GUIDE TO GENEVA

FOR

MEMBERS OF THE COLGATE GENEVA STUDY GROUP

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY/INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

201 MCGREGORY HALL

COLGATE UNIVERSITY

REVISED FALL 2008
The Office of Off-Campus Study would like to extend its thanks to the students who have helped to develop, write and edit this guide. The first edition of the Guide to Geneva was created through the efforts of F’02 study group members Scott Adams, Kate Beideman, Carolina Boettner, Chris Conti and Lindsay Mackenzie. The 2004 guide was updated by F’03 study group members Trinh Bui, Carla Hickman, Erick Bond, Rachel Adam and Amanda Morse. The 2007 guide was updated by Spring 2007 members Dylan O’Hearn, Jon Byer, Jess Kahn, and Courtney Dunlaevy. The 2008 guide was updated by Spring 2008 members Jamie Reutershan and Catherine Mendola.

We welcome your suggestions and any new information you may have to bring this guide up to date. The easiest way for us to make revisions is to receive a marked-up copy of the guide. So if you’re willing to help, make notes and corrections to the guide during your semester in Geneva and return it to the Office of Off-Campus Study in 201 McGregory Hall upon your return.

Thanks in advance for your help and best wishes for a great semester in Geneva!
PREPARING FOR YOUR SEMESTER ABROAD

First of all – get excited! You are about to spend an entire semester in the heart of Europe with a Eurail pass, access to some amazing people and institutions and a world of experiences before you. In this guide we’ve listed a few things we think are essential for you to know ahead of time that will help make your transition to votre vie à Genève a bit easier.

DO SOME RESEARCH

Some great sources for information about where you’re going to be living for a semester are websites, books and pamphlets. There are a number of great ones out there that are worth the investment. *Let’s Go Europe* or the *Rough Guide* are great resources, and are also good to have around for extracurricular traveling. The Rick Steve’s series is another resource that students have found useful. Talking to Colgate students who went to Geneva on previous groups is also highly recommended for information about traveling, schoolwork and professors. Some pertinent websites are listed below.

- [http://www.geneva.ch/](http://www.geneva.ch/) – News about the city and links to other Geneva-oriented websites
- [http://www.tpg.ch](http://www.tpg.ch) – Site for the Geneva bus system (Transports Publics Genevois) where you can get bus schedules, maps of bus routes and info on tickets and passes
- [http://www.unige.ch/cite-uni/anglais/](http://www.unige.ch/cite-uni/anglais/) – Website for the Cité Universitaire (where you’ll be living)
- [http://www.hostelworld.com](http://www.hostelworld.com) – Information on hostels, activities and events throughout Europe. You can make hostel reservations online from this site as well

MAKE A CHECKLIST

There are many things you must do to prepare for your semester abroad in Geneva. Here is a checklist of things that you cannot forget!!! All these things can be taken care of well in advance – so get them taken care of early; you’ll have enough to worry about at the last minute.

1. **Passport** – You should also make at least three copies of your passport before leaving for Geneva. Leave one copy at home with your parents/guardians, keep one with you (and carry it separately from your passport), and when traveling apart from the group, you should again keep a copy with you but carried separately from your passport, or give the copy to someone who is traveling with you in case your passport gets lost or stolen.

2. **Health insurance, medical and dental care, glasses and contacts** – Make sure that your medical insurance extends overseas (if you have the insurance that is offered through Colgate it does), that you are properly and sufficiently covered, and that you know the procedures for payment/reimbursement while abroad. If you have any preexisting medical conditions, confer with your medical provider about continuing treatment, prescriptions etc. and talk with your study group director as well. Be sure to keep any prescriptions you bring with you in their original containers so they won’t raise any questions at customs. If you wear glasses or contacts, you should consider taking an extra pair of glasses or contacts, as well as a copy of your eyeglass prescription.
3. **International Student Identification Card (ISIC)** – This card is internationally accepted and offers students special discounts in most countries in Europe. Remember your Colgate ID will not always work to ensure student discounts! See the STA website [http://www.sta-travel.com/](http://www.sta-travel.com/) for more information, including lists of places in Geneva and elsewhere that give ISIC discounts. When making travel arrangements, buying entrance tickets for museums, cinemas, or anything like that, always ask if there is a student or ISIC discount! Make sure to bring your ‘Gate Card also though, for reduced entry at a lot of attractions.

4. **Passport Photos** – Bring extra passport-size photographs. These are needed when you get your Geneva bus pass. It is often easier to have these taken before you leave so you don’t have to go through the hassle of getting them when you arrive in Geneva. You can get these pictures taken in the U.S. at any AAA location, and in Geneva you can get them taken at the train stations and airport for about 8 CHF.

5. **Certificate Letter from the Colgate Dean of the Faculty’s Office** – *It is very important not to forget this letter! Make extra photocopies of it as well!* (Also see note under “Visas” below.)

6. **Eurail Pass** – make a copy of this, too: it’s absolutely essential and far too expensive to have to worry about replacing later.

**PASSPORTS AND VISAS**

**Passport**

This will be your best form of identification, especially when cashing Travelers Cheques and making travel plans.

Your passport must be valid for the entire duration of your study group and for at least six months after you plan to be finished traveling, as some countries require this contingency for entrance into their country. If your passport is scheduled to expire less than six months after your scheduled return date, renew it before you go away.

If you do not yet have a passport, apply for one immediately. Passport agencies are located in most major U.S. cities. It is also possible to obtain a passport from a federal or state court of record, probate court, or designated U.S. Passport Office. The Hamilton Post Office accepts passport applications from 2-4 p.m. on weekdays. You can go to [http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html) for information about applying for a passport and the documentation you will need to provide.

The typical processing time for a passport application is six to eight weeks, so make sure that you leave yourself more than enough time to obtain your passport before your scheduled departure. Expedited service is available for an additional fee. If you elect for this service, your application will be processed in three working days from the time it is received at the Passport Agency. Passports are valid for ten years.

