




& sa station



Press Pack

SPRING – SUMMER 2023

**PAYS DE GEX
– MONTS JURA
RESORT
A CLOSELY
GUARDED SECRET
DESTINATION!**



DON'T COME
HERE.
THERE'S A RISK YOU'LL
FALL IN LOVE
WITH OUR **AMAZING**
VIEW OF MONT BLANC,
BE SWEEPED UP BY OUR
HISTORY
AND BECOME ADDICTED
TO OUR BLEU DE GEX
CHEESE!...



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CONTACT

Press pack of the Office de Tourisme Intercommunal du Pays de Gex.
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Ne pas jeter sur la voie publique.

PAYS DE GEX & MONTS JURA

GET TO KNOW US

Don't know anything about the Pays de Gex? No worries, you're not alone! We don't tell just anyone about our destination!

But the Pays de Gex (yes, you can pronounce the "x"!) covers a huge area and includes 27 towns and villages over 404.9 km². Together with the Monts Jura resort, there's a whole raft of sporting, cultural and food-related activities on offer.

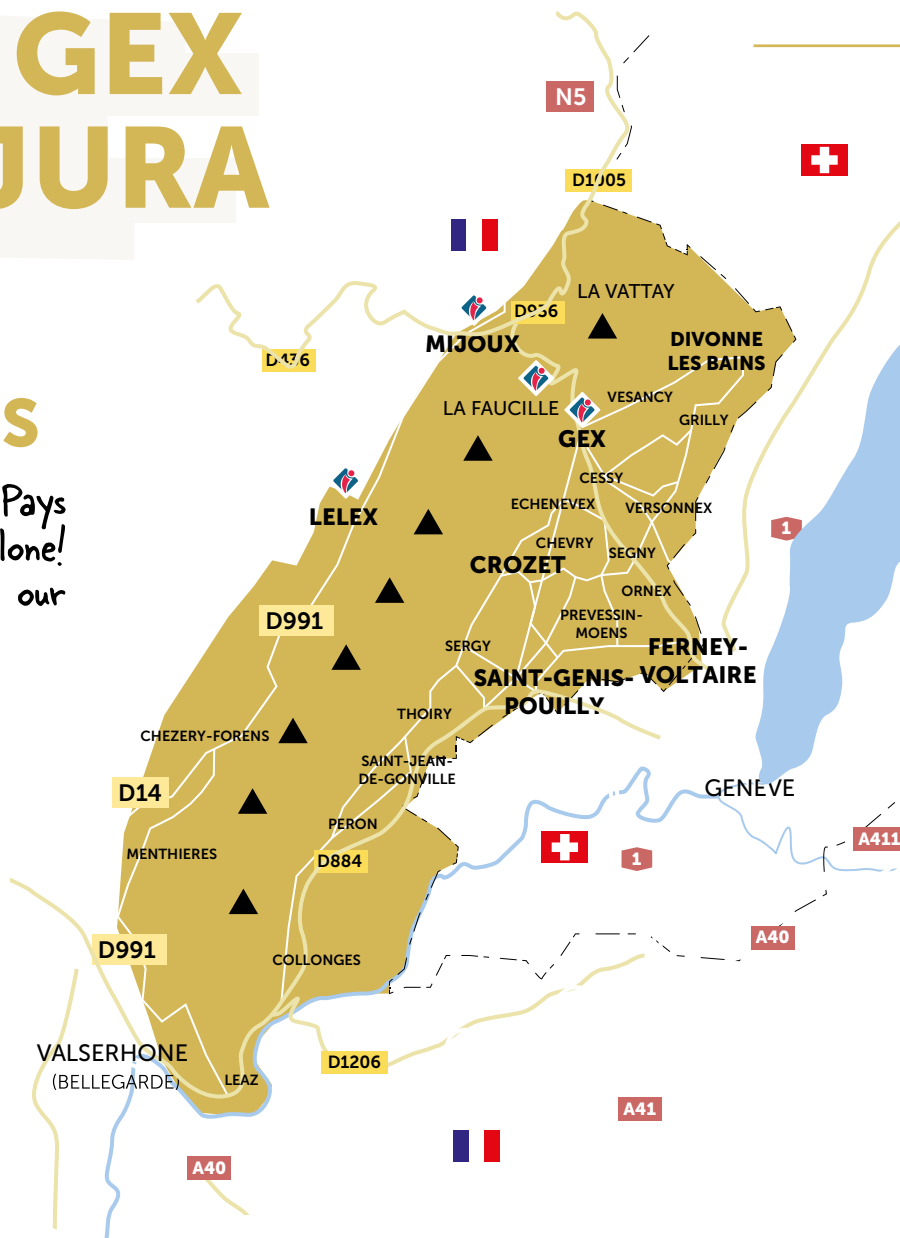
Our destination is home to the highest peaks in Jura, with some of **the most stunning panoramas in Europe from the Jura massif to Mont Blanc** and Lake Geneva.

Located in the Grand Genève cross-border area, Pays de Gex is a cosmopolitan region featuring some hundred different nationalities (yes, really!).

The area, part of the **Jura Mountains Regional Natural Park**, offers unspoilt nature in the heart of one of France's largest National Nature Reserves.

Pays de Gex brings you all the advantages of urban life combined with fresh mountain air.

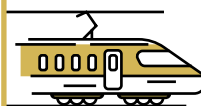
The destination is still a well-kept secret, perfect for an authentic experience in harmony with the environment and far from the crowds.



+ How to get here:

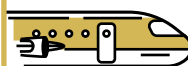


45 minutes from Annecy
and **1.5 hours** from Lyon



Less than 3 hours from Paris by train via two high-speed TGV train routes:

- Paris – Bellegarde sur Valserine (Valserhône)
- Paris – Geneva (Cornavin)



Fly into Geneva International Airport:

- **1 – 1.5 hours** from Paris, London, Amsterdam and Brussels
- **Direct flights (1 hr 15)** from Nantes, Lille, Brest and Caen

WOULD YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THIS UNSPOILT REGION?
USE OUR GUIDE!

