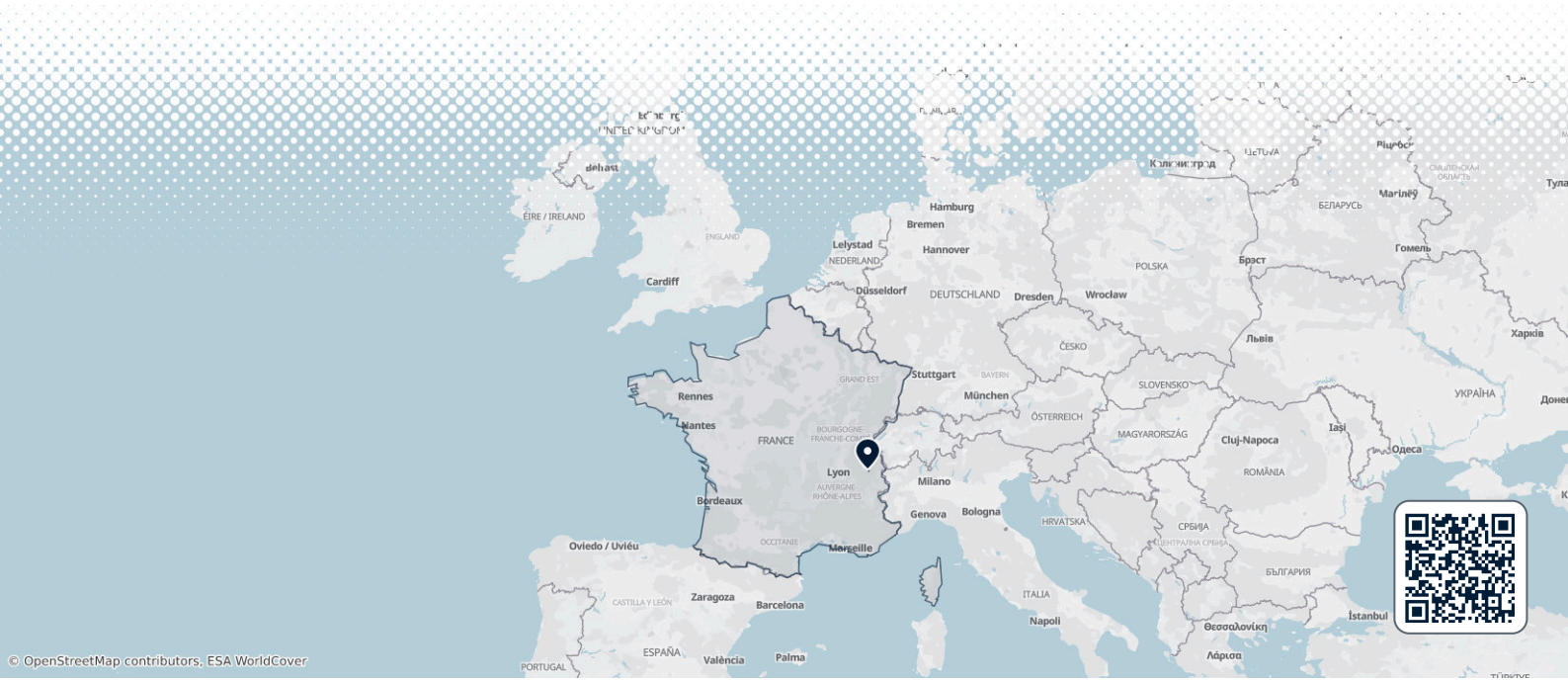


Lake Annecy

Annecy · France

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Lake Annecy lies in the French Alps, in the Haute-Savoie department. The lake is about 14 km long, and mountains rise steeply around it. The city of Annecy sits at its northern tip.

This is a place for slow, outdoor trips. Visitors swim, cruise, cycle and hike, and they eat on the shore in small villages such as Talloires and Menthon-Saint-Bernard. Plan two to four days, and use Annecy or a lakeside village as your base.