**To apply for a passport, you need:**

- a. A completed passport application;
- b. Proof of U.S. citizenship;
- c. **Original** birth certificate, or a **certified copy** of birth certificate (original and certified copies can be identified by their embossed [raised] seals);
- d. Two passport-size photographs taken within the last six months;
- e. Government-issued proof of identity with photo, such as driver’s license;
f. The $55 passport fee and $12 security fee (plus the $30 execution fee – paid separately – if you’ve never been issued a passport before); and
g. The additional fee of $60 and a stamped, self-addressed express mail return envelope if you opt for expedited service

Once you have completed the application process, the passport will be mailed to you directly. If you elect for the expedited service, your application will be processed in three working days from the time it is received at the Passport Agency. A passport is valid for ten years.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Make **at least** two photocopies of the first two pages of your passport and keep the copies separate from the passport itself. Leave one copy home and take the other(s) with you, but carried separately from your passport, when you travel. **If you should lose your passport, your nearest embassy can process a lost passport application much faster if you can provide a photocopy of the first two pages of your passport.**

(It is also helpful to have photocopies of other forms of identification, your credit cards and Travelers Cheques in the event that your wallet/purse is lost or stolen. Be sure to keep them in a safe place though. Another good idea is to leave anything at home that you will not need in your travels.)

**Visas**

At the time of this writing, U.S. passport holders do **not** need to obtain a visa to study in Geneva for the semester. This may change when Switzerland becomes part of the Schengen Agreement. Citizens of other countries should check the Swiss Embassy’s website in their home country to determine whether or not they will need to get a visa to participate in the study group.

Almost all European countries do not currently require visas of U.S. passport holders for tourist visits of less than 30 days (Russia and Ukraine both do; visitors to Turkey may obtain a visa on arrival at the airport). If you are planning to travel outside Europe, be aware that some countries do require visas if you’re going to visit, or sometimes even if you’re just planning to transit the country en route to somewhere else. In order to find out if you will need a visa to enter a specific country, go to that country’s embassy website to research their visa requirements. If you do not hold a U.S. passport, take particular care to investigate visa requirements, especially for those countries you will visit on study group field trips.

**IMPORTANT:** Even if you don’t need a visa to enter Switzerland, you will need to present the Certification Letter that you receive from the Office of the Dean of the Faculty to immigration officials upon your arrival. (This is the one that says you’re a full-time enrolled student at Colgate and that you’re participating in a Colgate Study Group for the semester.) **Therefore, keep this letter on your person when you travel to Switzerland – do not pack it in your checked luggage!** Also, always take your Certification Letter with you if you travel outside Switzerland during the semester, just to be on the safe side. **As with your passport, make a copy of your Certification Letter and keep it in a safe place, separate from the original.**

**MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Before you leave home, check your insurance policy to make certain that it covers medical care abroad. If you do not have insurance that extends overseas, you can purchase a short-term policy for your trip. Your current insurance provider may be able to provide you with information about such policies.
In the event that you need medical care overseas, keep all medical and prescription receipts because your insurance company will likely require these in order to cover/reimburse your costs. Be certain that the receipts are dated and that your name and the treatment received are specified. It is also helpful to note the exchange rate on the day of service.

Pharmacies are everywhere in Geneva and they can provide you with all medicines that you would find in the States. They will have different names and most of them will be behind a counter, but if you ask the pharmacist for assistance, s/he should be able to give you what you need. To prevent the hassle of trying to find your favorite aspirin, ibuprofen, cold medicine or whatever, you may want to bring some of these items along. Many of these basic things require a prescription abroad and are VERY pricey. For prescription medicines, ask your doctor and/or insurance company. Usually you can obtain a four-month supply of your prescription drugs to take with you. (As was mentioned above under “Make a Checklist”, make sure to keep any prescriptions you have in their original packaging.) Again, it is best that you consult with your health-care provider and your study group director before going abroad if you have a medical condition that will require continued treatment while you are in Geneva.

Once in Geneva, the nearest hospital/clinic you can use is Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève, located at rue Micheli-Du-Crest 24.

Colgate University has contracted with a company called International SOS to provide worldwide assistance and evacuation services 24 hours a day for all study abroad participants. The services provided by SOS range from telephone advise and physician referrals to full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance. SOS is not health insurance. For more information, please refer to the letter all study group participants and their families received prior to the start of the study group and to the SOS website: www.internationalsos.com Each study group participant is issued an SOS wallet card with important instructions for utilizing SOS services.

WHAT TO PACK

On international flights there is a limit of two pieces of luggage and one small carry-on that must be able to fit under the seat in front of you. These must all conform to the size and weight regulations set by the airlines, so make sure you check the regulations of your airline before departing. Remember there are domestic weight limits as well, which are lighter than international limits. When you arrive in the U.S. to make a connecting flight home, you might have to pay for extra weight, or they might not let you on the plane with the extra weight at all (so you’ll have to pull things out and leave them at the airport). These costs generally range from $50-$80, but can be a lot more if your bags are really heavy or if you have several pieces of luggage. Take bags that are lightweight and have wheels.

Most importantly, pack light. Most students who have gone on a study group will agree that they packed too much stuff and really only needed a portion of what they brought. Your best bet is to favor clothes that are comfortable and easy to maintain.

Some suggestions:

Pack for maximum efficiency.

A weekend bag that is small and lightweight (yet durable) will be useful if you plan to take advantage of the long weekends. Many students find a hiker’s backpack to be useful for traveling on the weekends and during the break.

It’s a good idea to bring at least one nice dress outfit for the trip, in case the group goes to an opera,
out for a nice dinner or something along those lines. For most of the international organizations we visited, khakis and a nice shirt were fine for the men; dresses, skirts, or nice pants were suitable for women.

Bring **comfortable** shoes (dress and everyday). You will do a lot of walking. One of the best ways to see a city is by foot – and if your feet are killing you won’t have a good time. If you have large feet, buy your shoes before you get there… Europeans have small feet so you won’t find shoes.