KEY FEATURES

The highest peaks in Jura until
1 720
metres altitude

+1 High-altitude salsa festival,
› **ONE OF A KIND IN EUROPE**

+1 sledge on rails
› **ONE OF THE LONGEST IN EUROPE**

+1 zipline
› **ZIPLINE: THE STEEPEST IN FRANCE**

500 km
of hiking trails

QUALITY AWARDS:



1
STATION VERTE
(Green Resort)



6
VILLES ET VILLAGES FLEURIS
(towns-villages in bloom)



8
VALEURS PARC LOCATIONS
(parks with values)



4
ACCUEIL VÉLO
(bikes welcome)
ACCREDITED LOCATIONS



1
AOC/PDO CHEESE

1
National Nature Reserve
will be 30 years old in 2023

La Valserine
1^{ère}
the first wild river in France

9
Golfs
including one in the mountains

18
equestrian centres

1
national monument
(Centre des Monuments Nationaux French government body)



BALCON DU LÉMAN AND THE JURA MASSIF

Spanning two countries, two regions, two departments!

There's common misunderstanding that Pays de Gex and Monts Jura resort are located in the Jura department. In fact, the area spans the Ain department (in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region) as well as the Montagnes du Jura.

The destination is home to the highest peaks in the Jura massif: Le Crêt de la Neige (1,720 m) and Le Reculet (1,719 m).

Get your bearings: The Charlemagne bridge in Mijoux crosses the Valserine river – the natural boundary between the Jura and Ain departments and, by extension, the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and Bourgogne-Franche-Comté regions. The bridge has a marker showing **Ain/Jura**.

Bordering on Switzerland, Pays de Gex also benefits from the rich culture of Geneva. And when you get up into the mountains, you'll get a view of Lake Geneva and its famous jet d'eau fountain from the Pays de Gex.



JURA ARCHITECTURE AND LANDSCAPES

Discover our distinctive, timeless landscapes...

In Monts Jura, walkers are immersed in the typical surroundings of the Jura. In the villages of Lélex and Mijoux, close to the Jura, you'll see **tavillons**. These small pieces of spruce wood, 33 cm long and less than 1 cm thick, are used as roof tiles and also on the south-west façades of houses to protect them from bad weather and windy conditions. The dried, untreated wood preserves the building's façade for at least a century while providing good insulation from cold and damp.



Traces of the past, bearing witness to a remarkable history...

The region is also home to many **alpine pasture** areas and **fruitières**.

A **fruitière** is a traditional, mountain cheese dairy, where local countryside residents join forces to make cheese. The first fruitières were created as milk storage collective facilities to manufacture Bleu de Gex and Comté cheeses. Monts Jura is the **traditional home of the fruitière!** During the 1920s, they were a regular feature in almost all of the villages in the Pays de Gex.

Alpage, or estive, are the French names given to the mountain pasture areas where herds are taken in summer to feast on the abundant supply of fresh grass. Today, there are a few chalets that are still active, preserving the memory of these historic practices from the 18th to the 20th century.

Monts Jura is also home to what's known as **greniers-forts** (fortified granaries). But what are they? These small buildings, covered in wooden tavillon tiles with no windows and a thick double door, are located a few metres away from residential properties. These fortified granaries were built because farms in the Jura Mountains were at high risk of fire with their large fireplaces and external wooden tiling, as well as the hay stored in the attached barn. The greniers-forts allowed precious valuables to be safely stored. Underneath the granary, a cellar is dug to store grain and vegetables. The granary is so well insulated that the inside temperature hardly varies between summer and winter. They were designed to last for many centuries and their orientation takes account of prevailing wind and snow directions. The work of a true engineer!



INDULGENT FOOD

Being in the mountains can make you hungry, but don't worry, we know how to eat here!

BLEU DE GEX

If you could choose just one product from the region, it would be Bleu de Gex.

This blue-veined cheese is sweet and light and famous for being the **favourite cheese of Charles V**, Holy Roman Emperor. It's typically used in fondue, raclette and Gexiflette (the local version of tartiflette).

+ A few facts:

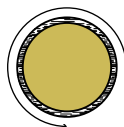


1st

The first unpasteurised cow's milk cheese to receive the French AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) in 1977 and, since 2008, it has had European protected status under the PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) label.



Made from the milk of Montbéliarde or Simmental cows, grazed in the traditional way (fresh grass in summer and hay and grains in the winter with at least one hectare of grass per cow).



Each cheese is 31–35 cm in diameter with a weight between 6 and 9 kg.



Stamped with the obligatory "GEX" mark on one side of the crust during fabrication.



4

Cheese dairies are authorised to produce the cheese, including the Fromagerie de l'Abbaye in Chézery-Forens (the village where the secret recipe for the cheese is kept).



There is a Brotherhood of Bleu de Gex: cheese lovers who wear a costume that hints at the cheese's colour complete with a bell, which is loud but highly evocative of Jura mountain pastures.

TIPPLES

You might be a wine connoisseur, but have you ever heard of “Gamaret”?

Gamaret is a surprising yet little-known grape. An artificial hybrid of Gamay and Reichensteiner, Gamaret was developed in 1970 at the Agroscope research centre in Pully, Switzerland, with the aim of creating a similar grape to Gamay but with better resistance and colour. This grape has experienced rapid development in the Lake Geneva region and is used in the French PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) wine, Coteaux de l’Ain. Gamaret has a dark body with a violet and blueberry aroma.

You can taste the wine at the Domaine de Mucelle estate, located in Challex, the last remaining wine-producing village in Pays de Gex. The estate produces a range of organic wine and includes 8 hectares overlooking the Rhône and the Swiss canton of Geneva, facing the Alps.



Pays de Gex also has its own local breweries offering organic, craft beers. You can attend tasting and brewing workshops.

There are also liqueurs produced in the region at the Distillerie Gessienne using 100% organic plants and fruit.

