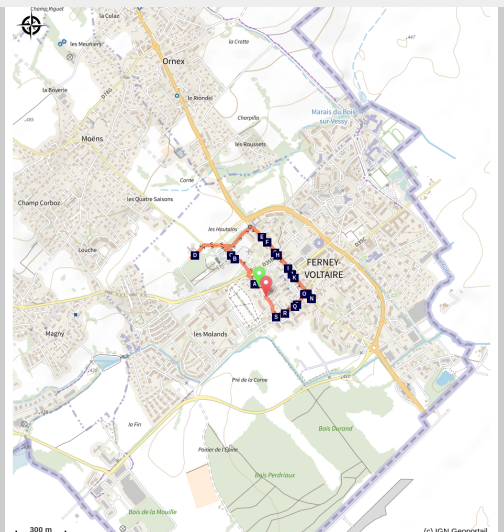
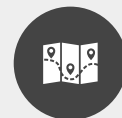


# Ferney-Voltaire

Pays de Gex - Ferney-Voltaire



Le château de Voltaire et ses jardins (PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis)

A little town that conquered the heart of a great philosopher, whose influence and actions shaped Ferney and can be found in each corner of every road on this tour around the town.

“Ferney is one of the most pleasurable stays on Earth. I add to the comfort of having a well-structured castle and of having planted unique gardens, the solid pleasure of being useful to the country I have chosen to retire in [...] in shot, I have put my Epistle’s theory into practice”.  
(Voltaire, 1761)

## Useful information

Practice : Nature trail

Duration : 1 h

Length : 2.1 km

Trek ascent : 23 m

Difficulty : Easy

Type : Circular


Themes : History & heritage

Accessibility : Joëlettes (all-terrain one-wheeled chairs), Pushchairs

# Trek

Departure : Castle parking lot

Arrival : Castle parking lot

Markings :  PR® (Walking & hiking trail)

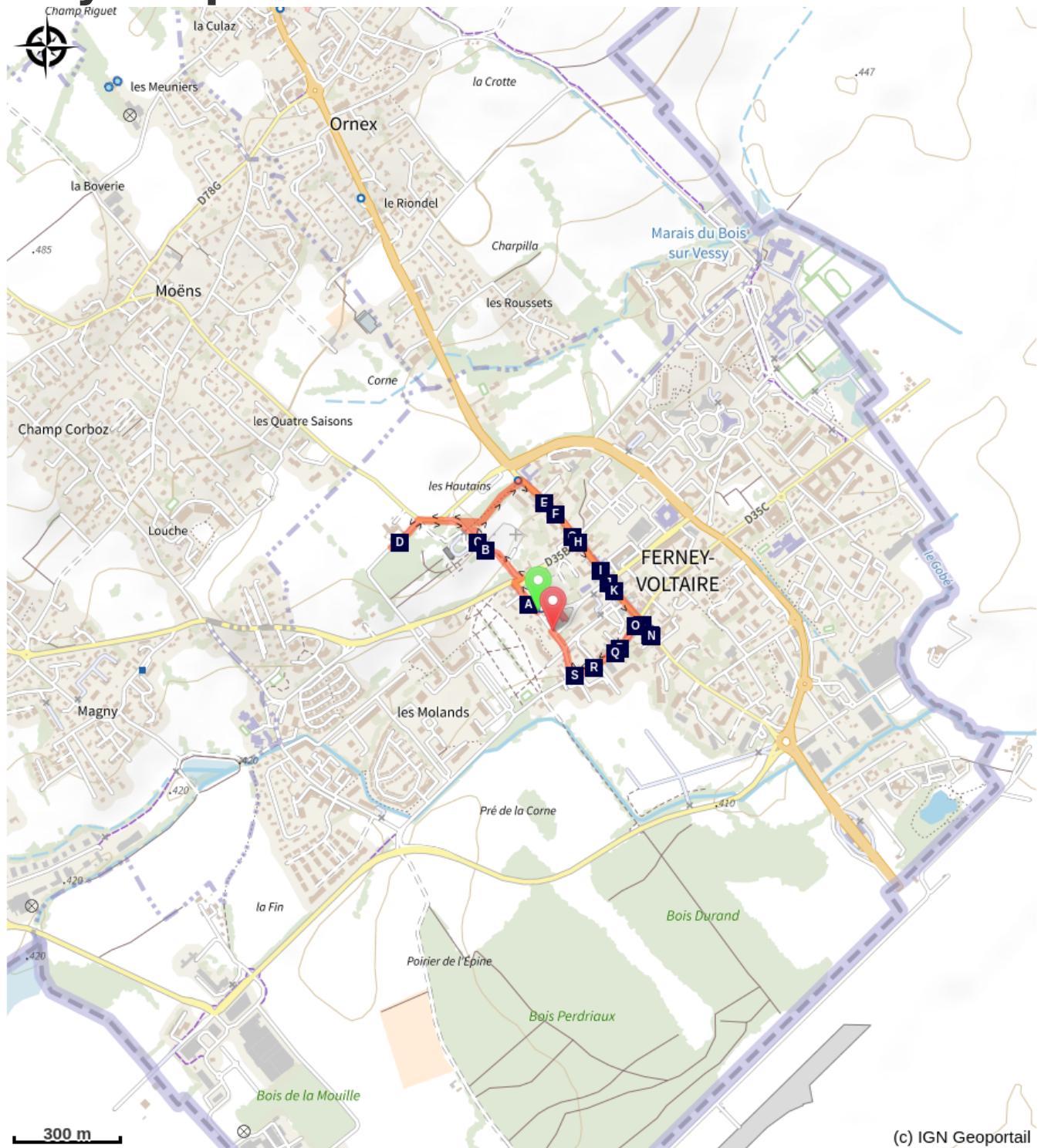
From the **Castle parking lot**, head up chemin Florian until you come to the roundabout.