When to visit

Late June to early September is the main season. It is warm and sunny, and the lake is best for swimming and boat trips. Early September is calmer and still pleasant. May and June can be wet, and the water stays cold until summer. Winter is quiet, and snow falls on the mountains around the lake.

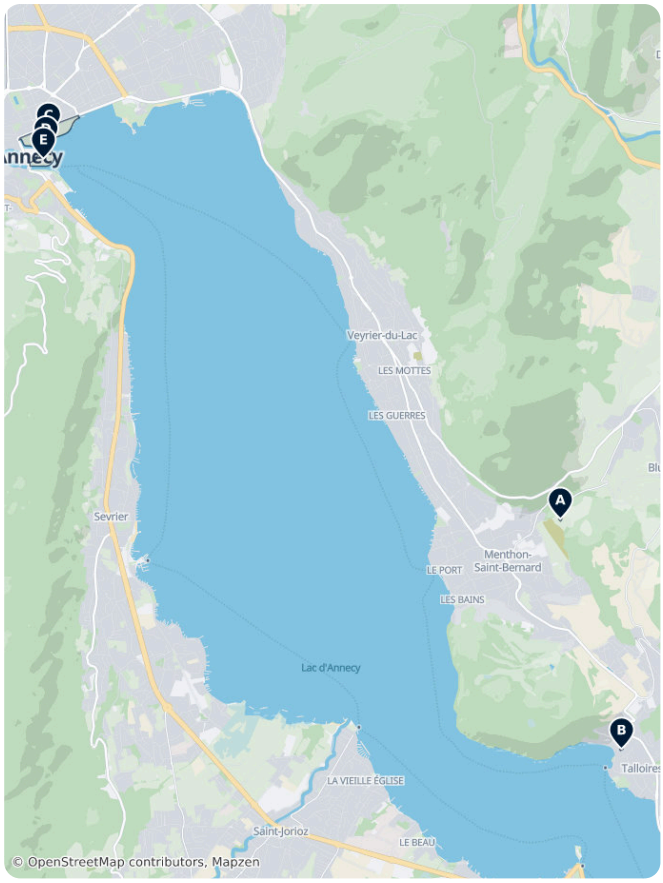
The biggest event is the Fête du Lac, held on the first Saturday of August. It is a large fireworks show over the water. Book rooms well ahead if you visit then.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for watersports	6° / 12° Feels like 2°	-1° / -8°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
February	Poor Poor for watersports	7° / 15° Feels like 4°	0° / -10°	Dry air · Calm winds
March	Fair Fair for cycling	11° / 18° Feels like 8°	3° / -3°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
April	Good Good for cycling	15° / 22°	6° / 0°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
May	Good Good for sightseeing	19° / 26°	10° / 5°	16 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
June	Good Good for sightseeing	24° / 31°	15° / 9°	15 rainy days · Calm winds
July	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 33°	16° / 11°	Calm winds
August	Good Good for sightseeing	26° / 34°	16° / 11°	Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 29°	13° / 7°	Dry air · Calm winds
October	Good Good for cycling	18° / 25°	9° / 3°	12 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
November	Fair Fair for cycling	11° / 19°	4° / -4°	14 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds
December	Poor Poor for watersports	7° / 13° Feels like 3°	0° / -8°	13 rainy days · Dry air · Calm winds

Best months: July, September

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



- A Château de Menthon-Saint-Bernard stands on a rock above the village on the eastern shore. The Menthon family has lived here since 1180. The castle is open to visitors from May to September.
- B Abbaye de Talloires is a former Benedictine priory on the water's edge at Talloires. It is now a hotel, and it is best seen from the shore or from a boat.
- C Le Pâquier is the big lakeside lawn at the northern end of the lake. People come here to picnic, walk and watch the boats.
- D Pont des Amours is an iron footbridge from 1907 where the Vassé canal meets the lake. It gives a good view of the water and the mountains.
- E Les Jardins de l'Europe is a calm lakeside garden near the old town of Annecy. Its paths are a good place for an easy walk by the water.

