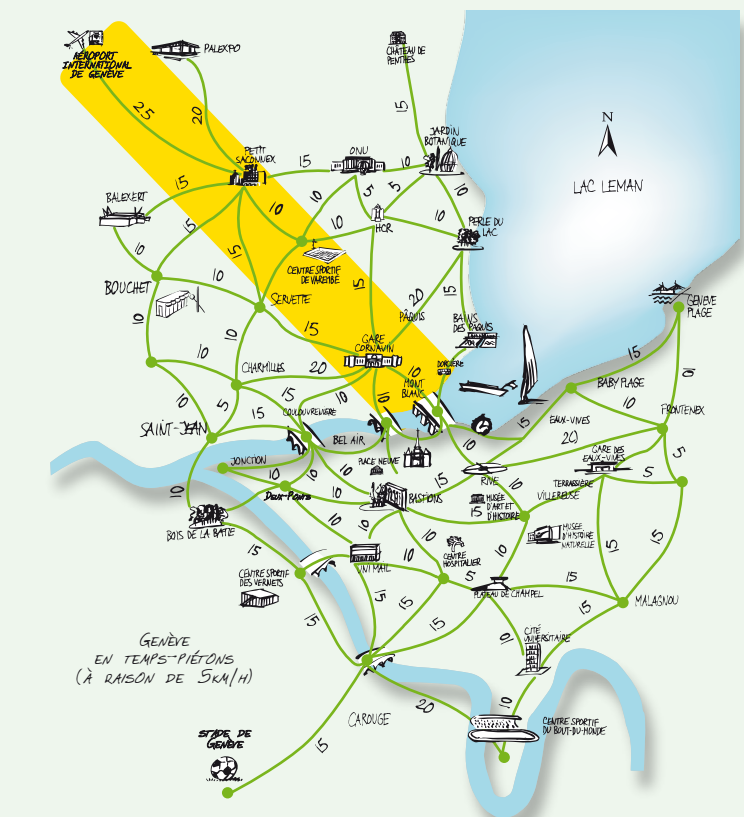




GENEVA ON FOOT - BETWEEN TRAVEL AND NATURE



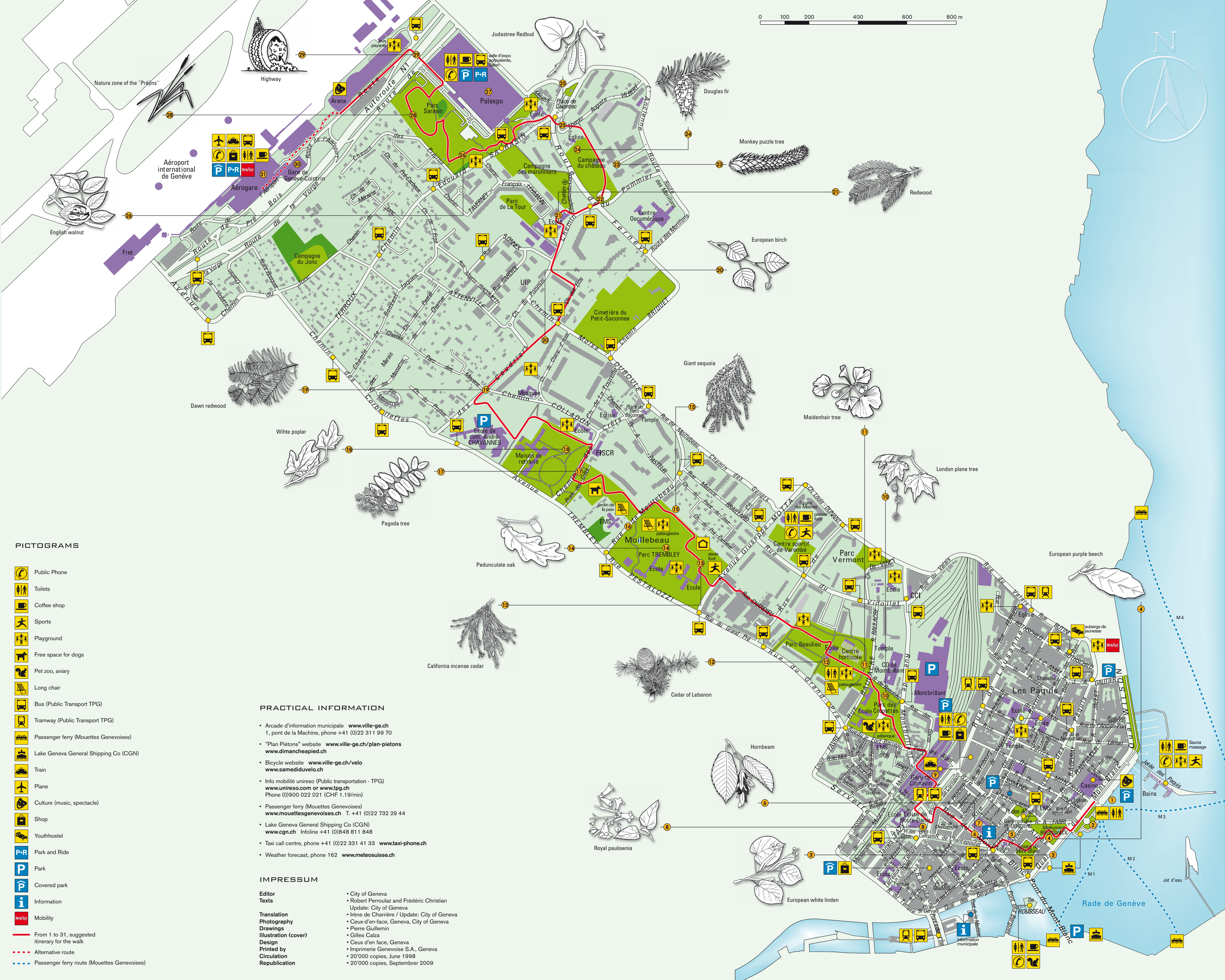
WARNING

- Estimated walking time : 2hours (~7km)
- The itinerary suggested for the 3th walk of the Plan Piétons, called "From quay to runway" cross a multitude of park, real green lane, called also "penetrating of greenery". By place, you will also cross school grounds, also we invite you to go through these sites except the school schedules.

The route does not present major difficulties. Note however that of the lake at the airport, the stroll is made in light climb, except the section between the street of Moillebeau and the road of Crêts (promenade des Crêts) which is more stiff.

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PICTOGRAMS

- Public Phone
- Toilets
- Coffee shop
- Sports
- Playground
- Free space for dogs
- Pet zoo, aviary
- Long chair
- Bus (Public Transport TPG)
- Tramway (Public Transport TPG)
- Passenger ferry (Mouettes Genevoises)
- Lake Geneva General Shipping Co (CGN)
- Train
- Plane
- Culture (music, spectacle)
- Shop
- Youthhostel
- Park and Ride
- Park
- Covered park
- Information
- Mobility