A water-repellent coat with a hood is a great option for the unpredictable weather. Umbrellas can be bought at almost every corner in every major city – save the packing space.

Since the study group goes during the winter, a winter jacket is necessary, as well as a good sturdy raincoat. Local fashion would seem to dictate having a medium-weight wool overcoat.

ALL students on the Spring 2008 Geneva Study Group and most of the ones before that group brought laptops with them. Having a laptop can make life much easier when you’re writing a paper – especially when the computer labs are busy 24 hours a day near midterms and finals. If you do bring a laptop and/or printer, you will need plug adaptors for them, which you can get at any Radio Shack-type store before you leave or can be purchased through the Cité once you’re in Geneva. **Note: all you need is a plug adapter, not a voltage converter, since pretty much all laptops can work on dual voltage systems.**

If you do bring a laptop, just remember: laptops are still a popular target for theft, so you need to be careful not only when you’re traveling, but when you leave it in your room at the Cité as well. Always keep your door locked when you’re not in the room, even if you’re just planning to be gone for a minute.

Although the UN Library is far away from the Cite for printing, lugging a printer abroad is unnecessary. It is bulky and you submit most of your documents via email.

If you plan on using a blow dryer, iron, shaver or any other small electrical appliance during the semester, it would be better to buy an inexpensive one in Geneva rather than bringing your own and buying a converter for it because small appliances tend to blow out with converters/adapters.

Many students bring an Ipod. Having one will help to pass the time on trains traveling.

You may need to bring a towel when you do French language immersion, or travel on your own. You do not need to bring bedding as these will be supplied by the Cité and cleaned on a weekly basis.

**Portable alarm clock (a battery-powered one that is small enough for weekend travel is best).**

**Clothing/Accessories thought to be Essential**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book bag / Hiking bag</th>
<th>Jeans</th>
<th>Waterproof shoes, such as walking boots, or waterproofing spray</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clothes that can be easily layered</td>
<td>Plug adaptor for laptop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
<td>Raincoat</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Travel alarm clock</td>
<td>Wool sweater(s)</td>
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**TIME AND WEATHER**

**Time Difference**
Geneva (and much of the rest of Western Europe) is 6 hours ahead of the Eastern U.S. (i.e. when it is 6:00 pm in Geneva it is 12 noon in Hamilton). Geneva does operate on daylight savings time, and it starts either the last Sunday in March or the first Sunday in April and ends on the last Sunday in October. These dates can sometimes be different from the U.S. by a week or two, so it is recommended that you make sure of the times in the places you are planning to travel or call so you are not confused.

Climate

Despite the fact that the highest peaks of the Alps can get snow year-round, Switzerland isn't as cold as most people think. The winters are much less severe than those in Hamilton, which will help save room when your packing. Spring should be quite mild and comfortable. You probably won’t see much snow, but a light coat and a couple of sweaters might be good idea. (*Note: Keep in mind that all temperatures will be listed in Celsius.)

LANGUAGE

Switzerland has four official languages – German, French, Italian, and Romansch – but people in Geneva speak French and English. About 20% of the country is French speaking, based around the Geneva-Lausanne area. Because of the high number of tourists who land at the Geneva airport to explore Switzerland and the French Alps, as well as the high concentration of diplomatic missions in Geneva, English is very common. Nonetheless, trying to defy the stereotype of Americans as unbending when it comes to language is a good thing. If your study group program has an intensive French course prior to your time in Geneva, it will be easy to use French phrases when asking questions and directions around town. If you have taken French courses at Colgate or prior to college, it is useful to review a bit before arriving so you can use your French in Geneva. Although locals might apologize for their poor English, most can speak it very well. (You’ll learn to appreciate this after trying to learn French.) However, remember that you are the visitor, and attempts to speak the local language, even though your French may be far from perfect, are greatly appreciated. Most Genevans will go to English once they hear your accent anyway.

French phrases you can’t live without:

Je suis Americain(e). (I am American.)
Parlez-vous anglais? (Do you speak English?)
Je ne peux pas parler le français. (I cannot speak French.)
Que’est ce que c’est... (What is …?)
Est-ce que... (Is …? or Does …?) (Examples: Est-ce que la gare est loin d’ici? = Is the train station far from here? Est-ce que le bus numero 3 passe par ici? = Does bus #3 go by here?)
Où est … ? (Where is …?)

During the semester you might find it quite difficult to improve your French language skills as you will be living around other Colgate students in Cité, with whom you will most likely be speaking English all of the time. When you have the opportunity to try French, take it and try to learn something.

When you are traveling on the weekends and with your group, language will be more of an issue. Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, and Flemish are just a few of the languages that you will encounter in Western Europe. If your group takes a field trip to East Central Europe, you will probably encounter Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish. In the high-tourist volume areas, people will be able to help you in English, but it is useful to ask the concierge at your hotel for help in finding places because you might not always be able to successfully communicate with passersby on the streets. Try
not to get frustrated, keep in mind you are the visitor and not everyone speaks English. In some cases, hand motions and facial expressions can be useful and remember: a smile is universal.

THE MONEY QUESTION

Local Currency

Switzerland uses the Swiss Franc (CHF). The exchange rate has been around 1 franc to one U.S. dollar as of 2008. Food costs are roughly fifty percent higher in Geneva than in the states. The most expensive things in Geneva that you will notice are food in the supermarkets and food in restaurants. A few examples: a McDonald’s Meal is about 9-13 francs; a kebab is about 7-9 francs (try them!!). Eating out is very expensive in Geneva, a dinner will set you back at least 30 francs. If you’re on a tight budget, expect to do quite a bit of cooking on your own Most of the students ate out when they traveled and bought most of their souvenirs and gifts in other countries because items are fairly cheaper outside of Geneva.