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What to experience

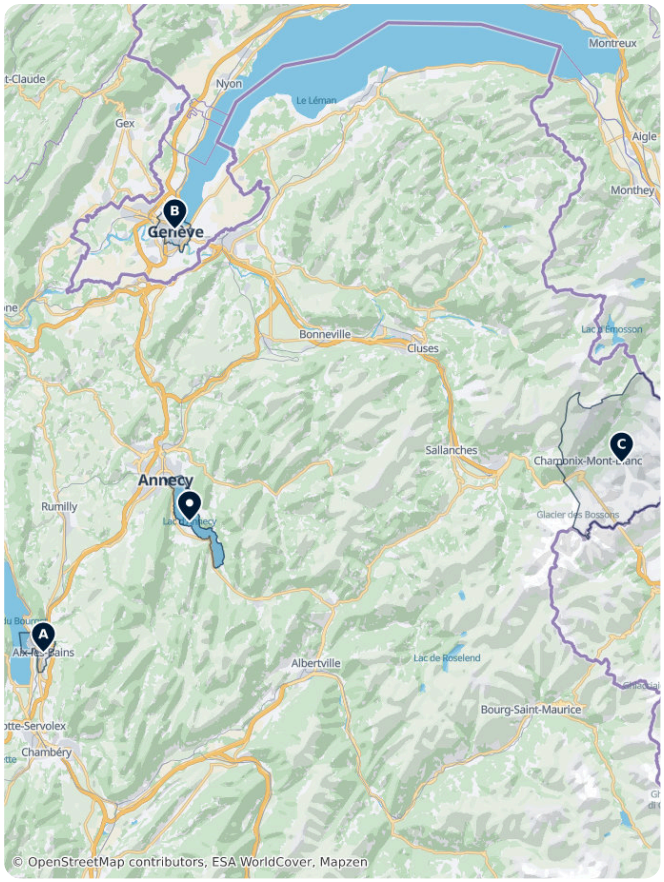
Things to do that are special to the lake:

- **Cruise on the lake.** Boats leave from Annecy and call at lakeside villages. A cruise is the easiest way to see the castle at Menthon and the abbey at Talloires from the water.
- **Swim from a public beach.** Many people swim from late spring to early autumn. The water is cold early in the season, so a lifeguarded beach is best. Paddleboards and kayaks can be rented.
- **Cycle around the lake.** Rent a bike and ride the shore paths. Stop for a swim or a coffee in a village on the way.
- **Fly over the lake.** Tandem paragliding flights are offered here, with views of the lake and the Dents de Lanfon mountains.
- **Watch the Fête du Lac.** On the first Saturday of August, fireworks light up the lake. Free viewing spots line the shore.

Day trips

Most trips here are by car, and a few are possible by train or bus.

- Gorges du Fier: about 25 minutes by car from the lake's northern end. A walkway runs through a narrow rock gorge. Entry is paid.
- Chambéry: about 45 minutes by car. It is the old capital of Savoy, with a castle and an old town.
- A Aix-les-Bains: about 40 minutes by car or train from Annecy. This spa town sits on Lac du Bourget, a bigger and warmer lake.
- B Geneva: about 1 hour by car or coach. Bring a passport, because the city is in Switzerland.
- C Chamonix: about 1 hour 15 minutes by car from Annecy. It is a long day, but it gives close views of Mont Blanc.



Getting there

- **By air**: The main gateway is Geneva Airport (GVA), about 40 km from Annecy. Coaches and shared shuttles take about 1 hour to reach Annecy. Lyon–Saint-Exupéry (LYS) is a second option, about 2 hours away.
- **By train**: Most visitors arrive at Annecy station, then continue to the lake by bus, boat, bike or car. Direct TGV trains from Paris take about 3 hours 45 minutes. Book at SNCF Connect.
- **By road**: The lake is about 40 km south of Geneva. Annecy is the usual starting point for the lake road.