From here, take **chemin du cimetière** opposite you to reach the Voltaire's castle and its gardens.

The Granges farm is on the other side of the castle, which you can go around via the **D78** and **chemin des Granges**. After making a U-turn, take **allée du Château** to **rue de Gex**. From here, the path, scattered with many buildings of interest, heads straight down via **rue du Gex** and **Grand'Rue** to the Voltaire's Fountain. A round trip via **rue de Genève** allows hikers to observe two buildings at numbers 9 and 10 in the road.

On returning to the fountain, take **rue de Meyrin** and continue until you reach **chemin Florian**, where you may return to your starting point.

# On your path...



Ferney-Voltaire (A)  
 Parish church (C)  
 Reformed church (E)  
 The urban area of Bijou (G)  
 Pays de Voltaire house (I)  
 Old Bonifas workshops (K)  
 Maison Saint-Pierre (M)

Château de Voltaire (B)  
 Les Granges farm (D)  
 Villa les Sorbiers (F)  
 Notre-Dame et Saint-André church  
 (H)  
 Old "fruitière" (dairy workshop) (J)  
 Hôtel de France (L)  
 Maison Dunoyer (N)

Public fountain (O)  
Domaine du Châtelard (Q)  
The Brotteaux district (S)

Grand Comptoir (P)  
Petit Comptoir (R)

# All useful information

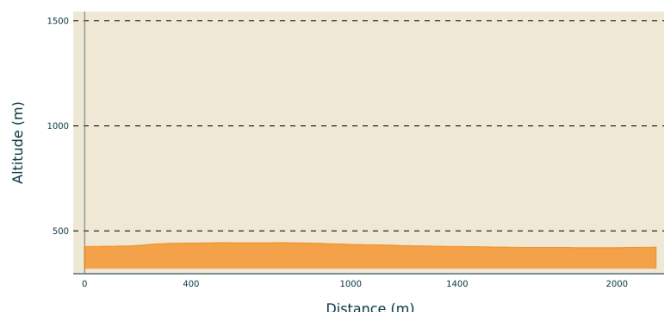
## **Advices**

This discovery trail unfolds in an urban environment and carries hikers along pavements and pedestrian crossings.