- From 1 to 31, suggested itinerary for the walk
- Alternative route
- Passenger ferry route (Mouettes Genevoises)

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- Arcade d'information municipale www.ville-ge.ch
1, pont de la Machine, phone +41 (0)22 311 99 70
- "Plan Piétons" website www.ville-ge.ch/plan-pietons
www.dimancheapied.ch
- Bicycle website www.ville-ge.ch/velo
www.samediduvelo.ch
- Info mobilité unireso (Public transportation - TPG)
www.unireso.com or www.tpg.ch
Phone (0)900 022 021 (CHF 1.19/min)
- Passenger ferry (Mouettes Genevoises)
www.mouettesgenevoises.ch T. +41 (0)22 732 29 44
- Lake Geneva General Shipping Co (CGN)
www.cgn.ch Infoline +41 (0)848 811 848
- Taxi call centre, phone +41 (0)22 331 41 33 www.taxi-phone.ch
- Weather forecast, phone 162 www.meteosuisse.ch

IMPRESSUM

- Editor
Texts
 - City of Geneva
 - Robert Perroulaz and Frédéric Christian
- Update: City of Geneva
- Tréne de Chamrière / Update: City of Geneva
- Ceux-d'en-face, Geneva, City of Geneva
- Pierre Guillemain
- Gilles Calza
- Ceux d'en face, Geneva
- Imprimerie Genevoise S.A., Geneva
- 20'000 copies, June 1998
- 20'000 copies, Septembre 2009

BETWEEN TRAVELLING AND NATURE...