Getting around

- **By boat**: The Compagnie des Bateaux du Lac d'Annecy runs cruises and lake services from the port of Annecy. Boats call at several lakeside villages. See Lake Annecy Tourist Office for information.
- **By bus**: Sibra runs the buses of the Annecy area. Tickets are sold in the Sibra app and online at Sibra. Use its route planner to check lines to lakeside villages.
- **By bike**: A greenway and cycle paths follow much of the shore, so you can ride around the lake at your own pace. Bikes can be rented in Annecy and in lakeside villages.
- **By car**: A road runs around the lake, and it is the easiest way to reach the eastern and southern shores. It is very busy in July and August.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

Villages and the shore paths are good for walking, but the lake is large, so most trips between villages need a boat, bike, bus or car.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

High

A greenway and cycle paths follow much of the shore, and bikes can be rented in Annecy and in lakeside villages.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** For the north shore and Annecy, no. A car helps for the eastern and southern shores and for the mountains.
- **Parking**: Village car parks near the water fill up by midday in July and August. Arrive early, or park in Annecy and use a boat or bike.
- **Traffic**: The shore road is slow on summer weekends. Plan extra time.

Food & drink

Food here is Savoyard. Look for cheese dishes such as fondue, raclette and tartiflette, which is a baked dish of potatoes, bacon and Reblochon cheese. Fish from the lake, such as perch, is also common. These are hearty dishes, so they suit cool evenings best.

For a meal, choose a lakeside terrace in a village such as Talloires, Menthon-Saint-Bernard or Saint-Jorioz. Annecy has the widest choice, along the canals of the old town.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Croissant
Buttery, flaky laminated pastry and a classic French breakfast staple.

LUNCH

Ratatouille
A Provençal stewed vegetable dish of eggplant, zucchini, peppers, and tomatoes.

DINNER

Coq au Vin
Chicken braised slowly in red wine with mushrooms, onions, and lardons.

Beef Bourguignon · Bœuf Bourguignon
Beef stewed in red Burgundy wine with carrots, onions, and mushrooms.

Escargot · Escargots de Bourgogne
Snails cooked in garlic and parsley butter, a classic starter.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Baguette
Long, crusty white bread loaf bought fresh daily from the local boulangerie.

Cheese · Fromage
France produces hundreds of cheese varieties, often served as a course before dessert.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Crepes · Crêpes
Thin pancakes served sweet with sugar or jam, or savory as galettes.

Macarons
Delicate almond meringue sandwich cookies in a range of flavors and colors.

DRINKS

Wine · Vin
France's wine regions, including Bordeaux, Burgundy, and Champagne, are among the world's most renowned.

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Safety & health

The lake area is safe for visitors. Petty theft is uncommon, but do not leave bags in cars at beaches and trailheads.

The main risks are outdoors. The lake stays cold early in the season, so swim where a lifeguard is on duty and stay close to the shore. Mountain weather can change fast, so check the forecast before a hike.

History

The lake was part of Savoy for centuries. Château de Menthon-Saint-Bernard began as a wooden guard post around 923. Saint Bernard, who founded the hospice on the Great St Bernard Pass, is said by tradition to have been born there.

Abbaye de Talloires was a Benedictine priory founded in the 11th century. The painter *Paul Cézanne* painted the lake in 1896.