The Euro

Fifteen of the twenty-seven European Union member countries are part of the European Monetary Union and replaced their national currencies with the euro (€) in January 2002. These countries are: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland, Cyprus and Malta. The dollar to euro exchange rate has been around $1.40/1€ as of Summer 2008. When you travel in Western Europe, you do not have very many issues with exchanging money because if you spend a weekend in Venice and have leftover euros, you can use them the following weekend in France or Germany or Austria. It’s really quite wonderful. If you travel to East Central Europe, you will encounter Czech Koruna, Hungarian Forint, Polish Zloty, and Slovakian Koruna but in general, you will work with euros and Swiss francs.

Money for Arrival

You can obtain Swiss francs from some banks in New York City on the spot, and from larger banks elsewhere if you give them enough notice, but you can also just wait and get francs when you arrive. There is a wall of ATMs in the Geneva Airport and at the main rail station, as well as exchange booths, so just take $100 in cash or have an ATM card ready and you will be all set. The one possible hitch with going the ATM card-only approach is that if for some reason your card does not work properly, you need to have a back-up option. That and you’ll be paying fees to withdraw cash and exchange rate fees.

Banking/Obtaining Cash during the Semester

You cannot open a bank account in Geneva because in all likelihood you will not have enough money to do so. Although having an overseas Swiss Bank Account sounds rather appealing, in most banks there is a CHF 17,000 minimum deposit, and in the rest, they are not easy to work with in setting up accounts for such a short period of time. It’s just not cost beneficial for them to do so.

Thus you have three options for handling your money: ATMs, credit cards, and Travelers Cheques. ATMs are the best way to go for most financial situations. Swiss banks do not charge fees to withdraw money, so you will only incur the fees that your bank charges for foreign withdrawals (check on this before your departure, and if possible, move to a bank that has a good deal for this). Be sure your ATM card is on a checking, not a savings, account. For some reason ATM cards with just savings were not accepted by all ATM machines. Any card on the Plus, Cirrus, or Honor networks can usually be used throughout Western Europe. The great advantage of obtaining local currency via
an ATM, apart from the convenience, is that you will obtain the “interbank” exchange rate – what the
banks charge each other – rather than the “tourist” rate, which is significantly worse and subject to a
commission. Don’t rely solely on an ATM card though. Occasionally cards will not work in certain
countries or in certain machines because the system and/or the card are outdated or incompatible with
each other. The network can also crash, you can lose your card or damage your card. In short, this is
the best route, but be cognizant of the fact that it is possible for something to go wrong; therefore, it’s
always good to have a back-up plan. It is no fun to be stranded without money.

Credit cards are good for purchasing goods, but not for getting cash because cash advances are
charged at a (much) higher interest rate that begins to accrue the moment you withdraw the money
rather than from the end of the billing period, and with some cards there is even an administrative fee
for using the card for a cash advance on top of the higher interest rate. Visa, MasterCard and
American Express are accepted almost everywhere. The debit feature on your Visa/MasterCard check
card (if you have one) will work in credit card machines in Europe as well.

As of this writing, Capital One is the only US card issuer that does not add a supplemental charge for
currency conversions. Over the course of the semester this can save a fair amount. You may also want
to consider looking into a card with a 0% APR introductory rate if you intend on carrying a balance
for the duration of your semester.

ATM Musts:
1. You must have a 4 digit PIN. 5-digit PINs are not compatible with most European ATMs.
2. Check with your local bank about charges you will incur for withdrawing funds.

American Express Travelers Cheques are great and Amex offices in major cities make it easy to
exchange them without hassle. If you do take Travelers Cheques with you, photocopy them or write
down each Cheque number and denomination in case they get lost or stolen. Keep those records in a
safe place.

Overall, we’ve found that ATM withdrawals are the best deal for your money and the least hassle
overall. Travelers cheques are used less and less frequently by most European countries.

In an Emergency

Western Union has several offices in Geneva: see www.westernunion.com for details.

There is also something relatively new offered by AAA called a Cash Passport. It is a Visa card that
can be purchased at an AAA office or on the Internet and mailed safely overseas because it requires a
PIN and password to activate (which your parents can tell you if they are the ones that buy it). It
operates like a gift card; that is, you start with a fixed amount of money on the card and the remaining
balance declines as you make purchases. The card can be set up so that it is attached to a bank account
and more money can be added to the card from that account via the Internet or a toll-free phone call.
Go to www.aaa.com and look up AAA Travel Money for more information.

Planning a Budget: Typical Costs

Switzerland is expensive. It is almost impossible to judge ahead of your arrival what costs will be.
You will receive a cost estimate of expenses for your study group based on the reported expenditures
of participants in last year’s group, but fluctuations in exchange rates and the Swiss cost-of-living can
drive those estimates off the mark. The best advice is to be careful in your spending.

Books
On way to get your books for the semester is to order them through Amazon.com and have them sent
to your Geneva address. Be sure to do this as soon as possible after you get the list to be sure that they
all arrive in Geneva on time. (Overseas shipping takes longer.) However, the Colgate Bookstore will also do its usual ordering – all of the Spring ’08 group did this.

Internet
The Cité’s internet access is extremely unreliable and often slow. It is also very expensive (180F for three months). It is functional, but works best when there are few other people using it. There are public access computers downstairs in the Cité which cost 79F for ten hours of use (ask about promotional deals). However, you can also get online at the United Nations Library and at different cyber cafés; one can be found close to the Gare de Cornavin (which is the train station right in the middle of the city). There is also a “ville de geneve” wireless network that works at various places through the city- in the middle of the park, or at the Starbucks near the Gare. This free internet won’t work at the Cité, however.

If possible, bring a laptop with you! Though computer access is possible through internet cafes and the UN, e-mail and Skype proved very useful as a means of arranging travel plans and communicating with friends and family at home as well as other group members. If you absolutely do not have access to a laptop, there is the possibility of renting a computer in Geneva. There are some plugs in certain trains where you can plug in your computer, although it’s not recommended for you to travel with a computer for short weekend trips.

