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Ithaca Is... Summer!

'161 Things' to do when
the weather's warm—
on the Hill and beyond



Centurea
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In the mid Nineties—inspired by the number of steps in McGraw Tower—CAM published a guide to the “161 Things Every Cornell Student Should Do.” The *Daily Sun* later ran its own version, and we updated our original list in 2015. But as Ithaca’s year-round residents often observe, most students don’t see Cornell’s hometown in its glory: the summer, when we locals reap our karmic debt for all those frigid winter days. It’s the perfect time for alumni to return and to use Ithaca as the base for a vacation. In that spirit, we offer a different list: 161 things to do—in Ithaca or within about an hour’s drive—if you come back this summer (with a few events in fall). Like Cornell itself, it has something for everyone.

#2



#18



On the Hill

Outdoor Amusements

1. Request a song to be played on the chimes, then listen to it while lounging on the grass.

2. Walk through the Botanic Gardens' arboretum; rest at the pond's gazebo and admire the aquatic life.

3. Take an official tour of campus (and see the new Tang Welcome Center, with its lovely view of Beebe Lake).

4. Go on a guided bird walk at the Lab of Ornithology.



5. Rent equipment—from canoes to backpacks to camping gear—from Cornell Outdoor Education (COE), then enjoy the great outdoors.

6. Kiss your significant other on the Suspension Bridge.

7. Enjoy a free concert on the Arts Quad, held on summer Fridays.

8. Stroll around Beebe Lake.

9. Marvel at the blooms in the Azalea Garden (on Tower Road) and Rhododendron Collection (at Cornell Botanic Gardens), at their height May to July.



10. Take a recreational tree climbing course at COE.

11. Watch an outdoor movie on the Willard Straight terrace, hosted by Cornell Cinema.

12. Go on a self-guided tour of campus's many outdoor sculptures.

13. Follow a timeline of Big Red history at the Sesquicentennial Commemorative Grove, at the top of Libe Slope.

Indoor Activities

14. Go rock climbing at the 8,000-square-foot Lindseth Climbing Center, one of the largest of its kind in the U.S.

15. Stargaze at Fuertes Observatory on Friday nights, cloud conditions permitting.



16. Take a week-long Cornell's Adult University course; topics this summer range from gourmet cooking to the science of climate change.

17. Climb to the top of McGraw Tower to hear (and see) a chimes concert.

18. Tour the Johnson Museum; after checking out the view from the fifth floor, go to the sculpture court and admire the *Cosmos* light installation from the "zero gravity" bench.

19. Enjoy a free concert in Klarman Hall (Tuesday evenings).

20. Go bowling at Helen Newman Hall (closed on Sundays).



21. Attend a free lecture in Kennedy Hall's Call Auditorium (Wednesday evenings).

22. View the Wilder Brain Collection in Uris Hall, whose specimens include the brain of infamous murderer Edward Ruloff.



23. Read a book in Uris Library's ornate A.D. White reading room.

24. Savor a quiet moment in Sage Chapel.

up some cheese, chocolate milk, and other Cornell-made products—at the Dairy Bar in Stocking Hall.

28. Enjoy a coffee at your favorite campus café, such as Manndible or the Temple of Zeus.

29. Stock up on apples, cider, maple syrup, and more at the Cornell O



Around Collegetown

30. Walk up the Cascadilla Gorge Trail from downtown; reward yourself with coffee and a sweet treat at Collegetown Bagels.

31. Have brunch at Ruloff's, one of Collegetown's oldest eateries.



32. Shop for comfortable shoes at Fontana's.

33. Relive your undergrad days with a bar-hopping tour of Collegetown's remaining watering holes.

34. Refresh yourself with bubble tea at one of several spots in the neighborhood.

35. Grab a pizza and Greek salad at Souvlaki House; don't forget the baklava.

25. Pick up some Big Red swag for the whole family at the Cornell Store.



Food & Drink

26. Sip a cocktail at the Statler bar (don't forget to ask about the secret drinks menu).

27. Check out the latest ice cream flavors—and pick



#14



#24

Ithaca and Beyond

The Great Outdoors

36. Take a gentle stroll to Taughannock Falls (two miles round-trip from the parking lot), then drive up to the falls overlook for a spectacular view.

