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Heavy ions at the LHC

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Ultra-relativistic collisions of heavy ions allow studying strongly interacting matter at extreme energy densities and temperatures. Quantum-Chromodynamics predicts that at such conditions normal, hadronic matter turns into a plasma of deconfined quarks and gluons, which are the constituents of atomic nuclei. In cosmology, it is believed that matter in the early universe must have existed in this Quark-Gluon Plasma (QGP) state within the first microseconds after the Big Bang.
After the compelling evidence for the existence of the QGP from the previous heavy-ion accelerators SPS and RHIC, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN marks the beginning of the exploration the QGP properties. In this contribution, I will present an overview of the recent results from the LHC and discuss them in relation to the previous findings.

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