GOURMETS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

➤ GOURMANDIV'

7 SATURDAY
OCTOBER

📍 DIVONNE-LES-BAINS

An annual culinary event in the Geneva area, Gourmandiv' has been bringing together a diverse range of food professionals for over 10 years and features tastings and workshops. The event has welcomed numerous award-winning chefs (including Michelin starred chefs and winners of the French MOF award), such as Jean Sulpice, Guy Legay and Michel Roth.

➤ SAVEURS & TRADITIONS

10 TO 16
OCTOBER

To celebrate the Semaine du Goût® (taste week), this festival is an occasion for all the restaurants in the region to come together and create 100% local, seasonal menus. This supportive and environmentally responsible festival features anti-waste workshops, tours and gatherings.

Events featuring
the “Saveurs de
l’Ain®” label.



NEWS IN 2023

CREATION OF THE CERN SCIENCE GATEWAY

How about visiting the biggest scientific centre in the world?

Located on the Swiss/French border, CERN (Centre Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire, or European Council for Nuclear Research) is a voyage of discovery into the composition and laws of the universe, and general information about the fundamentals of physics.

In an attempt to keep the public informed of its discoveries, in summer 2023 CERN is opening the "Portail de la science" (science gateway), which is a visitors' space with exhibitions and laboratories open to all, as well as talks, workshops and meetings.

The Big Bang, the unsolved mysteries of the universe, the quantum world and elementary particles – so many questions for the biggest scientific centre in the world (where the World Wide Web was designed!).

A new architectural project by **Renzo Piano** (Centre Pompidou in Paris, Fondation Beyeler in Basel, New York Times building in New York City, The Shard in London and the Paul Klee museum in Bern amongst others).



sciencegateway.cern/fr





RENOVATED JIVA HILL RESORT ★★★★★

THE place to be for lovers of perfection...

This 55-hectare Relais & Châteaux resort is preparing for energy transition and reinventing itself in 2023. After three months of work, the Jiva Hill Resort***** is reopening on 5 April with some brand-new features. These plans were designed to bring green spaces to the fore and reduce energy usage by using geothermal techniques and designing a planting scheme around the hotel entrance. The resort is also refurbishing its Deluxe and Corner Deluxe rooms and Jacuzzi Lodges with a modern design using wood.

All of the resort's facilities will still be available: spa, golf, water-skiing lake, tennis, mountain biking, private helipad, etc.

 www.jivahill.com

2
TO
6
AUGUST
2023

INTERNATIONAL DRESSAGE COMPETITION AT JIVA HILL STABLES.

The best dressage riders are coming together in August at the Jiva Hill***** stables. There will be five international challenges covering three rating categories: CDI 4*, CDI 3*, CDI Amateur.



www.jivahillstables.com



NEW HOTEL **LES LOGES DU LÉMAN** ★★★

Something new for our region...
Shall we take you there?



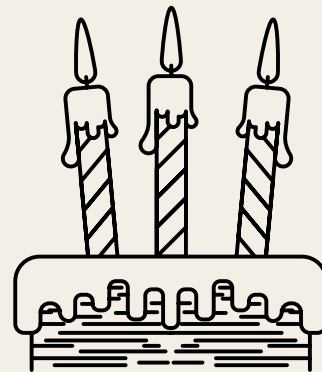
leslogesduleman.com

Brand new hotel-restaurant in Pays de Gex, Les Loges du Léman has a 3-star rating and is set in exceptional surroundings. At the base of the Fierney cable car in Crozet, it's ideally located for a mountain getaway. Set in the Crozet peaks, the rooms have magnificent views of Mont Blanc and the restaurant offers a seasonal menu featuring authentic dishes and some wonderful cocktails.

The facility also includes a gym, spa and jacuzzi®.



THIS YEAR'S ANNIVERSARIES



Time just flies by! 10, 20 or even 30 years...

Happy birthday !

30 YEARS AS A NATURE RESERVE:

Preserving nature's beauty

Most of the High Jura Mountain Range area has been classed as a French National Nature Reserve (RNN in French) since 1993. Studying the Western capercaillie, predator tracking, golden eagle and peregrine falcon nest watching, marking trails and quiet zones for wildlife within the reserve, and public awareness campaigns are just some of the actions carried out by the team on the nature reserve over the last 30 years, developing practices that align with the ecology and slowing the rapid decline in our biodiversity.

→ A day of activities and awareness and awareness-raising events are organised on Saturday 2 September.

To find out more, you can visit the nature reserve's permanent exhibition free of charge at the office of the Communauté d'agglomération du Pays de Gex (intercommunal authority) located in the town of Gex.



www.rnn-hautechainedujura.fr

20 YEARS OF THE THE 'MONTAGNES DU JURA' BRAND

Together, we're stronger!

Created in 2003, the "Montagnes du Jura" brand brings together two regions and three departments. For 20 years, the regions of Ain, Doubs and Jura have been united to showcase the Jura mountains as a bona fide destination in their own right, on a par with other French mountain ranges. This collective of fifteen Tourist Offices promotes the unspoilt nature in the region, where people come to make authentic connections and indulge in sporting endeavours, whatever their level.



www.montagnes-du-jura.fr

10 YEARS OF 'JAZZ'IN FORT L'ÉCLUSE'

For 10 years now, the stronghold of Fort l'Écluse has been reverberating with the sound of jazz every summer. With traditional, swing, gypsy and gospel among the jazz genres on offer, the programme features selected artists performing in this unique setting. It's the biggest free jazz festival!



www.fortlecluse.fr



EVENTS



7 TO 9
JULY
2023

CUBAN'02

*Dancing, mountains, concerts,
cocktails – you asked, we
delivered!*

Cuban'02 is the first and only Cuban salsa festival in Europe hosted in the mountains at an altitude of 1,300 metres. The Monts Jura resort is transformed into a giant open-air dance floor with the very best DJs, dancers and Cuban salsa instructors.

Programme includes dance classes (salsa, afro, rueda) for beginner, intermediate and advanced levels with panoramic views of Mont Blanc and Lake Geneva, plus DJ nights.