Entertainment
For those who can afford it, there is a lively night scene in Geneva. You probably want to include going out to pubs/bars in your budget, but keep in mind that European drinking habits are quite different from those you may encounter at Colgate. Behavior that might be considered normal at the Jug or walking down Broad Street will likely get you funny looks at the least, and possibly more severe forms of negative attention in Geneva and elsewhere in Europe. Drinks are not cheap in Geneva and most of the dance clubs have a substantial cover charge.

Food
In Geneva, you have four main places to shop for food:

1. **Coop** is a Swiss supermarket chain that has the best produce around. The closest one to the Cité is on Route de Florisant. Ask John Donnelly for directions.
2. **Manor** is a large store that sells everything. It is discussed in further detail later in this guide, but the bottom floor is a supermarket and a bakery with great take-away options. It is in downtown Geneva. (Be sure to sample the pain au chocolat and check out their selection of chocolate!)
3. **Migros** is another Swiss supermarket chain and the least expensive in general. There are two locations near the Cité. Again, ask John for directions. One is on the #3 bus line at Plateau de Champel (just get on the bus or walk down Avenue de Miremont until you get to Plateau de Champel). The other is on the corner of Route de Florisant and Avenue Louis Albert. (We recommend you try the excellence yogurt and farmer croc granola.)
4. There is a small market on the first floor of “Bâtiment B” in the Cité called the Bodega. This is great for Sundays when nothing is open except this little store, but it is extremely overpriced, so you may want to avoid buying things there if at all possible. The train station’s convenience store is also open Sundays when you come home from weekend trips, but again, is far overpriced.

Another option that you have is to go to France, where you can save up to 30-40% on food prices. If you want meat or cheese, this is the place to stock up. The best way to do this is to take the #3 bus to Cornavin and then take the “F” bus that goes to Ferney. The “F” bus goes up to the UN and then goes through a small tunnel at the end of which is the French border check. Chances are you will not get checked at the border, but make sure you have your passport or a photocopy of it just in case. The bus will go through the plaza and you will get off two stops later. The stop is called “Brunette.”
you get off the bus, look down the street and you will see a sign that says “Hyper Champion.” It is about a five minute walk to the front doors because you have to wind around some stores, but it is easy to find. If you take a backpack to facilitate carrying your purchases back to Geneva, you must leave it at the front desk of the store. Ask Professor Krause for clarifications but this is a great option. Wine is unbelievably cheap in France as well (even 1 euro/bottle if you’re not picky.)

Mail
To send a letter, there is an automatic stamp machine in the lobby, where you can buy stamps and mail letters at the same time. A non-priority letter costs 1.40 francs to send, and priority mail costs 1.80 francs. It is more convenient to pay the extra 40 cents since the mail gets there within a week, as opposed to about 2 months for non-priority.

To receive mail, you have your own box number, which is the same number as the room you are in. Your address will be:

Name
Cité Universitaire de Genève ____ (room number)
46 Ave. de Miremont
CH – 1206, Genève
SUISSE

Phones
The direct-dial access code to call the U.S. from Switzerland is 001, followed by the area code and number.

To call Switzerland from the U.S., one must dial 011 41 22 and then the number. (The first three digits are to get an international line; the next two are the country code for Switzerland and the final two are the city code for Geneva.) Usually telephone numbers will have a “0” as the first digit of the number (an example: 022 839 22 22). If someone is calling from outside of Switzerland they should drop the “0” when dialing.

You will not have your own telephone line in your room. There is a phone on each floor to receive calls, so the reception desk can tell you that number. Usually, someone on the floor will answer the phone if it rings (it all depends on whether you know the other people living on your floor or not). Be aware that the stalls with the phones close at midnight (or a few minutes before), but you can give these numbers to potential employers for phone interviews.

More and more students are opting to buy cell phones. They are convenient to have for emergencies and for people to call you but you must understand that the European system for cell phones is much different from that of the U.S. There is no such thing as unlimited night and weekend minutes! You pay for every single minute that you use to make a call, but incoming calls are usually for free. So your parents and friends can call you and it won’t use up any of your minutes; however, it will cost them money, and calling to an international cell phone can be extremely expensive.

Cell Phones
All European cell phones use the GSM standard, which about half of American carriers use. If your cell phone is from either AT&T or T-Mobile, it will work in Europe. You can either get an international plan for your phone, or get a SIM card from a European carrier. Some Verizon phones are “World Edition” and will work abroad, but most are not. Before you go, take your phone to the store to verify that it is “unlocked.” An “unlocked” phone will allow you to put different SIM cards in the phone, a “locked” phone will not.
Getting a SIM Card is not at all difficult. Most shopping areas will have a store that sells SIMs. Your best bet is to get a pre-paid plan. You are not going to be in Europe long enough to enter into a contract. If you buy your SIM in Switzerland (unsure about the policies in the EU), make sure you have ID with you, preferably your Passport. Under anti-terrorism laws, they are required to make photocopies of your information.

Many of the 2008 group members bought the phones and SIM cards through Telestial before going to Europe (www.telestial.com). The company has a variety of phones, packages, and plans.

It's recommended that you set up a Skype account before you go abroad (www.skype.com). Skype is a program that allows you to make international calls with your computer much more cheaply than cell phone or landline options. If your computer is not equipped with one, you will need to buy a microphone for your computer in order to use Skype.

If you opt not to purchase a cell phone, then the best way to call anywhere in the world is to buy phone cards. A selection of cards is available for purchase at the reception desk of the Cité. You can buy a 10 franc or a 20 franc card; the 20 franc card allows you to talk for up to 4 hours and 10 minutes depending on where you call, which is very reasonable. There are certain phones around the Cité where you can make outside calls.

The best card to buy is the “Flash” Calling Card which can be purchased at the kiosk at the train station (where magazines and newspapers are sold) and also at some post offices. Flash offers the highest number of minutes per franc and does not have a high surcharge for each call made. The phone cards sold at the Cité are sold for 5-20 francs but do not contain as many minutes as “Flash” does. When traveling outside of Switzerland, it is most convenient to buy a calling card for that country but it is less cost efficient if you’ll only be staying there for a short amount of time. You can purchase an international phone card online at www.nobelcom.com with a credit card. You can call from any country to any country and the rates are very fair.