Quays conjure up the idea of travel... The third Pedestrian Plan starts at the Quai du Mont-Blanc, in the centre of town, crosses the main transport arteries of the Geneva canton and finally reaches the Geneva International Airport. Beyond Cornavin Railway Station, our walk takes in an unexpected stretch of greenery, lasting all the way to Grand-Saconnex. This "green corridor", part of the planned urban development layout, consists of a succession of parks for the pleasure of pedestrians...

Our early ancestors depended mainly on their own legs for transport. Nowadays, going on foot means taking one's time, for walking has become a choice rather than a necessity. This itinerary should be an invitation to touch the bark of a tree, to observe the details of its structure, to smell its scent and to listen to the wind... It also provides a different way of seeing the city and discovering a thousand surprising details of nature's manifold surprises, which will offer unexpected sensuous pleasures.

Trees line this pedestrian way; they resemble the inhabitants of Geneva: whether they are of local rural origin or originate from all corners of the universe, they all have made their roots in this earth. Thanks to them, Geneva is one of the greenest cities in the world; it has a tree for every two inhabitants. In a town, trees define changing seasons, provide shelter for birds, and give off sweet scents...

In the past, trees signalled to the traveller the presence of a spring, a fountain or a crossroads; they marked limits and they were meeting points... All these meanings have gradually disappeared from the urban context, but many trees mark the third Pedestrian Plan in Geneva city as well as in Grand-Saconnex. These green milestones will guide the ramblor along his way, from quay to runway. Thanks to the attention they will be given by him, the trees will regain some of their former importance...

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Armand Brulhart et Erica Deuber-Pauli, Arts et Monuments, ville et canton de Genève, publié par la Société d'histoire de l'art en Suisse, Berne, éditions Benteli, 1993.
- Les parcs de Genève: 125 ans d'histoire
Genève: Ville de Genève, Service des Espaces Verts et de l'Environnement (SEVE), 1988, réédition 1993
- Mayor Jean-Claude: Genève à pied: un anti-guide citadin
Genève: Ed. Slatkine, 1986
- Marteau Jean-Jacques: Quand les parcs racontent Genève
Genève: Ed. Slatkine, 1997
- Compagnon Anne; Perroulaz Robert
La nature au coin de la rue: promenade en ville de Genève
Genève: WWF et Ville de Genève, 1997
- INSA, Inventaire Suisse d'Architecture, 1850-1 920, vol.4
Société d'Histoire de l'Art en Suisse, Berne, 1982, tiré à part. Genève, 1984
- Rafael Matos-Wasem, Genève à pied, 10 parcours à thèmes, Slatkine, Genève, 2008

THE PEDESTRIAN PLAN COLLECTION

This itinerary is part of the Pedestrian Plan collection of walks conceived by the Planning Office of the City of Geneva.

- Walking in Geneva
- From estate to estate
Geneva - Bois-de-la-Bâtie - Jardin Botanique
- From site to museum
Geneva on foot - in the heart of its heritage
- From quay to runway
Geneva on foot - between travel and nature
- From city to city
Geneva on foot - from the lake to the Arve
- Walking Downstream
Geneva on foot - nature and technology
- From here and afar
Geneva on foot - between work and leisure
- From body to heart
Geneva on foot - urban planning and health
- From history to modernity
Geneva on foot - from local to international
- From cedar to cedar
Geneva on foot - between city and country
- Spirit of Geneva
Geneva on foot - of dialogue and peace



1 THE FIRST PEDESTRIANS

About twelve thousand years ago, at the end of the last Ice Age, men dressed in skins and armed with spears and bows came to hunt horses and mammoths in the Geneva region. They had no choice: they had to go by foot to find new areas with game. These Magdalenian hunters were the first pedestrians to set foot in Geneva. They soon settled there, and they are still walking... from quay to runway, from one end of the city to the other.

- *Contact point with the walk:*
From body to heart and Walking Downstream



2 A QUAY FOR MONT-BLANC

The first steam-powered vessel on the lake of Geneva, the Guillaume Tell, was launched in 1823. Its promoter, Edward Church, embodied Yankee dynamism. Enthusiasm engulfed the whole country and people cheered as the boat steamed round the lake on its maiden voyage, although it is said that some, on the Savoy bank, spoke of witchcraft. Tourist cruises became very popular, and excursionists on the lake of Geneva discovered the joys of pleasure cruising. Paddle steamers multiplied, offering concerts, dinners and idle leisure... The city's luxury hotels competed to attract this new clientele. Hotel managers even went so far as to expect Mouette crews to wear liveries, for nothing was too good to tempt the visitors to taste the exciting life of the bourgeoisie, strolling the quays and experiencing the delights of lake cruising. The steamers thus contributed to the development of tourism, whilst vivid imaginations were puffing out publicity in praise of the merits of Geneva:

Geneva, a resort town: Healthy invigorating climate, recommended for curing anaemia and stress. The purest water of any European city. Epidemics are unheard of; perfect sanitation. Moderate temperature, never too cold nor too hot. Death rate: 17 per thousand. Foreigners exercising no professional activity pay no tax on capital.