Dancers: Jack El Calvo, Tom NKA, Ralph Le Cavo, Ayoub, Coya, Harold Kinanga, Yan El Diablito, Timbalero, Chechyto, Chantal Steiner, Chahera, La Tremenda, Yala, Lilimba.

Head to Pays de Gex and Monts Jura this summer and become an official Salsero or Salsera!



FULL PASS WEEK-END : €65
(daytime dancing + cable cars + evening events)

EVENING ONLY: €15

DAY ONLY: €9



ONLINE TICKET OFFICE AT
www.paysdegex-montsjura.com



JULY
- AUGUST
2023

MUSIC' ALTITUDE

Celebrating music for all!

Music'Altitude offers free concerts all summer long at the top of the Crozet and Lélex cable cars. Concerts cover varied genres, from traditional music to pop and rock.

The festival also arranges "rando-concerts" (hiking concerts) – an eco-friendly sensory walk listening to nature's own music to discover some of the hidden treasures of the mountain landscape, followed by a cosy performance in a mountain refuge.



FREE CONCERTS.

USE OF CABLE CARS AT ADDITIONAL COST



www.paysdegex-montsjura.com



17 JUNE
26 AUGUST
2023


JAZZ'IN FORT L'ECLUSE

The fort is in full swing!

For 10 years, the now legendary Jazz'in Fort l'Écluse event has been bringing jazz to the masses while delighting more seasoned fans. Throughout the summer months, there are free concerts within the exceptional surroundings of the fort.

A perfect opportunity to discover the music of world-renowned, talented artists.

 **FREE CONCERTS.**

 **SATURDAYS** 17 and 24 June, 1st, 8, 22 and 29 July and 5, 19 and 26 August at 8pm.

SUNDAYS 9 July at La Faucille and 6 August at Valserine golf course at 2:30 pm.

 www.fortlecluse.fr



7 JUNE
26 SEPT.
2023

EXHIBITIONS AT CHÂTEAU DE VOLTAIRE

In Pays de Gex, we know how to do culture too...

- "Voyage en Italie sur les chemins buissonniers d'une collection de peintures et de dessins" (A tour of Italy on the byways of a collection of paintings and drawings) – exhibition up to 31 December:

Via a collection of paintings from the 16th through to the 18th centuries, the visitor is taken back in time to set off on a grand tour of Italy. This exhibition highlights the enduring fascination we have for all things Italian and considers why this nation has so deeply influenced the arts since the 15th century.

- "Voltaire et ses amies" (Voltaire and his female friends): summer 2023:


An exhibition exploring the philosopher Voltaire and his relationship with women. The exhibition covers Voltaire's friendships and relationships with various women, including Catherine the Great, scientist Émilie du Châtelet and her niece Madame Denis.

 EXHIBITION INCLUDED IN THE VENUE'S ADMISSION PRICE.

FULL PRICE: 8 €

CONCESSIONS: 6,50 €

FREE VISIT FOR UNDER 18S AND FOR UNDER 26S FROM EU MEMBER STATES.

 Exhibitions open **EVERY DAY.**

 www.chateau-ferney-voltaire.fr

CULTURALS AND SPORTIVES EVENTS : FESTIVALS, FÊTE À VOLTAIRE, TOUR DE L'AIN CYCLING...

JUNE

+ FESTIVAL TÔT OU T'ARTS

Discover street art at every turn during this unique and colourful festival! Every year, this event assembles a series of different performances and activities by groups primarily based in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region.

www.festivaltotoutarts.com

10 - 11 JUNE

+ FESTIVOLT

Concerts, a craft market and food trucks will feature at this party weekend organised by Voltaire's Attic.

www.voltairesattic.com

24 JUNE

+ FÊTE À VOLTAIRE À FERNEY-VOLTAIRE

For street performances, concerts, dancing, theatre, circus and processions, head over to the town centre on Saturday 24 June 2023 for the Fête à Voltaire festival!

www.ferney-voltaire.fr

+ VERSOLÉO

Versoléo has been celebrating rock music in Veronnex since 2017. Rock lovers are welcome to join us to enjoy free concerts and discover bands from the local area and further afield in Geneva and Zurich.

versoleo.fr

+ 30 JUNE - 2 JULY

MONTAGNE EN PARTAGE

A festival to get to know the mountain area! Conferences, projections, fresque du Climat, climbing workshops, market...

21 - 22 JULY

+ FESTIVAL LE CRI DE LA GOUTTE

A dynamic, eco-friendly festival featuring the best that music has to offer in Menthnières. Bringing good times into perspective!

cridelagoutte.fr

22 - 23 JULY

+ THE LUMBERJACK FESTIVAL

The event celebrates its 47th edition in 2023! Numerous lumberjacking competitions allow you to discover this characteristic mountain profession, accompanied by concerts, entertainment and exhibitors.

30 JULY

+ LA CYCLO LÉLEX-PAYS DE GEX

Launched in 2022, the 80 km or 120 km cycling sportive event follows the traditional route of the Tour de l'Ain professional race.

Itinerary: leave Lélex at 9 am, climb the Côte de Lajoux, the Côte de Giron and the Col de Menthnières.

www.lelexpaysdegexcyclo.com

31 JULY - 2 AUGUST

+ LE TOUR DE L'AIN

This is an official event in the Union Cycliste Internationale calendar and this year will be its 35th season. Over a period of three days, the world's best teams will assemble to showcase their talent and determination.

tourdelain.com

26 AUGUST

+ FESTI LIVE

The fifth edition of the Pougny festival is back with light-hearted music and entertainment suitable for all.

26 - 27 AUGUST

+ VALSELIVRES

An event to celebrate the arts of reading and writing. The programme includes meeting authors, writing workshops, storytelling walks and book signings.

2 SEPTEMBER

+ 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RESERVE

An event to celebrate the arts of reading and writing. The programme includes meeting authors, writing workshops, storytelling walks and book signings.

+ 23 - 24 SEPTEMBER

YOGA ET WELL-BEING FESTIVAL

Yoga, pilates, Qi gong and meditation classes, plus parent-child workshops and a Zen market, concerts and talks within the grounds of the Château de Voltaire.