37. Go on a hot air balloon ride; flights leave from various parks in Ithaca depending on wind direction.

38. Go skydiving over the Finger Lakes from a private airport in Ovid.

39. Bring a picnic to the Flat Rock area of Forest Home, on Fall Creek just upstream of Beebe Lake.

40. Ooh and ahh at the Independence Day fireworks (set for July 3) over Cayuga Lake; viewing options include Sunset Park, Cass Park, Taughannock Falls State Park . . . and a boat on the lake.

41. Explore the farm and make crafts at Gourdlandia, a gourd-centric arts and agriculture spot on West Hill.



42. Visit Ithaca Falls, either by parking in the adjacent lot or taking an easy stroll from downtown.

43. Admire the nineteenth-century covered bridge in Newfield.

Water World

44. Go swimming in Cayuga Lake; lifeguarded areas are available at such venues as Taughannock Falls State Park (on the western shore) and Lansing's Myers Point (on the east).

45. Take a sailboat, canoe, kayak, or paddleboard onto Cayuga Lake; various venues offer rentals and/or lessons.

46. Spice up your Farmers Market visit with a one-hour boat ride from its dock (Saturdays, Sundays, and Thursday evenings in season).

47. Go for a dip in a (legal) swimming hole at Lower Treman or Buttermilk Falls state parks.

48. Take a paddleboard yoga class on the lake.

49. Wine and dine on the lake; offerings include wine-tasting cruises and self-catered sunset trips.

50. Go scuba diving in the Finger Lakes, where you can view sunken fossils, boats, even (in Skaneateles Lake) a plane.

51. Watch the action at the Finger Lakes International Dragon Boat Festival, set for July 13 at Taughannock Falls State Park.

Get Some Exercise

52. Rent a bike at Stewart Park and cruise Ithaca's 5.5-mile Cayuga Waterfront Trail.

53. Hike a state park; nearby options include Buttermilk, Treman, Taughannock, Watkins Glen, and Fillmore Glen.

54. Go mountain biking at Greek Peak, home to seventeen trails (and a chairlift); rentals and lessons are available.



55. Stroll or cycle the Black Diamond Trail, an 8.4-mile former rail line that runs from Ithaca to Taughannock Falls in Trumansburg.

56. Rent a Lime Bike and explore Ithaca and its environs.

57. Explore the trails of the Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, a Cornell-run preserve fifteen miles southwest of Ithaca.

58. Hike part of the 580-mile Finger Lakes Trail, which stretches from Allegany State Park at the Pennsylvania border across Central New York to the Catskills.

59. Bike along the Erie Canal, located about an hour north of Ithaca; the annual Cycle the Erie Canal event, with riders pedaling from Buffalo to Albany and camping en route, is July 7-14.

60. Walk, jog, or cycle the 3.5-mile East Ithaca Recreation Way.

PHOTOS: YOGA, TERRY KENT/ITHACA SUP YOGA; FIREWORKS, BARBARA FRIEDMAN; CANOE, ALAMY; GOURDS, GOURDLANDIA; MOUNTAIN BIKE, GREEK PEAK; CYCLING, ERIE CANAL INC; SWIMMING, ALAMY

#48

#40

#45



#59



#47



Race to the Finish

61. Run a 5K, such as the Ithaca Twilight (June 12), the Fillmore (July 20) in Moravia, or the Ithaca 5 & 10 (September 15), which also has a 10K option.

62. Run a trail race. Cayuga Trails (June 1) offers marathon and 50-mile distances, with a route that includes Buttermilk Falls and Treman state parks; the Finger Lakes 50s (July 6), which goes through the Finger Lakes National Forest, offers 25K, 50K, or 50 miles.

63. Compete in a triathlon. Options include the Musselman (Geneva, July 14), the Cayuga Lake (Taughannock Falls State Park, August 4), and the Finger Lakes (Canandaigua, September 8).