Since then, times have changed; but, as in the past, Mont-Blanc can still be seen from the quay, and vessels are still waiting to take one on a leisurely lake tour, purely for the sake of pleasure...



3 UNDER THE WHITE LINDEN TREES

Tilia tomentosa Moench

During the French Revolution, the white linden or limetree (Silver lime) was the tree of liberty. It is said to be a tree of great sweetness, symbolizing faithful love. Taken as an infusion, its flowers calm passion and anxiety... The "Quai du Mont Blanc" is the only section of the Geneva town shoreline to be planted with silver limes, the rest being plane trees. These white lindens witnessed the tragic end of the «seagull's flight», which is how Empress Sissi referred to her long voyage round the world. "On each of my journeys, she said, seagulls follow my ship, and there is always one that is dark, nearly black. I believe it to be my destiny". The Empress's odyssey ended on September 10th, 1898, as she was walking along the Quai du Mont-Blanc to the Genève, the steamer she was about to board. Under the Hungarian limetrees she was stabbed to death by the anarchist Luigi Lucheni. He did not know he was assassinating a woman who was escaping from the conventions of society, and who shared his hatred of kings...



4 THE BLOOD OF THE PURPLE BEECH

Fagus sylvatica L. var. *purpurea*

Behind the Duke of Brunswick's mausoleum, there is an impressive mass of purple beeches. Their colour is the result of natural mutation. They are reputed to come from an old Swiss German tree, already known in 1680, and still standing in a forest by the village of Buch, near Zurich, where a legend recounts the origin of its colour. A little over three hundred years ago, two brothers were returning from the wars, penniless and starving. Their village had not been spared by famine either, so they started to look for food in the beechgrove nearby. The younger brother managed to trap an emaciated mouse. The older one tried to take it from him, and they fought to the death. The leaves of a young beech were splattered with the elder brother's blood, so God decided that the foliage of this tree and its descendants would develop a purple hue.



5 STAGECOACHES TO MOTORCOACHES

Bus station. The panoramic buses are undoubtedly more comfortable and faster than 19th century stagecoaches. They carry their passengers to the south or the east of Europe at modest fares. The journey starts at "Place Dorcière", where luggage piles up. Once aboard, one can already feel the atmosphere of one's country of destination. The four seasons fountain, a work by Louis Dorcière, has been the silent witness of happy and heart-rending departures, of people waiting, of faces reflecting anxiety on arriving in a strange new country. Although we are in the middle of Geneva, it can sometimes feel like being in a village square in Anatolia, the Algarve or Moravia.

Destination	Timetable of stagecoaches (1818)	Departure time
Berne	33 hours journey. Four weekly services.	11 a.m.
Lyon	One well-sprung carriage, Thursdays and Saturdays. 24 hours journey.	5 a.m.

- *www.gare-routiere.ch*



6 THE HORNBEAMS AROUND THE POST OFFICE

Carpinus betulus L.

The hornbeam is a bountiful tree, frequently planted to create a green curtain around a secret garden. In front of the main post office, it brings welcome shade to the asphalt. The construction (1890 - 1892) of the main post office aroused much comment. The building, resembling that of an admiralty, was not to the taste of the Geneva people: it was considered to be insolently luxurious, and their indignation was inflamed by the nudity of the female figures flanking the clocks. Even today, some prudish people hope, to no avail, that the hornbeams' foliage in the street may some day modestly screen the building's feminine attributes...



7 THE POST OFFICE

The post was the first safe means of long distance communication: it enabled people to communicate with distant correspondents without having to travel. The person who wore out the soles of his shoes was the postman! In 1900, the seventy-four Geneva postmen organized mail delivery according to the volume of letters to be distributed. They often went round town just to deliver a dozen or so letters that had arrived in the afternoon. There were few letterboxes, and the postmen handed the mail directly to the addressees, or shouted their names in the courtyard of the building. At the postman's call, the tenant would let down a small basket on a string from his window to pick up his mail.