9, 30 SEPTEMBER AND 1ST OCTOBER

+ ULTRA TRAIL DES MONTAGNES DU JURA

The fourth edition of the UTMJ trail running event includes 7 course formats. The flagship challenge is 187 km with 7,970 metres of elevation, starting in Lancrans and finishing in Métabief.

STORY IDEAS

EXCEPTIONNAL SURROUNDINGS AND COMMITTED LOCAL PEOPLE

With its natural park, unspoilt landscapes, environmental and eco-tourism initiatives, Pays de Gex is a green destination!

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE

The Monts Jura resort is set within the nature reserve, which sets out to protect the natural landscape, ecologically important sites and valuable heritage. Most of the truly iconic High Jura Mountain Range area has been classed as a French National Nature Reserve (RNN in French) since 1993.

Spanning over **11,000 hectares**, the **RNN is one of the biggest in mainland France**. Fourth place in terms of surface area, it's home to 1,466 plant species and 205 species of vertebrates. The reserve protects these species, most notably the Western capercaillie, which is highly endangered. The organisation also protects other iconic species, such as the hazel grouse, the Eurasian lynx, the golden eagle, the three-toed woodpecker and the pygmy owl. There are regulations in place in certain areas to help protect the species (no dogs, camping or foraging and limited motor vehicle usage).



rnn-hautechainedujura.fr



LÉLEX 'STATION VERTE' CERTIFICATION

Lélex has been awarded the "Station Verte" (green resort) certification, which is the top eco-tourism certification in France.

Lélex is a mountain resort and is nationally recognised for offering meaningful holiday experiences with an emphasis on authentic, human-focused tourism that respects the environment.

The accreditation encourages the resort to implement tangible, sustainable actions to contribute to the local population in terms of well-being and respect for nature and heritage.

LA VALSERINE, THE FIRST "WILD RIVER" IN FRANCE



The Valserine is an exceptional waterway, starting at its source in the Nature Reserve and flowing out into the Rhône at Bellegarde-sur-Valserine. Over the course of its 47.6 km, it passes through the Monts Jura resort and provides habitat for almost 160 protected species, such as the yellow-bellied toad. It's one of only a few rivers in France that have barely been altered by human activity.

Because of its rich, unspoilt biodiversity, the Valserine was quick to become involved in the "Rivières Sauvages" (wild river) pilot project, an accreditation scheme from AFNOR (French quality standards body) whose aim is to showcase and protect our rivers. It was the first river to be accredited in 2014. Since then, a number of actions have been implemented to raise awareness. The Valserine has created some exceptional sites for visitors, such as deep gorges in the limestone rock resulting in impressive natural structures, including Pont du Diable, Pont des Pierres, Marmites de Géant, Pertes de la Valserine.

LE VALSERINE ECO-CAMPSITE

With a 3-star rating and located by the Valserine river at Chézery-Forens, this eco-friendly campsite covers 2 hectares and includes composting facilities, eco-friendly products and solar panels. It also favours short supply chains, local and regional produce and French manufacturers (mobile homes are made in Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes). The campsite has been awarded the Jura Mountains Regional Natural Park "Valeurs Parc" badge and is committed to protecting the environment, improving biodiversity and supporting the local economy. This animal-friendly site is also home to chickens, sheep, rabbits, cats and dogs and is a bird sanctuary for the French League for the Protection of Birds.

National accreditations Accueil Vélo and Valeurs Parc.



www.camping-chezery.fr



CHÂTEAU DE VOLTAIRE LPO BIRD SANCTUARY

The 7-hectare Château de Voltaire site is part of the French League for the Protection of Birds (LPO), committed to protecting nature and improving biodiversity. This commitment also includes public awareness activities and managed areas to encourage biodiversity. The site has a vegetable garden and beehives. It also hosts the "Fête de la Science et de la Biodiversité" (science and biodiversity fair) every October, with scientists, organisations and businesses from the Grand Genève area coming together to tackle climate-related issues.



THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
VIEWS OF THE
ALPS AND LAKE
GENEVA

*Quite simply the most beautiful
view of Mont Blanc and Lake
Geneva in the whole of Europe...*

On foot, on your bike or from the skies, our destination offers the most stunning panoramic views of the Alps in Europe. Down in the lowlands or up in the mountains, Mont Blanc is ever present.

For the best views, head to the Crozet cable car, the Col de La Faucille road, the Belvédère du Turet viewing platform, Crêt de la Neige, Mont Mourex or Vesancy.



Prenez vous en photo
face au Mont Blanc

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

From the middle ages with Fort l'Écluse to the Renaissance and Château de Voltaire, not forgetting the creation of the universe at CERN, Pays de Gex offers a voyage through the centuries.



FORT L'ÉCLUSE AND ITS WARS

This architectural jewel is unique in France and firmly rooted in its history, but it's not very well known...

For a journey back through time, head to Fort l'Écluse! Built in the 13th century, this fortified structure is a real labyrinth set on 1,800 hectares of conservation site. This is the only fort in France that has two gates (one called "France" and the other "Genève" – Geneva) and its history spans several centuries. It was erected on the mountainside of the Grand Crêt d'Eau (1,621 m), one of the highest peaks in the Jura mountains.

The site consists of a lower and upper fort, with 1,165 steps carved into the rock. At the top, visitors can enjoy stunning views of the Rhône river, Mont Blanc and Geneva. If you're feeling intrepid, you can get a certificate for making it up the steps.

The fort was built in the 13th century to deter even the most determined invaders. Because of its strategic position between the Kingdom of France and Savoie, the Rhône has been the site of many conflicts through the centuries. The "La Porte de France" exhibition shines a light on the fort's history, victories and defeats via 11 windows. The visitor is guided to each window

to contemplate the Pays de Gex, sitting as it does between the Alps and the Jura, through a number of different perspectives, including cartographers, geologists, botanists, meteorologists and military strategists. Distinct points of view showing how humans have changed their way of life and exploited the environment, leaving their mark along the way. The journey covers geography, history, the climate, populations, and plant and animal life.

