

An Unusual Internship at CERN

Part II



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Welcome to the *second part* of the article about my experience as an **openlab Summer Student 2019** at CERN! This time I will talk about the less serious sides of this amazing internship (yes, also researchers love to have fun time to time).

If you missed the first part, go check it out here!

The Summer Student Trips



The city of Geneva from the Kathedrale St. Peter (you can see the Jet d'eau on the lake)

As I was saying previously, was it “*all work and no play*” at CERN? Not at all! The weekends were completely free for us! I was surprised about how many people willing to explore and travel there were among the summer students. We could self-organize several trips around Switzerland and Europe. You could have proposed

your destination or just joined one of the existing groups. On the weekend you would have been literally overwhelmed by all the places other summer students proposed. I visited quite several cities during my stay: *Geneva, Bern, Lausanne, Annecy, Chamonix* and *Mont Blanc, Zurich*, etc. (and I was not the most prolific traveller!).



Annecy's Lake (Lac d'Annecy).

If I had to rank the places I have visited, I would say that the best ones were the lovely cities of *Annecy* and *Chamonix*.

Annecy is a pleasant town located in France, around one hour by bus from Geneva. It has really nice spots and interesting areas to visit, like the cathedral or the *Palais de l'Isle*, a small castle built during the 12th century in the middle of the river which crosses the village. It is the perfect destination for a one-day trip. Make sure to bring a **swimsuit** since the city is located near a gorgeous lake where you can also rent *paddle boats* to sail further in it.

Chamonix is a little town located also in France, easily reachable from Geneva, which is near *Mont Blanc* (or “Monte Bianco” in Italian), one of the tallest mountains of the Alps. The main attraction is represented by the cable car that brings you from the city centre to the top of the mountains. The cable car will take you to *Aiguille du Midi* (around 3800 meters/12467,19 feet tall) from which you will be able to experience an incredible panorama. I can assure you that the view from there is breathtaking (also because of the lack of oxygen you will feel)! Make sure to wear **warm clothes** and **proper shoes** because on the top it is really cold, even in summer! However, it is not the only thing you can do in Chamonix. If you want, you can also go *paragliding* or *hiking*. Moreover, it is possible to take a small train to reach in 20 minutes the *Mer de Glace*, which is the largest glacier in France. There you can visit the *ice caves*, tunnels that were dug inside the glacier itself!



The view from Aiguille du Midi. You can see the **Grandes Jorasses** mountain on the right.

What if you do not really like travelling? Well, I would suggest you try anyway! There are many fantastic places worth to see and which are surely worth the effort to wake up a little early on the weekend! In any case, the closer Geneva offers also plenty of occasions. The city itself is really beautiful and you can easily spend a day visiting it. I would suggest wandering around the *Old Town* as the best way to experience Geneva.

There are also more “sporty” opportunities around CERN. For instance, I hiked *Mount Salève* which is close to Geneva (just take the bus number 8 from *Gare Cornavin* to the last stop) and it offers a quite fun and entertaining walk which is perfect after a long working week. Moreover, near Saint Genis, you can find the *Jura Mountains* which also offer interesting options (unfortunately, I was not able to go there :().

Student Parties at CERN



The BBQ site at ALICE Point 2 near Saint Genis.

Apart from travelling, as summer students we organized several *gatherings* and *parties* throughout the summer. People used to meet out the *R1 restaurant* to chill, have a beer and to play some games. The place had several tables and chairs available and it also had a cosy area outside. If you needed, you could have also booked it for larger events.

We also did several BBQs at the *ALICE site* (one of CERN's facilities where one of the experiments is located) which was five minutes by bike from our apartment in Saint Genis. The place was well equipped with a large grill and a fireplace, capable of hosting many sausages and other meat (yes, these parties were not *vegetarian-friendly* indeed!). Luckily for us, wood was also provided (we had to buy charcoal only once!). An awning covered also the few tables and benches present there to be able to eat even with the rain. There was one downside though: the place had no light whatsoever! The funny thing was that there were some neon lamps attached to the ceiling of the awning, but there was *no electrical plug* where to attach them! However, it was not a big deal thanks to the long summer days.



The MÈTAL JÜSTICE band performing at the Hardronic Festival 2019.

Also, Geneva's area offers many possibilities for listening to live music. There are plenty of open-air events and concerts happening during the summer (e.g., *Fête de la musique*, *Montreux Jazz Festival*, etc.). For instance, at Perle du Lac, each Tuesday a *Swing Dance Night* was held, where you could have danced Swing or just had something to drink near the lake. Moreover, CERN's people also organized the *Hadronic Festival* at the *Prévessin site*. It was a big festival with two big stages

and really good live music non-stop for eight hours. Moreover, several food-trucks were there offering any kinds of meals and/or drinks.

Apart from music, Geneva is also famous for its fireworks! On the 10th of August, a big firework show lasting 45 minutes was organized. The fireworks were shot from the middle of Geneva's lake accompanied by thrilling music. Many people gathered to see it and many city's roads were also closed to make more space for the crowd. If you do not believe me, you can find the entire performance on YouTube (it will not be amazing as watching it for real, but it surely gives the idea about how massive they were!).



The crowd waiting for Geneva's Firework show near the lake (we were really lucky to find a spot!).

***If you reached the end of this article by reading it, well, congrats! :)
This is the end of the second part of the story about my experience at***

CERN. On the third and final part, I will talk a bit more about CERN itself and what I saw and visited there!

As usual, feel free to respond to this article with your suggestions, comments and questions! Stay tuned for more updates!