8 THE PAULOWNIA OR THE LAZY WANDERER

Paulownia tomentosa Steud

Climb the steps of Notre-Dame. Overhead, a royal paulownia spreads its broad-leaved branches. It is called after Anna Paulowna, the daughter of Paul I, Tsar of Russia, to whom its flower was dedicated. In May, before its first leaves appear, the spring festival starts, as blue flowers cover the tree; it then looks like a gigantic palace chandelier with crystal pendants. In summer, shelter in its leafy shade, for it is said to induce relaxation.



9 THE STATION PLATFORM: RAILWAY TIME

The Geneva railway began in the spring of 1858. The train arrived late, nearly half a century after England! When, at last, trains whistled into Geneva, it was on March 18th, 1858. They came from Lyon and bore the colours of the PLM Railway (Paris, Lyon, Méditerranée). Until the 19th century, clocks were set according to the passing of the meridian by the sun, which meant that each city had its own time. With the appearance of high speed railways, it became necessary to synchronize times. In those days, some public clocks in Geneva displayed three dials. One showed local time (5 minutes and 6 seconds later

than Bern, and 15 minutes and 16 seconds earlier than Paris), another showed Bern time and the third Paris time. This system was revised in 1894, when all clocks were set to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

- *www.cff.ch*



10 THE LONDON PLANE TREE

Platanus x acerifolia Willd

The thought that this tree had been imported from foreign lands and cultivated purely for its shade astonished Pliny the Elder. Yet, since Antiquity, its generous shade has given rise to many passions. According to Herodotus, Xerxes was so delighted by the shade of one particular plane tree that he covered it with gold bracelets and other jewellery. The cruel Persian king then ordered a soldier from the royal guard to watch over the tree day and night. A man of small intelligence, Xerxes made himself look foolish by bestowing his love on a plant, as if it were a woman from his harem.



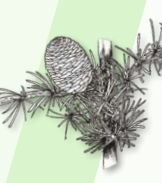
11 THE DINOSAURS' MENU

Ginkgo biloba L.

The venerable ginkgo or maidenhair tree is 150 million years old. It has seen the birth and extinction of dinosaurs, and has never been attacked by destructive insects; its resistance is exceptional. In the spring of 1946, in the epicentre of the conflagration which completely devastated Hiroshima, a small tree was growing out of the calcinated soil. It was a shoot of the maidenhair tree which had been standing next to the observatory until August 6th, 1945! Even the atomic bomb could not destroy it. In China, it is called Y a tchio (duck's foot) or Koung Choun (the grandfather-grandson tree). The latter name is because planting a ginkgo means working for one's grandsons who will eat its fruit.

Oriental treat: Gather the ginkgo fruit as soon as it falls. Be careful to wear gloves, as it is foul-smelling. Separate and wash the seeds and put them in a moderately heated frying pan. Once they are roasted, break open the shell and peel away the brown skin covering the pistachio green almonds. Eat hot or cold.

- *Contact point with the walk:*
From estate to estate



12 THE CEDARS' ARCHIVES

Cedrus libani A. Rich

The ancestors of these splendid Lebanon cedars were living in English exile when Bernard de Jussieu collected some of their seeds, which he sowed in Paris. In 1736, the Royal Gardens gave Baron de Sellon a few plants which he introduced at Beaulieu, near his house. Those seedlings were annexed to France in 1798, along with the Republic of Geneva. Since 1815, they have thrived on Geneva soil, which itself became a canton of the Swiss Confederation. Maybe they will quietly end their days in the European Community... Who knows? This just shows that, with roots in the right place for long enough, a tree can also cross borders... These cedars have witnessed many events over the past two hundred and fifty years. Bonaparte resided in the Beaulieu mansion whilst preparing his Italian campaign. Moreover, the trees are mentioned in the itinerary of the First Pedestrian Plan: From estate to estate.



13 THE PENCIL TREE

Calocedrus deccurens Florin

Originating from California and Oregon, the high coneshaped incense cedar looks like a huge thuja. The pencils used by Geneva schoolchildren are made from this variety of cedarwood. Children enjoy day-dreaming, eyes roaming beyond the schoolroom window; that is well known. Whoever remembers these moments of escapism, the teacher's voice going unheard, also recalls the strong resinous smell of the chewed pencil ends...



