



# The 161 Things Every Cornell Student Should Do

In which  
we enumerate  
the stunts,  
activities,  
arguments,  
readings,  
writings and  
ponderings  
central to  
the Cornell  
experience.



**Truth Number One:**

*There is no such thing as a typical Cornellian.*

**Truth Number Two:**

*There is no such thing as a typical Cornell experience.*

**Truth Number Three:**

*There are at least 161 things all students should do while they're at Cornell.*

While Truth Number Three may not seem to follow, a priori, from Truths Numbers One and Two, it is still self-evident: if you're going to do Cornell—or any university—correctly, there are certain things you just ought to check out.

What follows is an admittedly incomplete list of what *Cornell Magazine's* editors, their friends and some members of the university community consider to be the seminal experiences of life at Cornell. (Additions to the list are welcome and encouraged.)

They are, each and every one of them, things that educated, adventurous, curious, hungry, growing, challenged, sleep-deprived, learning people will do, some of the things regard-

less or where the college is located.

All of which leads us to think: perhaps there *is* a typical Cornellian.

# 21.

Get to know a professor so well she invites you to dinner; discover that professors have families.

1. Stay up all night arguing about the existence of God.



appreciation for the art and practice of tipping.

9. Get in a shouting match with the people behind the counter at the Bursar's Office.

10. Amass enough parking tickets to be told you won't get your diploma until you pay them.

11. Go on the rush tours of fraternities and sororities.

2. Try to go a whole semester without doing laundry.

3. Take courses outside your major—way outside your major.

4. Get yourself entangled in a long-distance relationship with someone at another college, one that's close enough to drive to, but far enough away to make yourself crazy.

5. Get sick drinking too much; vow to never drink again.

6. Call your parents and tell them you love them.

7. Get so far behind in your work you stay in Ithaca over a vacation. Get absolutely no work done as you explore the town and the surrounding area and realize what a beautiful place it is.

8. Take a service-oriented, minimum wage job. Gain a whole new

12. Try to hitchhike home for a weekend. Get picked up by a scary guy. Take the bus home from Binghamton.

13. Switch majors.

14. Read the following books while you are still in school: *Been Down So Long it Looks Like Up to Me*; *A Farewell to Arms*; *The Elements of Style*; *On the Road*; *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*.

15. Have a 2 a.m. breakfast at the State Diner. Acquire a taste for french fries and gravy.

16. Get at least one F; nothing prepares you for success quite like a failure.

17. Kiss someone on the Suspension Bridge.

18. Climb the steps of

McGraw Tower; watch a chimesmaster at work.

19. Buy a Cornell-raised apple from a vending machine.

20. Learn the first two verses of the "Alma Mater" (here they are):

Verse 1:

*Far above Cayuga's waters  
With its waves of blue  
Stands our noble alma mater  
Glorious to view.*

Chorus:

*Lift the chorus, speed it onward  
Loud her praises tell.*

*Hail to thee, our alma mater  
Hail, all hail, Cornell.*

Verse 2:

*Far above the busy humming  
Of the bustling town,  
Reared against the arch of heaven  
Looks she proudly down.*

21. Get to know a professor so well she invites you to dinner; discover that professors have families.

22. Skip class to play hackysack on the Arts Quad.

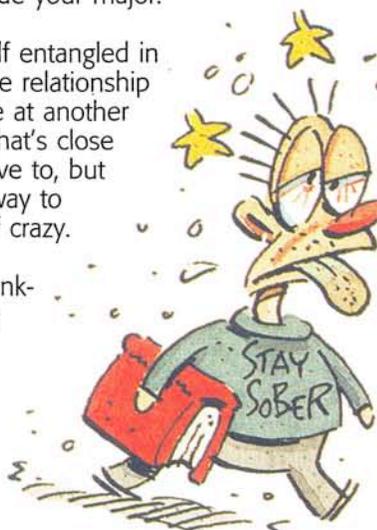
23. Hear the echo in the side of the Johnson Museum.

4. Tray down Libe slope.

25. Skinny dip in the gorge at night.

26. Have a Straight cookie during a study break.

27. Go to a hockey game.



# 45.

Fall helplessly in love, get dumped, be shell-shocked, recover.