Most parking spaces in the town centre may be in the blue zone, you will therefore need to obtain a parking disc.

Voltaire's castle and its gardens may be under works or maintenance. To find out about opening times and prices, and for any other information, do not hesitate to visit the Tourist Office, 30 Grand'Rue.

## **Altimetric profile**



Min elevation 420 m

Max elevation 444 m

## **Transports**

To visit and get about in the High-Jura, visit [www.reshaut-jura.fr](http://www.reshaut-jura.fr), the eco-mobility portal listing all means of transport within the Park.

## **Access**

Located 2 km north of the Geneva airport, Ferney-Voltaire can be accessed via the A1, the D1005 and the D35.

## **Advised parking**

Castle parking lot, rue de l'Église

## **Information desks**

Tourist information centre - Gex - La  
Faucille

Coeur de station, 01170 Gex

Tel : +33 (0)4 50 41 53 85

<https://www.paysdegex-montsjura.com/>





# On your path...

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## Ferney-Voltaire (A)

With its (almost) duty-free border right next to the international airport of Geneva, its population which has tripled in 40 years, its real estate madness, its international high school, its market (on Saturday mornings) - highly frequented by inhabitants of Gex and Geneva -, its castle and of course its traces of a farming and industrial past, Ferney-Voltaire is a good example of the process of urbanisation, which is visible all over. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis

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## Château de Voltaire (B)

Most likely from the 14th century, this castle was burnt down under Bernese occupation, partly renovated during the 17th century and entirely rebuilt during the 18th century by Voltaire. Two construction campaigns were undertaken to give the entire building a "Bourgeois" look, characteristic of the Lake Geneva region: the first focused on its central body, and the second was entrusted to architect Léonard Racle to elevate the two lateral wings. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Parish church (C)

Used as the Ferney Parish church up until the Notre-Dame et Saint-André church was built, this edifice - which was used for a time by the Protestants - was rebuilt by Voltaire and devoted to "the only God" (Deo Erexit Voltaire). A pyramid-shaped "half in, half out" tomb was added to it by Voltaire in 1766. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Les Granges farm (D)



Influenced by agricultural techniques from Switzerland, and due to the sale of its production on Geneva markets, agriculture in the Pays de Gex improved its culture and stock breeding techniques earlier than the Jura. The Lumières' ideas on agronomy were also promoted by Voltaire during the 18th century. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Reformed church (E)



After the Revolution, the legal recognition of the Protestant faith allowed protestants to construct new buildings. The Reformed of the Pays de Gex purchased the former Palais Dauphin in 1822, a house built by Voltaire for one of his close ones. The temple was later built in 1824 on the adjoining land. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Villa les Sorbiers (F)



These pavilions were built between 1765 and 1776 for Voltaire's close ones and master builders and to give Native clockmakers - whom he needed for his new Ferney industry - a place to settle definitively. Along with the bottom of rue de Genève, the upper part of the village was to be the village's "noble district". (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## The urban area of Bijou (G)



The collective housing of Bijou is part of the first series of rental accommodation constructed in Ferney-Voltaire in the 1960s and was given the name of an old Voltaire house destroyed a few years earlier. This was a way of geographically and historically establishing these new contemporary urban neighbourhoods as part of Ferney-Voltaire. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Notre-Dame et Saint-André church (H)

Next to the main chapel devoted to the Virgin Mary, the chapels of Saint-André, patron of the old Ferney church, and of Saint-François de Sales are testaments to the “continuity of the Catholic faith in Ferney” and “the evangelisation of Calvinistic regions neighbouring Geneva” (C.E.F., 1990). The statue of the Virgin (1872) in the church square is a cast iron copy of the Notre-Dame de Fourvière statue in Lyon. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Pays de Voltaire house (I)

The Ferney theatre was born from the initiative taken by a trader and a Bernese entertainment promoter. With financial support from Voltaire, these two men created a theatre. The Théâtre de la Comédie opened in 1776 but did not withstand Voltaire’s death. Up until the 20th century, the building housed crafts activities. Today, it is home to the Atelier du Livre (Book Workshop) and temporary exhibits. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : PNRHJ - F. Jeanparis