Travel
Geneva is a great place to travel from since it is centrally located in Europe and there are easy ways to travel from the city. The first thing that you need to travel on the Geneva Study Group is a Eurail pass. This pass is required for the program field trip travel, and part of the cost is covered by Colgate. You can get the pass extended for another month (at your own cost) depending on the amount of traveling you think you are going to be doing. If you plan to travel a lot at the beginning and end of the trip then it would be a good idea to extend your pass, which can be done at the train station in Geneva if you don’t get it done before you leave the U.S. Remember to take this cost into account when planning your budget.

ONCE YOU’RE IN GENEVA

ARRIVAL

When you arrive in Geneva, you would probably be tired from all the traveling, but do not worry because both the airport and the main train station at Cornavin are close to the Cité. You might want to exchange money or get some money from the ATM machines. The best way to get to the Cité is by taking a taxi (if you travel with the group, you can split a taxi with other people). If the taxi driver does not recognize the address, you can tell him/her that it is located in Crets-de-Champel, which will
help to give the driver a general idea of where it is. You will find the taxi to be pricey, but keep in mind that pretty much everything is expensive in Geneva and the convenience of taking a taxi and not having to deal with public transportation with all your luggage when you’re not familiar with the city or the bus system yet is potentially worth the cost. The Spring 2008 group managed to take the bus for their move-in and move-out, and since they were all together, it was more manageable and less risky.

ACCOMMODATION: THE CITÉ

The Cité is a group of buildings that house students who attend the University of Geneva and other area institutions. The Cité itself consists of two main buildings, A and B. The main reception and restaurant are in Building A and the small grocery store and “disco” (Arcade 46) are in Building B (the buildings are connected by a hallway that is open during the day). Colgate students are mainly grouped together, but depending on availability some are in separate halls or even buildings.

John Donnelly is the contact person in the Cité most familiar with the Colgate program (and he is Irish, so don’t worry about speaking French). John will be able to give you good maps of Geneva, and he will always help you out when you need to go somewhere. He can also give you a bus map, which is extremely useful to have.

In the Cité you can also find booklets of different activities that are going on in Geneva. One of the best ones is the “Agenda de Genève,” where you will be able to find information on exhibits, shows, movies, etc.

Deposits
When you arrive you will be asked to pay a number of deposits – for your room key (50 francs), kitchen key (10 francs), Internet box and laundry card. These deposits will be returned to you when you leave, provided you haven’t lost or damaged any of the items.

Kitchen
There is a small kitchen in each hallway with 4 stovetop elements, a sink and a microwave or toaster oven, and shelf and counter space. The director of the spring 2008 group purchased cookware for the group and left it packed in boxes at the Cité for the next group’s use. The boxes are marked “Colgate University,” so upon arrival, speak to John Donnelly for help in locating them. Also – it is likely there will be ‘community dishware’ on the floor – just make sure to check with someone who has been living there for a while to make sure you aren’t using someone else’s dishes.

Although you certainly don’t have to, we suggest that you divide into cooking groups of 4-6 people when you arrive in Geneva. The best way that we found to divide up the groups was to have one or two people cook dinner for the rest of the group each night of the week and leave weekends free. This saves time preparing and shopping for food and generally makes the quality of the meals better because each person doesn’t have to cook as often.

Laundry
Laundry is a bit of an adventure at the Cité. It’s best to ask someone to show you how the machines work the first time. There are 3 washers and dryers per building (sometimes is takes a while for one to become available, and Sunday nights are always busy). In order to use the machines you need a key to the room they are located in (a twenty franc deposit at the front desk) and you need a card (it can be filled at the front desk and works like a photocopy card). You are only allowed the keys for 2 hours; if you keep them longer you may not get your deposit back.

Dryers in Europe are different than those at home. In an effort to save electricity, the dryers do not dry your clothes so much as they warm them up. Be prepared to hang some laundry in your room to dry,
Rooms
All of the dorms are comfortable singles and have a twin bed, desk, pull-out table, sink, closet and lots of shelf space. We recommend bringing some decorations to make the place a little more livable as the brown curtains and blankets and shelves can get a little ugly. Bedding and a pillow are provided for you. Once a week the cleaners change your sheets and tidy your room. This may be done in the early morning hours when you are sleeping … if do not want this service on a particular week leave a note with “Pas de ménage” on your door. Showers and toilets are in separate rooms in the hallway. Lock your door at all times. Security is very lax and theft can be an aggravating and serious issue.

Other facilities
There is a reading room located on the 13th floor of Building A (be sure to go up there for the view). It’s a nice place to do homework and there are English newspapers and magazines which are replaced regularly. There are also a number of classrooms in both buildings where you can do work. There is a TV room in both buildings though they are usually being used and on French channels. All of the public rooms (reading, TV, classrooms) close at midnight.

EATING OUT
There are a lot of opportunities to eat out in Geneva. Geneva is a very multicultural town, so any type of ethnic food you want will be there. There is a section of town near the train station called the Paquis that has many great restaurant choices. The one problem with eating out is that it is VERY expensive. You can expect any meal to be about 30-35 CHF or 23-26 USD. It is recommended that you use your group activities funds to go to at least one group dinner in Geneva so you have the opportunity to eat the great food without breaking your personal budget. Be sure to ask Professor Krause for restaurant suggestions, he knows all the good spots!

Lunches are easier and less expensive than dinners. Manor, the large department store near the train station, has a supermarket in the bottom and also sells sandwiches, hot dogs, pizza and rolls which are very inexpensive and make great lunches/snacks. They bake fresh croissants and breads everyday, so this is also a great place to pick up breakfast on your way to Professor Krause’s class!