28. Visit the Lab of Ornithology at Sapsucker Woods; start a life list.

29. Walk around Beebe Lake.

30. Cross-country ski at the Plantations.

31. Bowl at Helen Newman Lanes.

32. Stand in line for 45 minutes on a Saturday night at the Nines; eat a whole deepdish pizza yourself.

33. Stop at the Collegetown Convenience Store for Tums; eat a whole roll yourself.

34. Fall asleep in the library; panic that someone saw you with your mouth agape.

35. Over Winter Break, criticize your parents for their middle-class values; later, remind them to send in your tuition check.

36. Sell your text books at the end of the semester; blow all the money on a Frosty at Wendy's.

37. Write an indignant letter to the editor of the *Sun*.

38. Freshman year: look at the class columns in *Cornell Magazine* and wonder aloud to your friends who in the hell would want to read such stuff.

39. Senior year: volunteer to be a class correspondent.

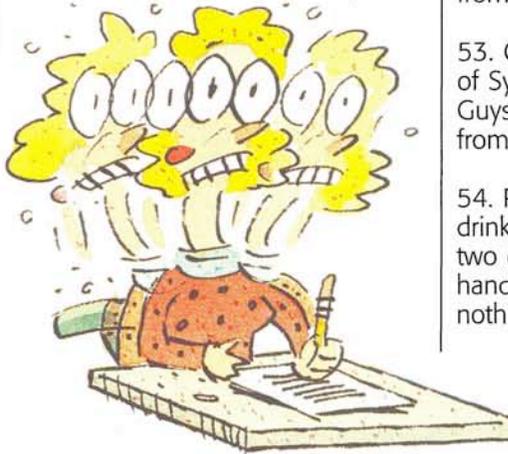
40. Stand in the freezing rain at a football game; catch a cold.

41. Eat at every one of Cornell's nine dining halls at least once.

42. Live off-campus in a Collegetown apartment; watch for the looks of horror as you show your parents around, telling them

how great it is.

43. Have an epiphany in the stacks



of Olin Library on a beautiful fall afternoon that grades are not the most important thing in the world; leave the library and take a walk.

44. Take the following courses: Wines, Psych 101, Sex, Intro to Natural Resources, CS 100, an Intro to Art History.

45. Fall helplessly in love, get dumped, be shell-shocked, recover.

46. Get on a first name basis with Bob Petrillose.

47. Have Sunday brunch at the Statler; put it on Cornell Card.

48. Have the courage of your convictions to tell a professor what you really think about his or her class.

49. Ace at least one class. Nothing prepares you for success like success.

50. Switch majors. Again.

51. Get a mantra.

52. Guys: Read the collected works

of Henry Miller and decide to move to Paris.

Girls: Stay as far away as possible from these guys.

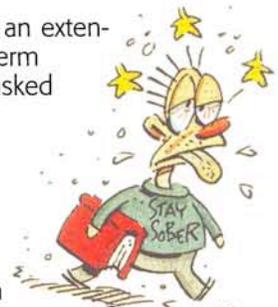
53. Girls: Read the collected works of Sylvia Plath.

Guys: Stay as far away as possible from these girls.

54. Prepare to pull an all-nighter by drinking three Mountain Dew's and two cups of coffee and eating a handful of No-Doz; accomplish nothing due to an inability to sit still.

55. Get sick from drinking too much; vow to never drink again.

56. Ask for an extension on a term paper. Be asked why. Learn that workload is no good answer.



57. Get an internship so as to be better able to judge your career prospects.

58. Apply to grad school.

59. Tape tons of stuff—especially "Calvin and Hobbes" comic strips—to your dorm room door.

60. Spend the summer in Ithaca. Let your friends roll their eyes when you tell them how beautiful and peaceful and quiet it is. You know better.

61. Be an Orientation Counselor.

62. Watch a polo match.

63. Study a foreign language, then go to, say, a French Club meeting.

# 90.

Stay sober on Slope Day and be amazed at what's going on.

Lose your inhibitions and *parlez-vous*.

64. Drive out to the observatory on Mt. Pleasant; bug the graduate students until they let you look at the stars and planets through the telescope.

65. Take an Outdoor Education course or a Wilderness Reflections trip; learn more about yourself in a weekend than you will in a year in a classroom.

66. Let a harried mother go ahead of you in line at Wegmans or Tops; show the locals that not all students are rude and self-absorbed.