Savoy joined France in 1860, and the lake became part of the Haute-Savoie department.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for France at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY



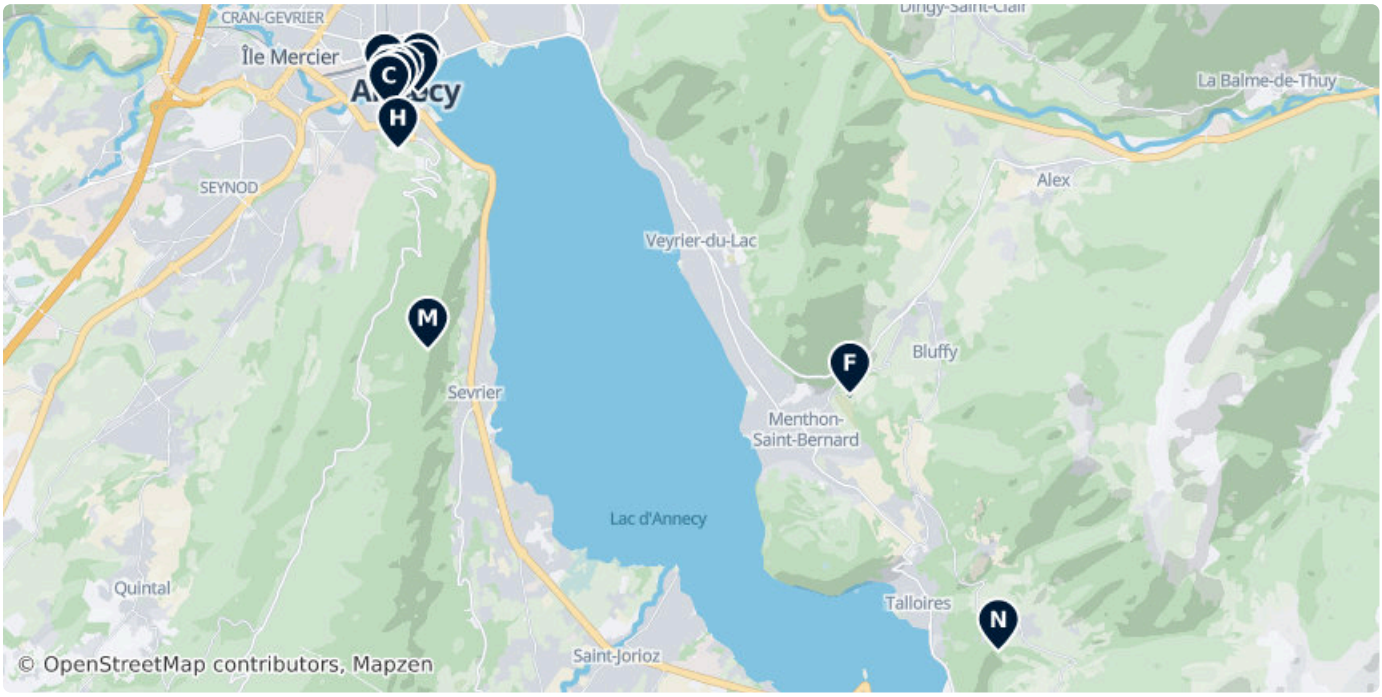
Type C / Type E
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
French

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Lake Annecy's Must-See Treasures

Located in the French Alps, Lake Annecy is defined by glacial waters and medieval architecture. This selection features 12th-century fortifications like the Palais de l'Isle and the former residence of the Counts of Geneva at Château d'Annecy. The list includes religious landmarks such as the 20th-century Basilica of the Visitation and the Baroque Church of St. Francis, alongside natural sites like the Cascade d'Angon waterfall and the Jardins de l'Europe. These locations highlight the region's transition from a strategic medieval stronghold to a center for alpine heritage.





A Palais de l'Isle

A 12th-century fortified house and former prison situated on a rocky island in the Thiou canal. It historically served as a courthouse and a mint for the Counts of Geneva.

1 Place Saint-François de Sales, 74000 Annecy, France (45.89858, 6.12701)

musees.annecy.fr/les-3-lieux/palais-de-lile



B Lover's Bridge

An early 20th-century iron footbridge designed by Claude Grandchamp. It spans the Vassé canal, connecting the Pâquier esplanade with the Jardins de l'Europe.

Pont des Amours, 74000, France (45.90023, 6.13139)



C Château d'Annecy

The Château d'Annecy is a restored castle which dominates the old French town of Annecy in the Haute-Savoie département.