HEALTH CLUBS/FITNESS ACTIVITIES
With regard to fitness, unfortunately, health clubs are very expensive in Geneva. There is a very small gym behind the tennis courts at the Cité. You have to go through a 2 hour training (in French) to use it and it costs about 100 Swiss francs to join. A better alternative is to take a good pair of sneakers and go running along the Arve River on the trail system there. From the Cité, take a left on Avenue Louis Albert, go down the long hill to the sports complex, take a left, cross the bridge and go down the stairs to the running trails. This is a beautiful place to go running and there are always lots of people down there. Another good option is swimming. There is a pool near the UIT on the 8 and 11 bus routes. Ask John if you need help with these places.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS AND ADDRESSES

Fire
Dial 118

Hôpitaux Universitaires de Genève Emergency Phone Numbers and addresses:
- For general emergencies (ambulance and “cardiomobile”)
Dial 144

- Centre d'Accueil et d'Urgences (CAU)
rue Micheli du Crest 24,
1211 Genève 14
Tel: 022 / 372 81 20

- Emergencies of a gynecological nature
Boulevard de la Cluse 30
1211 Genève 14
Tel: 022 / 382 68 16

- Eye emergencies
Tel: 022 / 382 84 00

- Psychiatric emergencies
Tel: 022 / 372 38 62

Pharmacies
To see a weekly schedule of which pharmacies in Geneva are open late, along with their addresses, phone numbers, and maps of their locations, go to http://www.pharmacies-geneve.ch/cad_gardes.html

Poison Control
Dial 145

Police
Dial 117

RESEARCH FACILITIES

Trying to do research for a paper in Geneva can be challenging. Give yourself more time than you typically need at Colgate to gather information and research materials. None of the libraries (except the ICRC) will allow you to take out books so you’ll have to photocopy (and pay for the copies) whatever you want to take with you. Each library has its own system. The UN is fairly complicated: you have to find the book you are looking for in the computer system, and then fill out a request form for that book. You can only request three books at once. Once you fill out the form you have to wait until later in the afternoon or the next day for the librarians to get the books for you. Once you get the books, decide if they are what you are looking for and then photocopy what you need and return the books so that you can request another three. You may print twenty pages at a time at the UN library, though no one really checks. At the HEI library (located in the WTO building) you find your books yourself and may photocopy them with a card (like at Colgate). The selection of books is fair, though the majority is in French. If your topic relates to the ICRC or humanitarian issues the ICRC library is quite helpful. The librarians there are very friendly and you are allowed to take books out. Printing there is free for the first 10 pages and 10 centimes per page after that.

SHOPPING

As it would be expected in Geneva, shopping for clothing is really expensive. H&M, Benetton, and Zara can be found in different parts of the city. Manor is the department store where you can find everything you need for a reasonable price; this is where you can buy your pots, dishes, silverware,
etc. There is an American Store in the Paquis, where you can buy some American foods if you feel you need a little taste of home, but it’s ridiculously expensive. For school supplies, try to bring your notebooks with you, since they are extremely expensive (about 8 dollars per notebook) and European notebooks all have graph paper instead of lined pages. To buy an adaptor, Fnac and Interdiscount are good stores where you can find electrical gadgets. Globus is a more expensive department store, and it’s a nice place to just wander around without buying anything. When buying clothing, you might find that the sizes are different and that the Europeans have a different body shape, so that might be a problem for some people too.

NIGHT SPOTS

- Club 46 (in the Cité’s basement) – Enter at your own risk! Creepier than the Jug.
- Mr. Pickwick Pub (good for all sporting events and Monday night trivia/poker)
- Spring Brothers (in the old town)
- Platinum Club
- Java (very difficult to get into and expensive – but if you can, great DJ sets)
- Spring Party Weekend (located in Place Neuve)

TOURIST SITES AND ATTRACTIONS

- **Old Town:**
  - The Cathedral
  - Calvin’s chapel
  - The Museum of Art and History (Some good paintings and ancient Roman and Eastern artifacts)
  - Institut et Musée Voltaire
  - Franz Carl Weber: fun toy store

- **Place Neuve:**
  - The park with the large chessboards and statues of Reformers
  - Musée Rath (Specializes in Pre-Columbian art)
  - Skate Park-really fun to just watch. Some of the Genevois are quite impressive.

- **International District:**
  - The ICRC museum
  - The UN
  - The Ariana Museum (Pottery museum)
  - The Botanical Gardens

- **Lake Geneva:**
  - The Jet d’eau
  - Swim in the Lake across from the Naga Hilton!
  - Rent boats and ride around in the lake, or go on a boat trip and visit the other side of the Lake

- **Surrounding Area:**
  - Mt. Saleve
  - Yvior (by boat)
  - Chateau de Chillon (by boat)

It is highly recommended that you just take walks around and familiarize your self with the area. It’s really a beautiful place, and John Donnelly can tell you about some great running trails that are easily
accessible from the Cité. Also, there are some great parks right near the building so you can go there on nice days and just hang out!

TRAVEL

Although you will find countless cultural experiences and things to do in Geneva, you should take every opportunity to travel. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore Europe. Take advantage of it. Travel in Europe can prove to be fairly inexpensive if you do some research before hand and look for good deals. Members of the spring 2008 study group did a lot of traveling and will have many suggestions of places to visit and stay.

By Air

Flying within Europe has become substantially cheaper in the past few years and is worth looking into. It saves time and in some cases money as well. This is probably the best way to get to the UK as the Eurail pass doesn’t cover the Chunnel or anywhere in the UK. It also makes places that would take too long to get to by train more accessible, for example Greece or parts of Spain. A couple of low-cost airline websites to check out:

- Easyjet  [http://www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)
- Ryanair  [http://www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)

Just keep in mind that part of the way these carriers are able to keep their ticket prices low is they fly into and out of smaller airports that often aren’t centrally located. Usually the money you save makes up for any inconvenience, but not always, so make sure to do your homework on all travel arrangements before committing to a purchase and research different options.