67. Visit the local wineries; learn to spit.

68. Play intramural innertube water polo.

69. Carve your initials into a table at the Chapter House, then drink a yard of beer.

70. Camp out on the Arts Quad.

71. Have a buttered, toasted Long Island bagel at Collegetown Bagels after last call.

72. Flirt with someone—anon-ymously—via the *Sun* personals.

73. Pedal a bicycle around Cayuga Lake.

74. Yell—bleary-eyed—at the people in the dorm corridor making noise at 3 a.m. Apologize to them the next day.

75. Road trip!

76. Go to Fall Tonic. Hum along with the singers.

77. Link arms with your friends and sing the "Alma Mater" during half time of a football game.

78. At least once, find yourself in a situation where you ask yourself, "My God, what am I doing here?"

79. Learn how to use the Internet.

80. Go South for Spring Break. Call home for more money.

81. Host a prospective freshman during Cornell Days.

82. Go on a campus tour. Ask the guide for a tour of the Medical College.

83. Have breakfast with President Rhodes. Ask him if he's going to finish his muffin.

84. Go to a Theatre Cornell production. And while you're at it, check out the theater scene in downtown Ithaca.

85. Be the subject of a psychology experiment in a window-less room in Uris Hall.

86. Chalk messages on the sidewalk.

87. Take at least one class in each of Cornell's eight colleges.

88. Go to the Space Sciences Building and see the color photographs

ICE CREAM



from Voyager.

89. Attend a lunchtime political rally outside the Straight; get into a heated debate with supporters or detractors of the group the rally is for; miss class because of it.

90. Stay sober on Slope Day and be amazed at what's going on.

91. Help clean up Collegetown during the annual "Into the Streets."

92. Be a Big Brother or Big Sister to kids in Tompkins County.

93. Milk a cow during Ag Day.



94. Take a class S/U. Work harder than you did for any graded class as the prospect of failure looms before you.

# 129.

## Take a poetry class with Archie Ammons.

95. Get your parents Cornell sweatshirts.

96. Have dinner at the Terrace in the Hotel School on a night when undergraduates run the place.

97. Have an ice cream cone at the Dairy Bar.

98. Drive up to the very top of Buffalo Street in a standard transmission car; learn how not to roll backward at the yield sign at the top.

99. Dragon Day!

100. Have your picture taken in A. D. White's lap.

101. Be a Blue Light escort.

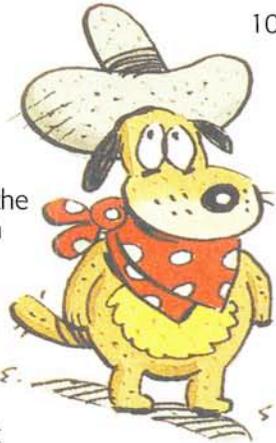
102. Watch the sunset from the top of Libe Slope. (Do this as often as possible.)

103. Go to the ROTC museum in Barton Hall.

104. Sit quietly and alone in Sage Chapel. Admire the stained glass windows.

105. Write a senior honors thesis. It's the only way to graduate from Cornell with honors.

106. Drive through a blinding snowstorm to see a concert in Syracuse or Binghamton. Think a lot about snow tires on the way home.



107. Take great solace in the endless supply of boiling hot water delivered at fire-hose pressure in the showers at Teagle Hall.

108. Tell yourself how brilliant you are.

109. Tell yourself how stupid you are.

110. Play pick-up basketball at Barton Hall.

111. Attend a Cornell Concert Series performance in Bailey Hall.

112. Always smile and say hi to the people serving food at Robert Purcell Community Center.

113. Take an auto-tutorial class. Realize that all education is auto-tutorial.

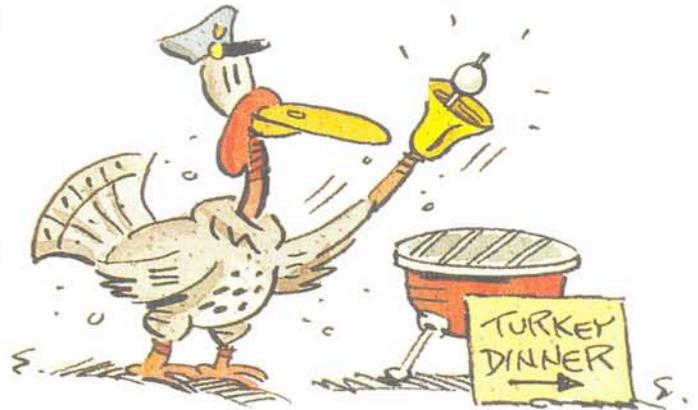
114. While walking home from the library late at night, be startled, then amused, by the raccoons that live in Ithaca's sewers and prowl the night for food.