3 Rue de Charmoisy, Annecy 74000, France (45.89749, 6.12614)

musees.agglo-annecy.fr/Musee-Chateau, +33 4 50 33 87 34

D Glacier des Alpes

Artisanal ice cream parlor in the old town, known for traditional production methods and a wide variety of seasonal flavors.

Côte Perrière, 74000 Annecy, France (45.89801, 6.12741)



E Gardens of Europe

A 19th-century English-style park planted on former marshland. It features centuries-old trees and provides a direct view across the lake toward the surrounding peaks.

Quai Napoléon III, 74000, France (45.89913, 6.13103)



F Château de Menthon-Saint-Bernard

The Château de Menthon is a medieval castle located in the commune of Menthon-Saint-Bernard, 12 kilometres south of Annecy in the Haute...

521 Route du Château, 74290, France (45.86395, 6.20349)

chateau-de-menthon.com, +33 7 81 74 39 72



G Église Notre-Dame-de-Liesse

A mid-19th-century neoclassical church built on the site of a medieval sanctuary. It retains a 16th-century bell tower and a prominent front facade.

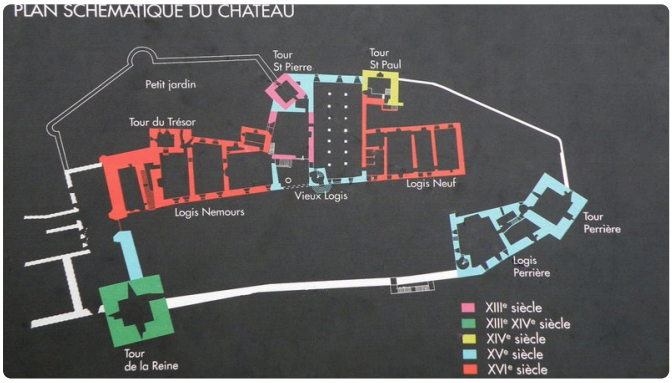
8 Place Notre-Dame, Annecy 74000, France
(45.90005, 6.12539)



H Basilica of the Visitation

A 20th-century church built between 1922 and 1930. It houses the remains of Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Jane de Chantal and features a 72-meter bell tower.

12 Avenue de la Visitation, Annecy 74000, France
(45.89255, 6.12761)



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10 Rampe du Château, Annecy 74000, France
(45.89763, 6.12609)



J Church of St. Francis

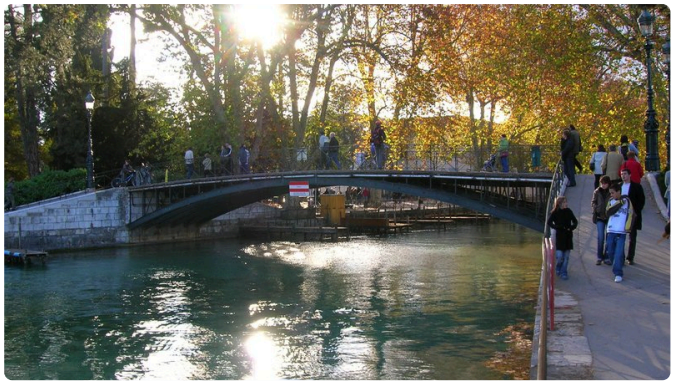
A 17th-century Baroque church that originally served as the burial site for Saint Francis de Sales. It was part of a former monastery and is often called the 'Church of the Italians'.

1 Place Saint-François de Sales, Annecy 74000, France
(45.89867, 6.12835)

K Fontaine

A historic stone fountain located near the entrance to the Château d'Annecy, representing the traditional water infrastructure of the old town.

(45.89827, 6.12620)



L Pont des Amours

Iron footbridge built in 1907 that crosses the entrance of the Vassé canal. It provides a vantage point where the canal meets the open lake.