Fort l'Écluse is also an important site in the conservation of bat species in the Geneva region.

There are guided tours, temporary exhibitions, a via ferrata course, adventure park, concerts, maps and more.



OPEN weekends from 3 to 11 June, then every day from 17 June to 17 September from 10:30 am to 6:30 pm



FULL PRICE : €6

CONCESSIONS : €4,50

FAMILY PASS (2 ADULTS AND 2 CHILDREN) :
€17

**JOINT TICKET FOR FORT L'ÉCLUSE AND
CHÂTEAU DE VOLTAIRE**: €10



www.fortlecluse.fr


THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD AT CHATEAU DE VOLTAIRE

Without Voltaire, Ferney would have remained a little village with no story to tell...

Château de Voltaire is the iconic cultural spot in Pays de Gex, located in the eponymous town, Ferney-Voltaire. Awarded the **French Maison des Illustres mark** and managed by the French "Centre des monuments nationaux", the castle offers a rich and varied cultural experience. The Renaissance philosopher Voltaire lived here for the last 20 years of his life and the château hosts permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as concerts, talks and philosophy receptions.

Having played host to Voltaire, the town of Ferney was completely transformed to the extent that today it's known as "Ferney-Voltaire". Voltaire, also known as "the patriarch", described this previously small, swampy village with 100 inhabitants as a "miserable hamlet", but because of him, it became a modern town with a theatre and public fountain. He created a ceramics factory, a tannery, a silk mill and clock-making workshops. Europe's elite flocked to Ferney to stay with him, earning him the nickname "l'aubergiste de l'Europe" (Europe's innkeeper). Voltaire continued to fight for tolerance, freedom and justice. He wrote the *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763) and the *Philosophical Dictionary* (1764) in Ferney.

Fun fact? Voltaire was a vegetarian and lived a self-sufficient life. Today, there are beehives in the grounds of his château (honey sold in the shop).

 **OPEN EVERY DAY** (10:00 am to 6:00 pm).

 **FULL PRICE:** €8

CONCESSIONS: €6,50

FREE VISIT FOR UNDER 18S AND FOR UNDER 26S FROM EU MEMBER STATES.

 www.chateau-ferney-voltaire.fr



THE **BIG-BANG** AT **CERN**

CERN, the European Council for Nuclear Research, provides answers to our most pressing questions about the creation of the world and its matter. Their flagship device, the famous particle accelerator known as The Large Hadron Collider (LHC), passes through Pays de Gex. CERN is the biggest scientific centre in the world and is a hub for creativity and discovery (the World Wide Web, Higgs-Boson, etc.), playing host to a number of Nobel laureates in physics who work there.



ACTIVITIES FOR THRILL SEEKERS

Sports lovers looking for thrills and spills won't be disappointed in Pays de Gex. The hardest part will be choosing what to do!



THE GIANT ZIPLINE TO DO AS A DUO

Hurting down at up to 70 km per hour! The Col de la Faucille zipline attracts visitors looking for a fun and thrilling experience with an incredible view of the Jura. Two cables means that two people can zip down at the same time. At almost 1 km long, it features an impressive incline, setting off from La Faucille (1,323 m altitude) and landing in the village of Mijoux (1,000 m altitude).

LENGTH: 905 M

INCLINE: 37%

DESCENT: 312,7 M

WEIGHT : FROM 40 KG TO 115 KG PER FULLY-EQUIPPED PERSON (EQUIPMENT: 4 KG)

PRICE: €34

HEIGHT: FROM 1,25 M TO 2 M

It's easier to take that leap with other people!



SLEDGE ON RAILS

(a whirlwind of sensations!)

Speed freaks can try the sledge at La Faucille, which is **one of the longest sledges on rails in Europe**. This attraction features tight bends and inclines of up to 37%! For a comfortable ride on your own or in pairs, this activity is perfect for people who just want to enjoy themselves at their own pace and in their own way.

LENGTH: 955 M

DESCENT INCLINE: 37%

LENGTH OF CLIMB: 410 M

DESCENT: 90 M

5 HAIRPIN BENDS, 1 TWIST

1 SLEDGE (1 OR 2 PERS.): €9

5 SLEDGES: € 36

CHILDREN UNDER 1.35 M MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT.



THE VIA FERRATA

For the most intrepid, the via ferrata at Fort l'Écluse is a 1.5 hour outing with magnificent views of the Rhône river and the Défilé de l'Écluse valley. It's accessed free of charge and equipment hire is available on site.

THE FORT L'ÉCLUSE ADVENTURE TRAIL

This adventure trail is something else! After climbing the seemingly endless steps at Fort l'Écluse, adventurers will reach the upper part of the fort and, at that point, they'll have to start climbing! Balance games, beams, Tarzan swings and ziplines are just some of the challenges they'll face, all with a gaping void below and in the stunning surroundings of the fort.



www.fort-lecluse-aventure.com



THE CANI RANDO

Do you fancy a whole new hiking adventure? Cani-rando is an energetic hike on foot with a dog. The hiker is fitted with a special belt attached to a dog wearing a pulling harness. Little ones aged 2 to 5 can join the hike in a dog-pulled trailer. You can do cani-rando on your own, as a family or in a group and explore the Valserine valley over 2.5 hours.



www.qimmiqaventure.com



PARAGLIDING

For the best panoramic views of the Alps and Mont Blanc, try an introductory paragliding session in Pays de Gex. For seasoned paragliders, there are a number of take-off and landing spots available for free flights. The "Sur un nuage" flying school offers pleasure flights, introductory and improve courses for solo pilots and sessions leading to paragliding pilot qualifications. Instructor Didier Marinet also offers discovery tandem flights, suitable for all.



CYCLING AND MORE

Cycling lovers will enjoy being able to travel around Pays de Gex on two wheels.



➤ THE VIA RHÔNA

The famous Via Rhôna cycling route running from Lake Geneva to the Mediterranean passes close by in the mountains and valleys. The Vulbens/SeysSEL section offers wonderful views over the Rhône and the Défilé de l'Écluse valley, a major navigation route since classical times.