17 THE PAGODA OR SCHOLARS' TREE

Sophora japonica L. var. *variegata* Hort.

The pagoda or scholars' tree is umbrella shaped. Of a very rare type, this specimen has fine variegated leaves. In summer, its panicked pale yellow flowers evoke a calm morning in the land of the rising sun. The thick carpets of fallen flowers at the foot of the trees around pagodas are an incentive for the mind to meditate and wander. In Japan, a beautiful yellow dye is extracted from these flowers, used for the robes of the Emperor...

- *Contact point walk:*
From history to modernity and Spirit of Geneva



14 THE OAK AND THE JAY

Quercus robur L.

Peduncular oaks are familiar trees in our canton. Those in Trembley park date from the time when it was simple countryside; but the city has expanded since, and now they are in the town. To ensure its posterity and propagation, the oak has an assistant in the jay. Jays love acorns and an oak can produce about half a ton a year! Therefore, in the autumn, the jay has a wonderful time. He gathers acorns and hides them where the soil is loose. He eats some, then forgets where he has hidden the others. Buried in suitable ground, the acorns can then sprout. A jay can spread about 4500 acorns a year, having carefully chosen the best ones. The jay is noisy; when disturbed, he utters a harsh cry, which is why he is nicknamed the "forest concierge". His feathers are a rusty grey, his breast and rump white, his wings brown, his tail black; his head is adorned with a rounded crest. When walking through a park in the autumn, you can easily recognize this amazing acorn planter.



15 THE MAMMOTH TREE

Sequoiadendron giganteum Buchz.

1852, Sierra Nevada in the midst of the gold rush. In the deep forest, Dowd was tracking the bear he had wounded. Suddenly he stopped: in front of him stood a gigantic tree. He had never seen such a thing before. He forgot all about his bear, and ran to report his discovery. His friends thought he had, once again, been hitting the bottle, but they had to recognize the fact, such a tree really existed, and not only in Dowd's inebriated mind. The giant sequoia is an exceptional tree. "General Sherman", the tallest known is 84 metres high, and its trunk has a diameter of 9.35 metres, for a weight of 2000 tonnes. This means it is the largest living being on earth. Its estimated age is 3800 years. With its 1400 cubic metres of wood, one could build a case large enough to contain a transatlantic liner, or produce 50 billion matches...



16 TRAMCARS: A NEW DESIRE

1832, New York. John Stephenson has the idea of putting horse-drawn omnibuses on rails. The tramcar or "American train" was born. June 19th, 1862: Geneva is the fourth city in Europe to introduce that means of public transport. Opened in triumph, the first line, Place Neuve - Carouge, is today the oldest line in the world still in operation. Drawn at first by horses, then driven by steam and finally, from 1894, powered by electricity, trams linked Geneva to Douvaine, Chancy, Gex or Etrembières... A wonderful network, over 100 kilometres of rail, taken over by the Compagnie Genevoise des Tramways Electriques (CGTE) in 1899. Years passed. One by one the tram lines disappeared and trams were replaced by buses and trolley buses. Soon, only Line 12 was left. But, if you listen carefully, you may still hear the noisy trams in Moillebeau street, with their drivers and conductors decked out in uniforms worthy of brass bandmen, which were not even modern at the time. Today, however, trams are coming back, eager to criss-cross the city. Five lines are on the rails, rejoining their ancestor, tram Number 12 and many others are still to come.

- *www.tpg.ch*



18 THE DANDY OF THE PARK

Populus alba L.

The silver-leaved, white poplar displays an elegance and a refinement garden plants often lack. According to the ethnobotanist Pierre Lieutaghi, it is "the waterside aristocracy's dandy". Light, triumphant, almost provocative, it stands out from its fellows by the shine of its milky bark, adorned with pale lichen and tender moss. The upper surface of its dark green leaves is in appealing contrast to their pale underside, covered by a fine white down. Quivering in the wind, its foliage has silvery waves. A legend gives a key to this particularity. Hercules still had to accomplish the last of the twelve labours ordered by Eurystheus. Before descending to Hades to fetch Cerberus, the watchdog of the Underworld gates, he made himself a crown of silver poplar leaves. During his descent to the kingdom of the shadows, the faces of the leaves which were exposed to the smoke of hell darkened, whereas the sides turned towards his forehead stayed white.



