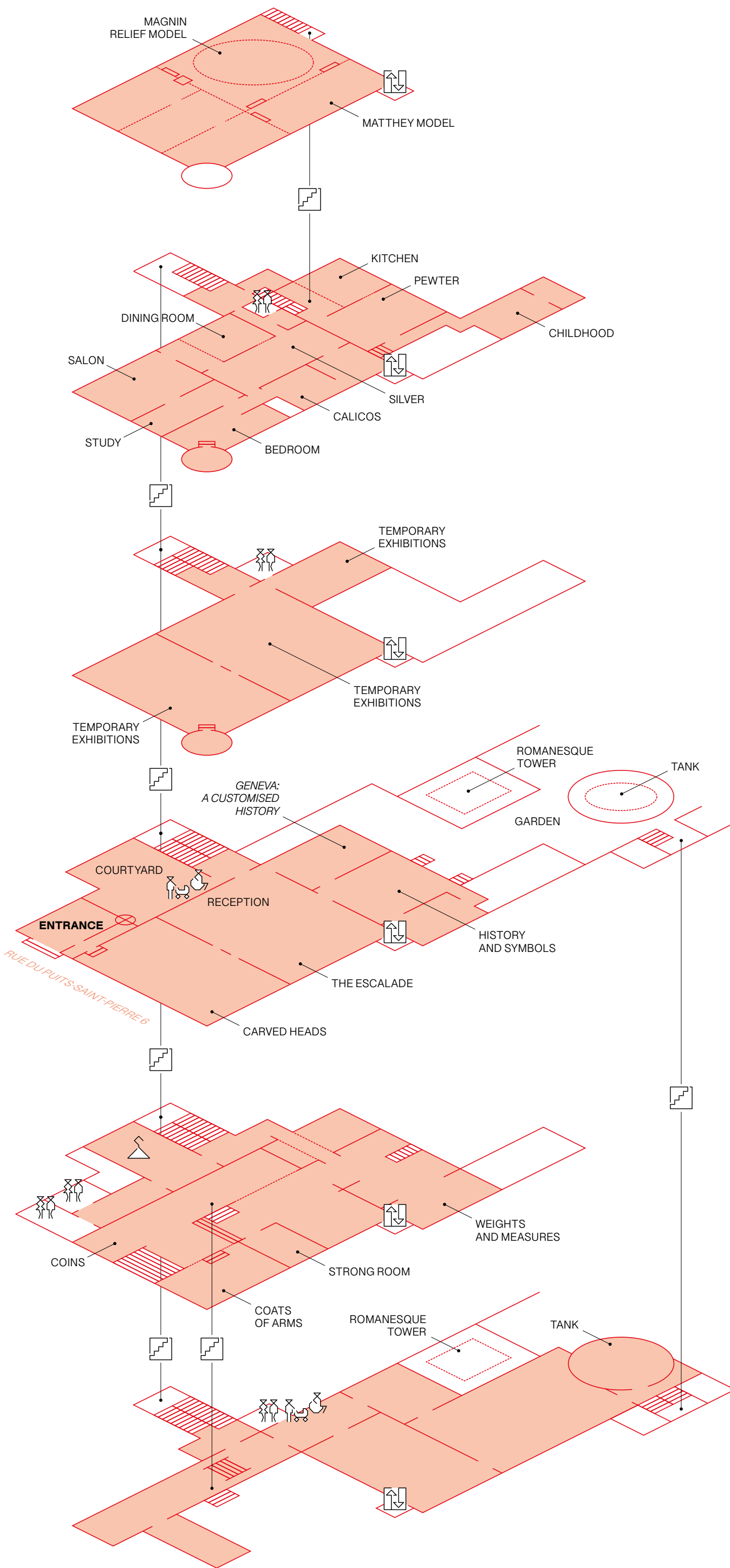


MAISON TAVEL VISITOR GUIDE

Welcome to Maison Tavel, Geneva's oldest standing private residence. It's a fine example of Swiss civil architecture and bears the name of the family who owned it from the late 13th to the early 16th century. Devastated by fire in 1334, the building was soon rebuilt as a fortified house with two turrets, only one of which has survived. Its main façade was then decorated with ten carved heads, giving it the look of an urban castle.

The house evolved over time, with modifications and additions in the 17th and 18th centuries. The City of Geneva acquired it in 1963 for its museum of urban history and everyday life. After a research phase that included archaeological excavations, it underwent a magnificent restoration, and opened to the public in 1986.





LEVEL 3 MODELS OF GENEVA

Until the mid-19th century, Geneva was an urban centre surrounded by fortifications. When these ramparts were no longer needed, their destruction led to major changes in the urban landscape. Nostalgic for this vanishing Geneva, architect Auguste Magnin focused on the contours of the city before its profound transformation. He then made an impressive 3-D model, which was named after him. Requiring over 18 years of work, this model was made entirely of metal, with zinc walls and copper roofs. It measures 32 square metres and is made up of 86 pieces based on Magnin's precise calculations. The model was presented for the first time at the 1896 National Exhibition in Geneva.

Before Magnin, Pierre Matthey produced a smaller model representing Geneva in 1815, the year when the city entered the Swiss Confederation. This model, also displayed in the attic of Maison Tavel, inspired Magnin, who restored and completed it.

LEVEL 2 18th- AND 19th-CENTURY APARTMENT

All the rooms on level 2 remain as they were in the 18th century. On the courtyard side, the kitchen still has its sink, whetstone, and hearth. In addition to the original woodwork, there's reproduction wallpaper based on period designs characteristic of this type of house. A selection of representative objects evokes everyday life and locally produced items. From the turret of one of the bedrooms, visitors can see the lake, the fountain, and the spire of Saint Pierre Cathedral.

LEVEL 1 TEMPORARY EXHIBITIONS

Once a residential floor for the Tavel family, this space is now used for temporary exhibitions.

LEVEL 0 ADMISSION AND INTRODUCTION TO MAISON TAVEL

During the Middle Ages, the ground floor was used for domestic activities. The hall that now holds the reception desk has a massive hearth, although its mantelpiece no longer exists. Nearby, medieval graffiti is visible on the wall, combining words and drawings that are difficult to decipher. The ten carved heads that originally decorated the house's façade are exhibited in the room on the street side. They were moved inside for preservation and replaced with copies. The garden-side galleries present a film/slideshow on the development of the city of Geneva as well as symbolic objects from its history.

LEVEL -1 THE CELLAR

The Romanesque cellar dates back to the late 12th century. The vaulted arches rest on columns with capitals sculpted in a simple style. Originally, this space was used for trade, having access to the street, but was not directly connected to the rest of the house. A strong room built into the walls was used to store valuables. In the 17th century, additional vaulted cellars increased the storage area on the lower level.

LEVEL -2 BUILDING THE CITY

When it was converted into a museum, Maison Tavel received a new underground space for the archaeological remains that had been discovered: the foundations of an 11th-century Romanesque stone tower and a large cistern built in the 17th century to collect rainwater. Today, this room displays architectural elements from Geneva's history that were preserved during the city's transformation in the late 19th century. Visual representations of the city and its residents are on view across from them.

Enjoy an immersive adventure into the museum's treasures. Scan the QR code for audio guides and point at the objects you're curious about to discover their secrets.



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Catalogues, accessories, and various other items are available at shop.mahmah.ch.

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