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## Old “fruitière” (dairy workshop) (J)

Cheese production was the heart of a pastoral system that was long based on alpine pasture practices, and dictated the organisation and complementarity between the plain and the mountains (the municipality has owned the alpine pasture of Nevy in the Jura Mountains since 1988). The creation of “fruitières” on the plain (here 1818) to produce large hard cheeses went hand in hand with the gradual end of “mountain pasture” practices. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez





### Old Bonifas workshops (K)

In Ferney, pottery became particularly popular with the settlement of several potters and particularly with the arrival of ceramists René Nicole and Paul Bonifas from Geneva in the 1920s. By buying a small Ferney factory specialised in souvenirs for water cities, the pioneer of Art Deco and design developed certain techniques that are now characteristic of his work, including his “black lusterware”. The Bonifas workshops remained open until the 1970s. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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### Hôtel de France (L)

As lord of the village, Voltaire attracted many trades and skills that he needed to manage his fortune and his property. To these men he gave annuities and lands for building. This house, built in 1770 by one of Voltaire’s close friends and secretaries, Jean-Louis Wagnière, at the junction between the village’s main roads, was later elevated and turned into a hotel in the 19th century. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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### Maison Saint-Pierre (M)

A former “boarding house for youths” (1864), and later the Saint-Pierre Orphanage founded by Franciscan nuns and managed by abbot Boisson up until the 1970s, Maison Saint-Pierre was sold to the city in 1978 and now houses several social and cultural activities. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez



### Maison Dunoyer (N)

The master masons of Samoëns (Haute-Savoie), who were renowned and sought after for their expertise, built many buildings in Ferney. This house was built by one of them, François Dunoyer, who was promoted to “architect and expert” by Voltaire himself (B. Obergfell, 2009) and elected mayor of Ferney at the end of the 18th century. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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### Public fountain (O)

The concept of hygiene, launched by the Lumières, resulted in sanitation in cities, the drying-out of marshlands, better air circulation and an abundance of water. Public fountains became vital components in plans to “make cities more attractive”. This fountain was widely funded by Voltaire. The bronze bust that can be seen atop it is a replica of the “Seated Voltaire” sculpted in 1781 by Houdon. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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### Grand Comptoir (P)

Voltaire led a pro-active economic policy to ensure that his city of Ferney, which had recently been founded, had a lucrative activity capable of competing with Geneva. Here, man developed the first clockmaking factory in Ferney in 1770, known as Grand Comptoir. Three other factories followed shortly thereafter. The first was managed by a family of native clockmakers, who kept close commercial ties with Geneva, until 1802. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, “A tour of the town”)

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Domaine du Châtelard (Q)



Domaine du Châtelard was purchased by Voltaire from the lord of Fernex in 1759 and is a good example of the modernisation of agricultural areas during the Voltaire era: paving of courtyards, water pipes, housing development (large homes characterised by the evenness of their facade and the symmetry of their openings), etc. The barn, which was purchased by the municipality in 1990, is now a cultural area (Châtelard theatre). (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## Petit Comptoir (R)



The architecture found on the clockmaking factories Grand Comptoir and Petit Comptoir is different to that found in the group of linear houses built between 1766 and 1776 at Voltaire's initiative. "Vast houses of rectangular shape, longer than pavilions and less ornate, were built with many harmonious openings". (C.E.V., 1990). The openings sometimes placed on gables were necessary for the meticulous work of clock and jewellery-making. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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## The Brotteaux district (S)



In the rural landscape of the Pays de Gex, Ferney is no exception: some rare rural-styled houses are remnants of an agricultural past. Between the mountains and the plain, and at the junction between various architectural influences, the rural habitat of the Pays de Gex is above all the habitat of the farmer-breeder and buildings are organised only one way: farms are in one single block containing both dwellings and agricultural buildings. (PNRHJ - Un tour en ville, "A tour of the town")

Attribution : Illustration de David Gonzalez

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