➤ COL DE LA FAUCILLE

(1323 M AND 703 M ELEVATION)

This historic mountain pass has featured 20 times in the Tour de France since 1947. The Col de la Faucille ascent from Gex (10.1 km – 6.5% average incline) is rated category 2 in the Tour de France mountains classification. The route offers a wonderful climb with stunning views of Mont Blanc, the countryside around Geneva and its lake.

If that's not enough for you, head to the Col de Menthières (1,136 m and 620 m elevation).

➤ THE GTJ

(GRANDE TRAVERSÉE DU JURA) CYCLING/ MOUNTAIN BIKING

The GTJ cycling route extends over 360 km across the Jura mountains from Montbéliard to Culoz. It provides access to the Jura Mountains Regional Natural Park and is suitable for all levels of cyclist.

➤ TOUR DE L'AIN CYCLING RACE

From 31 July to 2 August, the biggest sports event in the Ain department, the Tour de l'Ain, is back once more! Top French riders such as Thibaut Pinot, Romain Bardet, Julian Alaphilippe, Warren Barguil and David Gaudu all won their first professional race or came to the forefront at this event. The three-stage race, alternating between flat and mountain terrain, is a must-see event in the region.

↗ MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS

Monts Jura is the perfect playground for mountain biking enthusiasts, with 40 km of marked trails starting from Lélex (2 red trails, 1 blue and 2 black). You can use ski lifts that have been set up for mountain bikes (except electric-assist bikes).

↗ ALL-TERRAIN **ELECTRIC SCOOTERS:**

Hop on a "Ze Trott Jura" scooter and head to the summit of Mont Rond from the Col de la Faucille in a whole new way! A low exertion option, you can make the return trip to the peak in 30 minutes with Mont Blanc in your sights. A fun activity for 12 years and up.

As well as scooters, you can hire Enduro mountain bikes (with or without electric assistance) as well as M-BMX mountain BMX bikes.



↗
ACCUEIL
VÉLO

Accueil vélo is an accreditation that guarantees quality services along cycle routes. It's awarded to businesses located less than 5 km from a cycling route that provide cycling-friendly facilities, such as secure cycle parking, repair kits, advice, routes, luggage transfer and more.

Some campsites, B&Bs, holiday rentals and other holiday accommodation options in Pays de Gex carry this accreditation.

CRAFT AND ITEMS MADE IN PAYS DE GEX

Gemstone cutters, glass blowers, breweries – there's so much talent in our region!



➤ MUSÉE DES PIERRES ET DU LAPIDAIRE (LAPIDARY MUSEUM)

In the village of Mijoux, Trabbia Vuillermoz is the last remaining gemstone specialist in Pays de Gex, offering a range of fine raw and cut gemstones. Visitors can admire the treasure trove of gems from all over the world. During your visit, you can learn more about the craft of gem cutting and you'll get to see some of the tools that have been used over the years.

 FREE ADMISSION

➤ SOAP-MAKING

Nestled at the foot of the mountains in the Valserine valley, the Ferrone soap-making facility creates artisan soaps using the cold saponification process with natural, organically grown ingredients. The soaps are made using their own recipes, endorsed by a medical doctor. Everything is designed to reduce the environmental impact, from manufacture through packaging to final use. Tours of the facility can be booked to learn about the manufacturing process. The on-site shop is a sensory journey with essential oils used in the soap-making process.

 WWW.SAVONNERIEFERRONE.BIO

➤ GLASS ARTISTS

Anne Donzé and Vincent Chagnon are passionate glass artists who share their expertise to create glass sculptures. In 2018, they created the brand "Atelier de verre Anvi" to showcase their expertise in kiln-cast "pâte de verre" glass, one of the oldest glass fabrication methods, and glass blowing techniques. Through demonstrations, introductory workshops and courses for adults and children they share their passion for this fascinating material. Their work has received a number of awards and is in demand internationally. Recently, their collection of glass bags could be seen in the Netflix film *Glass Onion...*

 ATELIERDEVERREANVI.COM

➤ AQUAPONIC FARM

Pays de Gex is home to one of the few aquaponic farms in France. Aquaponics, which is a combination of aquaculture and hydroponics, is an integrated farming practice that produces quality foods using natural methods. This recirculation system combines fish breeding with vegetable growing. The plants can use the nutrient-rich water created by the fish breeding and the water is naturally purified using nitrogen cycling. Bacteria transforms the fish excreta into nutrients that can be absorbed by the plants.

 LAFERMEAQUAPONIQUE.COM



HIKING

With some of the highest peaks in Jura and 500 km of walking trails, Pays de Gex is a hikers' paradise.



CRÊT DE LA NEIGE

The flagship hiking route in our region, reaching the summit of the Jura's highest mountain. Starting from Lélex, the walking trail offers breathtaking views of the Alpine arc and Mont Blanc. A section of GR 9© (one of France's major walking routes), the Crêt de la Neige offers a stunning climb surrounded by rich, wild and unspoilt nature. The hiking route can be extended to join its neighbour, Le Reculet, the second-highest peak in the Jura.

🕒 5H30

📏 15 KM

LE PETIT MONT ROND

Le Petit Mont Rond sits at an altitude of 1,534 metres and is a family-friendly route that will get you up into the peaks in less than an hour. This hike can be extended up to the Grand Mont Rond (1,473 m) and if you're feeling brave, to Colomby de Gex (1,688 m).

🕒 2H30 HOUR LOOP 📏 6,3 KM

*Don't worry!
You can also get to the top of Le Petit Mont Rond with no effort required, using the "télécombi" lift.*

LA GRANDE TRAVERSÉE DU JURA ON FOOT (GTJ)

The GTJ (the grand tour of Jura) takes intrepid hikers on the legendary GR5 and GR9 major French walking routes. 400 km of marked paths exploring diverse landscapes, including lakes, waterfalls, valleys and mountains. The GTJ is also an opportunity to explore other activities in the region, visiting villages, makers and heritage sites. There are 150 GTJ accommodation partners, as well as luggage transit and packed lunch services.