19 THE REBIRTH OF A FOSSIL

Metasequoia glyptostroboides Miki

In 1946, a Pekin scholar compared a fossil imprint, discovered a few years before, with twigs from Mo-Tao-Chi. The latter were identical to the impression in the stone. The scholar was stunned. The living needles proved that the dawn redwood still existed, hidden in a Chinese valley, although it was thought to have disappeared from the face of the earth three million years ago! A survivor from the past, this beautiful deciduous conifer, with pink spring foliage, has reappeared in our gardens since 1948.

- *Contact point with the walk:*
The spirit of Geneva



20 THE BIRCH SPIRIT

Betula pendula Roth

In the Slav countries of northern Europe, each forest has its spirit. A human look, a blue skin, a beard and long tousled green hair: that is the Lechy, the birch forest spirit. He is the size of the highest trees when he grows among them, but turns into a dwarf when he moves through a coppice at the wood's edge. He takes malicious pleasure in leading astray anyone venturing into his kingdom. If this should happen to you in spite of this pedestrian plan, remember that, to avoid the Lechy's spell, you must put your clothes on inside out and not forget to put your shoes on the wrong foot! Good luck...



21 REDWOOD, THE EVERGREEN SEQUOIA

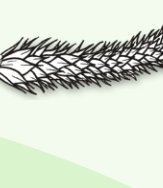
Sequoia sempervirens Endl.

The tree is named after an Indian chief, See-Quayah, who invented an alphabet to transcribe the Cherokee language. As a result, the Cherokee Phoenix, the first Amerindian daily paper, was published in 1826. The bark of the sequoia, or coast redwood, can be up to 60 centimetres thick, an indispensable protection against fire, since its seeds sprout only from burnt soil. Hence the oldest known sequoias have lived through many fires to secure the survival of their species. The tallest on record, in California, is 112 metres high, the equivalent of a thirty-five storey building.



22 MOVE ON, NOTHING TO SEE!

Travel by car in the city often means being stopped by a red light, or being a prisoner in a traffic jam; on the other hand, it is often impossible actually to stop because there is nowhere to park... For example, one cannot park on the Ferney road. In 1957, forty-seven parking meters made their appearance in Geneva. They fed on 20 centimes pieces, which allowed one to park for up to an hour. Since then, these one-armed bandits have improved, multiplied, and sometimes been transformed into multi-armed meters, ever greedier.



23 THE MONKEY PUZZLE

Araucaria araucana K.Koch

The Spaniards discovered this strange tree in Chile, whilst looking for wood to repair their ships before facing the storms of the Tierra del Fuego. The British, who later took the same route, gathered some of its seeds. They humourously called it the monkey puzzle to express that animal's confusion when, assessing such a tree, he wonders how to get to the tasty seeds of the cones. The scale-shaped needles along the trunk and branches of the Chile pine are stiff and sharp and are, in consequence, most off-putting. The Araucarian Chileans value the monkey puzzle's seeds, for they are rich in starch and proteins. Every cone contains over a hundred of these nuts, each twice the size of an almond. They are eaten raw, boiled, roasted or in cakes made with a flour based on the fermented, ground seeds.



24 DOUGLAS' FRIGHT

Pseudotsuga menziesii Franco

Approach the two Douglas firs at the bottom of the park... If you crush a few of their needles in your fingers, they exude a pleasant smell of lemon. Archibald Menzies found this large conifer in Oregon in 1795; David Douglas first brought back the seeds to Europe. In those days, the botanists' work was often hazardous, as shown by the discovery of the sugar pine, described by Douglas in his diary. "Unable to climb the tree to detach the pine cones directly, I took my gun, and was busy getting them to fall by shooting at them when, attracted by the shots, eight Indians suddenly appeared. They were smeared with red earth and armed with bows and arrows, bone pipes and flint knives. Their appearance had nothing friendly about it. I was determined to sell my life at a high price... For eight or ten minutes, I stayed motionless looking at them; they did the same. Not a word was spoken until one of them, who seemed to be the chief, indicated by gesture that he wanted some tobacco. I told them they could have some, providing they brought me pine cones." *D. Douglas, October 26th, 1826.*



25 THE JUDAS TREE

cercis siliquastrum L.