Pont des Amours, 74000, France (45.90020, 6.13136)

M Croix du Crêt

A mountain viewpoint marked by a large cross on the Semnoz massif, offering panoramic views of the lake, the Bauges mountains, and the city below.

Sentier de la Crête, 74320 Sevrier, France (45.86919, 6.13263)

N Cascade d'Angon

A 60-meter waterfall accessible via a forest trail near Talloires. The path leads behind the falling water along a limestone cliff edge.

74290, France (45.83393, 6.22843)

Annecy Heritage Trail

The Annecy Heritage Trail spans centuries of Savoyard history, from the UNESCO-listed prehistoric pile dwellings at Petit Port to the medieval fortifications of the Château d'Annecy and Château de Menthon-Saint-Bernard. This route includes the iconic 12th-century Palais de l'Isle, a former prison situated in the Thiou canal, and the 19th-century architecture of the Haras National. These sites showcase the region's evolution from strategic military strongholds and episcopal residences, like the Manoir de Novel, to centers of horse breeding and ancient lakeside settlements.





A Palais de l'Isle

A 12th-century fortified house and former prison located on a rocky island in the Thiou canal. Throughout history, it has served as a courthouse, a mint, and an administrative center for the Counts of Geneva.

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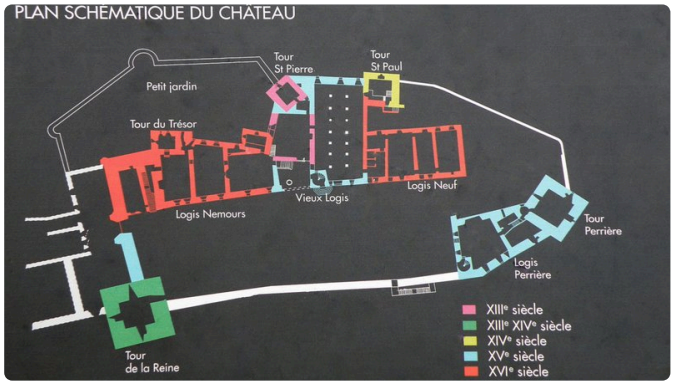
musees.annecy.fr/les-3-lieux/palais-de-lile



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10 Rampe du Château, Annecy 74000, France
(45.89763, 6.12609)



C Châteauvieux

Also known as Château d'Héré, this late 14th-century fortified house in Duingt was built to monitor the route between Annecy and Faverges. It features traditional Savoyard military architecture and stands near the shores of Lake Annecy.

Duingt 74410, France (45.83138, 6.20599)



D Château de Menthon-Saint-Bernard

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521 Route du Château, 74290, France (45.86395, 6.20349)

chateau-de-menthon.com, +33 7 81 74 39 72

E Manoir de Novel

A 12th-century manor house that served as a residence for the Counts of Geneva and later the Bishops of Geneva. The site includes a courtyard, a square tower, and agricultural buildings reflecting its history as a seigniorial estate.

60 Avenue de Novel, Annecy 74000, France (45.91829, 6.13481)

F Site sublacustre du Petit Port

A prehistoric archaeological site consisting of remains from an ancient stilt-house settlement submerged in Lake Annecy. It is part of the UNESCO World Heritage listing for Prehistoric Pile Dwellings around the Alps, dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Ages.

74940, France (45.90486, 6.15476)



Haras national d'Annecy

Established in the 19th century, this former national stud farm was dedicated to horse breeding. The site features neoclassical buildings and landscaped grounds that now serve as a public park and cultural space.

19 Rue Guillaume Fichet, Annecy 74000, France
(45.90484, 6.12737)

We–Su	10:00–22:00

Lake Annecy Outdoor Adventures

Lake Annecy, often cited as Europe's cleanest lake, offers a diverse range of outdoor pursuits. This collection features its most prominent swimming areas, ranging from the sandy shores of Saint-Jorioz to the expansive lawns of Plage d'Albigny. Beyond the water, the list highlights established climbing sectors on the limestone cliffs of Les Grandes Suites and Le Biclop, providing routes for various skill levels overlooking the turquoise water and the surrounding Alpine peaks.