**A Cautionary Note on Low-Fare Airlines:** With the deregulation of the European airline system, a host of new operators have appeared, often offering comically cheap flights to various destinations (Ryanair, the largest of the low-fare airlines [LFA], has periodic seat sales starting at £0.01 plus tax each way). A lot of Colgate students, however, have been badly caught out while traveling with the LFAs. Some points to consider:

- The free baggage allowance on most of the LFAs is only 15 or 20 kg (33 or 44 lb) for checked baggage. Anything over that is charged at around 11.50 CHF or 7.50€ per kilogram. These limits are rigorously enforced. (Ryanair is now talking about doing away with the free baggage allowance altogether, and charging for all checked bags.) There is typically no weight limit on carry-on items, but they must be able to fit in the overhead bin or under the seat in front of you.

- Many of these flights land at remote airfields far from their stated destinations. Ryanair’s flight to Frankfurt, for example, actually lands in Hahn, a small airport some 60 miles away. Not only is this inconvenient, but you could easily get stranded at the destination point. If your flight is delayed and arrives late at night, you may find that the last ‘bus to civilization’ has long since departed, confronting you with the choice between an extremely expensive taxi fare or cooling your heels outside a closed terminal until morning.

- Many of these airlines close their gates 45 minutes before the scheduled departure time. That means that you have to have cleared the initial check-in desk and be at the departure gate well before that time or else you’re out of luck. Even if you’re en route to the gate after having checked in, after that 45-minute mark is past they close up shop and will not let you on the plane. Nor will they refund your ticket, so you’re stuck buying a full-price fare for the next available flight.
Some of these airports are also places that have been abandoned by the full-fare airlines because of unfavorable weather patterns. Jerez de la Frontera in southern Spain, also used by Ryanair, is regularly shut down in the winter for days at a time because of fog. If you have to be back in Geneva for a Monday-morning class, your return flight might be more expensive than you had originally bargained for.

If you’re trying to make a connection on an LFA (e.g. Geneva to Dortmund then Dortmund to Prague for example) and your outbound leg is delayed because of the airline’s fault, under European law they are under no obligation to find you a seat on a later service. You will have to buy an entirely new ticket for the Dortmund-Prague leg; and without any advance purchase, it’s likely to cost you a lot more than what you originally paid.

Should the airline cancel a flight, their only legal responsibility is to find you a seat on the next available service. If there’s only one flight a day, and it takes five days to clear the backlog of stranded passengers, that’s just too bad.

None of this is to suggest that you shouldn’t use LFAs, but you need to know what you’re getting for your money. Don’t assume, though, that the lowest fares are always to be found on Ryanair or EasyJet. Some of the larger airlines will often offer cheap airfares in order to remain competitive with the LFAs.

By Rail

Because you are required to have a Eurail pass for group travel, trains are by far the most utilized and cheapest means of transportation among study group members. At first it may seem a bit complicated but once you get things figured out you’ll learn to love trains. First, find out how long it will take to get to where you want to go and make sure this can fit into the amount of time that you have off. Second, find out whether or not you need reservations. Reservations are required on the TGV (French high-speed trains) and on some other routes. They are recommended for most trips to guarantee you have a place to sit. Reservations are usually quite inexpensive – about 10-15 francs, in addition to the cost of your ticket. Make sure to tell the person booking them that you already have a Eurail pass. Overnight train reservations can cost quite a bit more if you want a sleeping compartment. Be sure to check. The information and reservation center is in the train station in Geneva. On the day of departure, give yourself 45-60 minutes to get from the Cité to the train station. Upon arrival at the train station you can read the departure board to find out which platform your train is leaving from. Once you have your tickets and are getting on the train, make sure both your SEAT and CAR numbers correspond with those on your ticket.

Websites can be extremely helpful in finding out arrival and departure times. You cannot phone the train station, so the only way to find out information is through the website or in person. A few useful rail sites follow below, but it is often easiest to go in person to the train station and have an agent take care of everything for you (for free).

- France [http://www.sncf.com/indexe.htm](http://www.sncf.com/indexe.htm)
- Germany [http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en](http://reiseauskunft.bahn.de/bin/query.exe/en)
- General info [http://www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com)

**Street Smarts:**
Most hotels/hostels have cards at the front desk. When traveling, a good habit to get into is to take one of these with you when going out so you do not need to try and remember the name or address of where you are staying. If they don’t have one, write the information down on a piece of paper.

If you’re going out at night, and going to be taking a taxi home, be sure to ask the desk at your hotel/hostel how much return fare should be. Taxi drivers are notorious for trying to overcharge, especially if you are in a country where you do not speak the local language well, or at all. It’s amazing how poor their English is when they try to overcharge you and how quickly it can improve when you tell them you’re not going to let them do so.

Many clubs have dress codes – save yourself the embarrassment of being a “tourist” and look into this in advance. A good rule of thumb for guys is to avoid wearing sneakers out.

Learn to say “no.” As Americans, we don’t like to flat out tell people no for fear of insulting them, hurting their feelings, etc. Europeans don’t have this hang up and will use our tendency to make excuses as a polite way of refusal to their advantage, especially street vendors and men in bars/clubs. The sooner you learn this the better.

A European city, in terms of violent crime, tends to be much safer than most major American cities. However, there is more petty crime especially targeting tourists. Girls, be sure to keep your purse zipped, buttoned, etc. Guys, keep everything in your front pocket. It is an even better idea to invest in a longer coat, for example, a toggle/pea coat, because it will hang past your pockets making it nearly impossible for someone to pick them. 2008 members mostly all had the pouches under their shirts for passports, money, etc. While quite the fashion statement, there were few incidents compared to other groups.

**FINAL NOTES**

This guide is meant to be used as a starting point and a tool to help get you oriented when you first get to Geneva. Don’t rely on the guide too much – half the fun of being in a different country is exploring and discovering things on your own! You are in for an amazing semester; just don’t expect things to fall into your lap. You’ll need to get out there and make the effort to do things and meet locals!

Be aware, too, that other countries have different ways of doing things and part of the education that comes with studying abroad derives from experiencing how other cultures operate. Switzerland is no exception. Things will be different, and you’re going to be expected to adapt to the Swiss way of life; not the other way around. Remember: “When in Rome (or Geneva!)…”