🌐 WWW.GTJ.ASSO.FR



SOME ROUTES PASS THROUGH THE JURA MOUNTAINS NATURE RESERVE, WHERE SPECIAL RULES APPLY.

WWW.RNN-HAUTECHAINEDUJURA.FR

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

From horse-drawn carriage and donkey rides to visiting a goat farm, Pays de Gex is bursting with activities for little ones and their parents to enjoy.

HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE RIDES:

Experience the Jura's unique landscape from a carriage. Perfect for families! A 2.5-hour or day-long wander alongside the Valserine river. Take the opportunity to discover the Equitable farm in Monts Jura, which offers an agritourism educational experience about the environment and working with animal power. The farm is preserving age-old skills and knowledge and developing environmentally friendly methods.

DONKEY TRAIL

You can set off for a walk with a pack donkey at Col de la Faucille. For a few hours or for the whole day, Ali the donkey will take the little ones for a stroll on its favourite paths: Petit and Grand Mont Rond. A guide can join your walk to show you around the Jura Mountains Regional Natural Park and give you a taste of pastoral life with a picnic in a chalet.

 juraventure.com

THE VOUIVRE TRAIL

The cultural nature trail, "Sous l'œil de la Vouivre", is a fun, themed area for families to enjoy. Visitors young and old can track the "Vouivre", a mythical creature from the Jura, on the hunt for his emerald. You'll tackle a series of fun workshop challenges along the way.

The walking trail was put together by local artists and features a number of workshops (including wooden musical instruments, log maze, net course, slides and a safe to unlock).

 ACCESSED VIA LA FAUCILLE.

FOR 3-8 YEAR OLDS

DISCOVERY RALLIES

The Tourist Office has created 5 rallies to help you explore the towns and villages in Pays de Gex: Ferney-Voltaire, Gex, Lélex, Mijoux and Saint-Genis-Pouilly. Perfect for a family outing where you can learn about the different localities. History, culture, landscape, panoramic views and puzzles

On paper or via a phone app, it's a fun way for kids to explore the locations using a quiz and through the eyes of different characters.

GOAT FARMS

Pays de Gex has many artisan and traditional family businesses. These producers open their doors to families to showcase their farms. Children can spend precious moments with animals (goats, kids and piglets), get involved in milking and taste some of the products. Discover authentic products and chat to passionate producers before leaving with a selection of delicious local cheeses.



HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

➔ LUXURY

⊕ Jiva Hill Resort ★★★★★

This 5-star "Relais et Châteaux" is a standout resort. It features two restaurants, four meeting rooms, a golf course, spa, cinema, games room and heliport.

🌐 jivahill.com

➔ BRUNCH

⊕ Domaine de Divonne ★★★★★

This grand 4-star hotel in Divonne, set in 4-hectares of stunning gardens, is located right in the centre of town. In the Art Deco-style lounge, the Sunday brunch featuring a gourmet buffet has become an institution!

🌐 domainedivonne.com

⊕ Restaurant des Bergers

Brunch at the Restaurant des Bergers is like no other. It's an homage to cheese! This is a newly opened restaurant in Ferney-Voltaire to attract even more foodies. Don't miss out!

🌐 restaurantdesbergers.fr

➔ WITH VUE

⊕ Le Bois Joly

Up above Crozet, this family-run 3-star hotel and restaurant has a large terrace overlooking Lake Geneva and the Alps. A must if you want to try fondue, Gexiflette, raclette or some of Chef's lighter dishes.

Certified under the scheme



🌐 boisjoly.com

⊕ Le Yéti

Accessed via the Ferney cable car in Crozet, Le Yéti offers stunning views over Pays de Gex. It's also the venue for the Cuban'O2 festival!

➔ MICHELIN / MOF



⊕ Le restaurant des Bergers

This authentic restaurant in Grilly is ideally located within the Fromagerie Michelin. Philippe Standaert, winner of the "Meilleur Ouvrier de France" award, offers cheese-based specialities using cheese from the factory next door. You can't get closer than that!

🌐 restaurantdesbergers.fr



⊕ La Mainaz ★★★★★

Perched at an altitude of 1,250 m, just 35 minutes from Geneva, Hôtel La Mainaz enjoys breathtaking views of Mont Blanc. Julien Thomasson joined the hotel as head chef in March 2019 and quickly obtained a Michelin star. His solid experience was obtained alongside other starred chefs such as Jean-Paul Jeunet from Jura, Pierre Gagnaire in Paris and Patrick Jeffroy in Finistère. He showcases produce from the surrounding area, such as fish from Lake Geneva, poultry from Bresse and Jura cheeses.

🌐 la-mainaz.com

⊕ L'Auberge de Grilly

This restaurant, awarded with the Michelin Plate, is an authentic venue nestled in the village of Grilly. It offers the refinement of precise cooking and a love of food. Booking is essential, as this is a very popular restaurant!

🌐 aubergedegrilly.com

➔ HOME COOKING



⊕ Pré Richard

Featuring five guest rooms, a holiday rental and rooms in the host's home, Pré Richard is a haven of tranquillity in Gex. The hosts grow produce in their garden and share the fruits of their labour at the table. With stunning views of Mont Blanc, this location is ideal for contemplating the setting sun.

🌐 pre-richard.com

⊕ La Michaille

This guest house in Mijoux is a cosy family cocoon where everything is home made. A dormitory and holiday rental are also available, and there's even a hairdressing salon!

🌐 lamichaille.com

➔ COSY

⊕ Pom'Violette

This new café and florist in Gex is an original space where you can enjoy a snack and buy yourself some flowers. It offers only local, organic, seasonal products. Creative workshops are available for children and their parents.

🌐 pomviolette.fr



⊕ Apania

Food bowls, home-made ice cream and artisan drinks can be enjoyed on the terrace in a friendly atmosphere on the shores of Lake Divonne with views of Mont Blanc.

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