A Plage municipale

Located at the southern end of the lake in Doussard, this beach features a sandy shore and is adjacent to the Bout-du-Lac nature reserve.

Allée de la Nublière, 74210, France (45.79270, 6.21963)

Mo–Su	08:00–23:00

B Plage des Marquisats

A free public beach close to Annecy's old town, featuring large grassy areas and a dedicated swimming zone.

Voie Verte Tour du Lac d'Annecy, 74000 Annecy, France (45.89275, 6.13750)

C Le Pop Plage

A private beach area within the Imperial complex, featuring fine sand and sun loungers.

(Unnamed Road), 74000, France (45.90230, 6.14325)

Mo–We	10:00–22:00
Th	10:00–18:00
Fr–Su	10:00–22:00

lepop-annecy.fr/pop-plage/, +33 4 50 19 19 73

D Plage de l'Impérial

A managed beach facility with diving boards, slides, and grassy lounging areas near the Imperial Palace.

(Unnamed Road), Annecy 74000, France (45.90276, 6.14271)

Mo–Su	10:00–19:00

lac-annecy.com/plage-espace-de-baignade/plage-de-limp...

E Plage d'Albigny

The largest beach on Lake Annecy, characterized by extensive lawns and shallow water entry.

(45.90433, 6.14745)

F Plage de Doussard

Sandy beach situated at the southern tip of the lake, offering views of the mountains and proximity to paragliding landing zones.

(45.79311, 6.21936)

G Plage de Saint-Jorioz

A unique beach on the lake featuring fine sand, large shaded lawns, and a diving board.

(Unnamed Road), Saint-Jorioz 74410, France
(45.84395, 6.17193)

H Jet de la Rose

A beach area located in Saint-Jorioz, providing lake access and swimming facilities.

(45.84254, 6.19030)

I Plage de Saint-Jorioz

Monitored swimming area with sandy lakebed access, changing rooms, and showers.

(45.84417, 6.17271)

J Plage de Menthon-Saint-Bernard

Managed beach area with a stone pier, grassy lawns, and a snack bar on the eastern shore.

(45.86386, 6.18591)

K Plage de Veyrier-du-Lac

A tiered grassy beach offering ladder access to deep water and views across to the Semnoz mountain.

(45.87882, 6.17465)

L Plage de Talloires

A supervised beach with a large lawn, diving board, and paddling pool, situated in Talloires bay.

(45.83752, 6.21225)

M École d'escalade Angon

A limestone climbing site near the Angon waterfall, featuring routes suitable for beginners and instructional groups.

74290, France (45.83265, 6.22607)

Mo–Su Open 24/7

thecrag.com/climbing/france/lac-dannecy/area/14017231

N Les Grandes Suites - Secteur Leçon de Piano

A technical climbing sector within the Grandes Suites cliffs, known for vertical limestone routes and lake views.

(45.87559, 6.19043)

O Les Grandes Suites - Secteur Dalle Bleue

Climbing area featuring slab routes on compact grey limestone above Veyrier-du-Lac.

(45.87579, 6.19026)

P Les Grandes Suites - Secteur Venezuela

A climbing sector offering athletic routes on the prominent limestone cliffs overlooking the eastern shore.

(45.87714, 6.18980)

Q Les Grandes Suites - Secteur Erable

Limestone climbing sector part of the larger Grandes Suites massif, accessible via forest trails.

(45.87569, 6.19033)

R Zig Zag

Climbing sector located near Menthon-Saint-Bernard, offering various sport climbing routes on limestone.

(45.89018, 6.18976)

S Le Biclop

A historic climbing site overlooking the lake with multi-pitch and single-pitch routes on a prominent limestone bluff.

(45.89900, 6.16428)

DATA SOURCES

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