115. Tie a bandana around a dog's neck and teach him to fetch Frisbees on the Ag Quad.

116. At 6:30 p.m. in a crowded dining hall, stand up and sing your high school's fight song. (Everyone will think you're doing an experiment for a psychology class.)

117. Go to a service for a religion you know nothing about.

118. Help serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Salvation Army.



119. Be able to explain the Theory of Relativity to the man on the street.

120. Commit to memory at least one of Shakespeare's soliloquies.

121. Force yourself to read all of *Gravity's Rainbow*. (You'll be glad you did.)

122. Stop for coffee and banana cream pie at the Roscoe Diner on Route 17.

123. See the following films at Cornell Cinema: *Stop Making Sense* (midnight show only), *Citizen Kane*, *8 1/2*, *The 400 Blows*, *Casablanca*, *It's a Wonderful Life* (make fun of the people who cry), *Diner*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Graduate*, *Harold and Maude*.

124. Go to the Synchrotron and ask for a tour.



# 140.

Read King Lear. Decide you are one of the daughters.  
Inform your parents.

125. Stick your hand in the rumin fistula cow at the Vet college Open House.

126. Take friends who visit from other schools to Uris Hall to see the Cornell Brain Collection; tell them the legend of Mr. Ruloff. Then go to Ruloff's in Collegetown for dinner.



127. Go see the rock and mineral collection and the seismograph in the lobby of Snee Hall.

128. See Bound for Glory at the Commons Coffeehouse in Anabel Taylor Hall.

129. Take a poetry class with Archie Ammons.

130. Start saving for retirement.

131. Go strolling through Forest Home. Walk hand in hand with your best girlfriend/boyfriend.

132. Write a letter to your parents that begins: "Dear Mom and Dad, Please ignore every previous letter I have ever sent you."

133. Decide absolutely your mission in life. Change it five times.

134. Write a poem that ends: "Oozing out of the shell/and into the darkness that/never ends, that/has my name." Send it to your parents.

135. Research a paper on witchcraft in Europe using the Kroch Library Department of Rare and Manuscript Collections' "Cornell Witchcraft Collection" and discover a spell that will give your ex-boyfriend/girlfriend an undefinable sense of yearning for you.

136. Travel abroad.

137. Two weeks before graduation, complete a wardrobe that will be utterly useless by next fall.

138. Read Hamlet. Decide you are Hamlet.

139. Get sick from drinking too much; vow to never drink again.

140. Read King Lear. Decide you are one of the daughters. Inform your parents.

141. Go to a fraternity party dressed as a disgusting object.

142. Publish an opinion piece in the *Sun* claiming the toilet paper in Day Hall is superior to that in the dorms.

143. Take a Graduate Entrance Exam in a subject you have barely studied. Inflate the results to your friends.

144. Learn to play bridge.

145. Write three papers in the same night.

146. Write a thesis that is at least ten pages longer than your roommate's.

147. Use the words "seamless" and "dichotomy" and the phrase "precious few" in the same paper.

148. Keep a diary. Write in it at least once a year.

149. Play one memorable practical joke on a dean.

150. Invent something.

151. Take a date to Connecticut Hill to watch the stars on a clear night. Claim to see at least eight shooting stars ("There's one!") when nothing appears.

152. Plan a tour through a country in the midst of civil war. Send the itinerary to your parents.

153. Play Twister.

154. Inform your new roommate that you are "anal retentive."

155. Hold a nostalgic conversation about "Sesame Street."

156. Enter a conversation in which everybody quotes dialogue from a Monty Python movie. Make up dialogue and claim it is in the "unedited version."

157. Say something politically incorrect in a public place.

158. Go to the Rare and Manuscript Collections and ask to hold the Gutenberg Bible.

159. Go to a Trustee meeting. They're open to the public.

160. Go hear a band you know absolutely nothing about.

161. Take to heart Frank Rhodes's advice that there is no such thing as a stupid question. 