The Redbud is a small tree, with a twisting trunk and gnarled branches. It is also called the Judas tree because, according to tradition, the apostle, tormented by remorse, hanged himself from one. In April or May, the tree is covered with lovely rosy pink flowers, which blossom on its branches and even on its trunk. Then, round leaves appear, a reminder of the coins Judas received for his treachery. The flowers are edible. Put some in your salad! Crisp, fresh and sweet, with a slight taste of lemon, they will surprise your guests.



26 THE WALNUT DRIVE

Juglans regia L.

Common walnut trees are above all fruit trees. When these specimens were planted, the area was purely rural and, at that time, the only dogs one came across were the ones watching the sheep. Nuts can be worthy successors of the Trojan Horse. In 1597, a farmer's cart was stopped at the barrier of the town of Amiens which, at the time, was besieged by the Spanish. The gates were opened without anyone realizing that the farmer was a Spanish soldier, disguised in peasant's clothes. Suddenly, one of the sacks on the cart burst open, and hundreds of nuts scattered on the ground. While the guards were busy rescuing the spilt nuts, Spanish troops lying in wait poured into the city.



27 GENEVA PALEXP0

Geneva Palexpo, a new universe in the center of the big communications (air, rail, road). Here, the tradition of Geneva as city of Fairs and reception is respected since 1981. 110'000 m² of spaces flatware intended for conferences, congresses and demonstrations allows to discover events international as: the horse show, the supercross, the Car Show or telecommunications congress. A way of testing means of transportation varied, concrete or virtual.

- *www.geneve-palexpo.ch*



28 MARSH NOSTALGIA

Nature zone of the "Préjins"

Last nature stop before the highway, this biotope explains the life of indigenous plants and animals. Carefully labelled and laid out, a learning tool on a piece of land spared from urban development, where there is no risk of getting lost... This area is a small space for a Sunday stroll, created in 1987 by the schoolchildren of Grand-Saconnex and the Geneva WWF, with the help of the municipal gardeners.



29 RUNNING AWAY POINT ON THE MOTORWAY

Confined in his car, the motorist on the highway below calculates the remaining kilometres he still has to drive, one eye on the speedometer or the dashboard clock, and the other on the running away point on the road, where his destination is still out of sight. He is far from the gardens which inspire daydreams. This is nature at full speed, limited to a functional layout designed to mask the road infrastructure, calm the driver's aggressiveness, and stop him from dozing, but without distracting him. The landscape is a sham of nature, its limits fixed once and for all, with ivy, cotoneasters, laurels, hornbeams or symphorines, far from the pedestrian's view. On the fenced footbridge, his only solution is to close his eyes and try to pretend that the whirring of motors is the twittering of a tit or the murmur of a brook.



30 TRANSIT

A station... One station follows another... And yet, they have little in common. Of course, at both, one can catch trains, but here, underground, there is a whole transit network for a multitude of travellers. No one comes here just to keep warm. No non-traveller is there except for a few locals attracted by the shopping arcades. Everyone has arrived by train, by plane, by car or taxi... You are surely the only one to have come here by foot. Go down on the escalator. If you come across a passenger with an ear glued to a cellphone, don't worry, he will take no notice. Then, allow yourself to be tempted by the traveller's ritual: a quiet cup of coffee whilst reading a newspaper. This is the time to look around, to see what goes on in a station away from the town centre, and to watch a world of temporary pedestrians walking up and down, waiting in transit to continue their journey...



31 AIRPORT: BAR CODE DESTINATION

Outside working hours, the caretaker is in charge of the safe arrival of all unexpected aircraft. The flock of sheep permanently grazing on the airfield must be chased from the runways by two hoots of a siren. That was in 1937. The first passenger terminal opened in 1949. At the time, one could eat on the restaurant terrace overlooking the tarmac! The airport of 1968 was built further up, to allow sufficient parking space. The beginnings of the 20th century were outlined by the modernization of boarding and waiting rooms and of Geneva's international airport (AIG) as a whole, so as to respond efficiently to the growing traffic of passengers. In 2008, more than six million passengers (in six months) walked onto the ground of the AIG. Henceforth, no more question to welcome the travelers on the runway. Security controls: one might be undergoing a complete medical check-up, while one's suitcase, on a rolling carpet, goes off to the destination on its label: bar code. After going through endless underground corridors, one finally arrives at something which is more akin to a cinema than to the Motosaoche biplane of the Dufaux brothers.

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