64. Run the Ithaca Gorges Half Marathon (June 15), described by its organizers as “fantastically fast and scenic.”

65. Cycle around Cayuga Lake—and raise funds for HIV/AIDS prevention and services—with the annual AIDS Ride for Life, September 7.

66. Brave 5K or 10K obstacle courses along the Cayuga Waterfront and Black Diamond trails at the Tough Turtle Mud Run, September 21.

Family Fun

67. Stroll the Sagan Planet Walk, a scale model of the solar system stretching from the center of the Commons (the sun) to the Sciencenter (Pluto).



68. Bring the kids to Ithaca's Sciencenter for some hands-on science education, plus a large outdoor play structure and mini-golf.

69. Learn about all things avian at the Lab of O's Migration Celebration, September 15.

70. Take a spin on the Stewart Park carousel and enjoy the park's new inclusive playground for kids of all physical abilities, then go watch the geese on the lakeshore.

71. Visit the Ithaca Children's Garden, a three-acre oasis near Cayuga Inlet.



72. Navigate a six-story tree house at the Cayuga Nature Center, which also features live animals and (in summer) a butterfly garden.



73. Burn off some energy on the giant, castle-like wooden playground outside Fall Creek Elementary School.

74. Encounter bugs of many species at Insectapalooza, hosted by Cornell's entomology department in Comstock Hall, October 19.



75. See some 275 species at Syracuse's Rosamond Gifford Zoo (whose healthcare is provided by specialists at the Vet college).

For Foodies

76. Have breakfast at the State Diner—any time of the day.

77. Take the "Pinesburger Challenge" at the Glenwood Pines, the venerable eatery overlooking Cayuga Lake (put away four cheeseburgers in under an hour, win a bobblehead).

78. Go grocery shopping at Wegmans, the mega-market that so many Cornellians wish had a branch where they live.

79. Take a scenic drive on Route 89 to Cayuga Lake Creamery (lauded by *USA Today* as the best ice cream in the state), stopping at wineries there and back.

80. Revisit the Hot Truck with a French bread pizza at Shortstop Deli.

81. Go vegetarian with lunch or dinner

at the legendary Moosewood Restaurant in Ithaca's Dewitt Mall.

82. Sample dairy delights on the seven-stop Finger Lakes Cheese Trail; the closest one to Ithaca is Lively Run Goat Dairy, which offers tastings and barn tours.

83. Have an upscale lunch or dinner at Simeon's restaurant, the Commons stalwart that reopened several years ago after being heavily damaged by a 2014 truck crash.

84. Graze the vendors for breakfast at the Ithaca Farmers Market; shop for produce and crafts, then graze for lunch.

85. Eat brunch at Purity Ice Cream, then chase it with dessert.



86. Take a six-stop, three-hour, downtown culinary tour with Ithaca Is Foodies.

87. Gather strawberries, blueberries, apples, peaches, and more at a variety of U-pick farms in season.

88. Take a cooking class. Venues include Ithaca's Cultivare Culinary Center and Aurora Cooks!, a school run by Inns of Aurora.

89. Take a "farm to fork" cycling tour based at Atwater Estate Vineyards, August 9-10.



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#82



#87



#111



#104



#112

Libations

90. Go tasting on the Cayuga or Seneca Wine Trail, with dozens of wineries. Don't want to drive? Book a tour, which can include lunch and expert guides.



91. Sample local hard ciders at the Finger Lakes Cider House in Interlaken.

92. Grab a brew on the Finger Lakes Beer Trail, which features some 140 breweries, pubs, tap houses, and tasting rooms.

93. Quaff beers, take a tour, and eat al fresco at the Ithaca Beer Company.

94. Enjoy a craft cocktail with some locally sourced ingredients at Argos Inn, a lavishly renovated hostelry a block east of the Commons.

95. Taste small-batch spirits and take a tour at Finger Lakes Distilling in Burdett.

Festivals & Events (Food & Beverage)

96. Choose from among more than 200 wines at the Seneca Lake Wine and Food Festival in Watkins Glen, May 18.

97. Eat shortcake, view a parade, and more at the Owego Strawberry Festival, June 14-15.

98. Taste vino on a vast scale at the Finger Lakes Wine

Festival, which brings more than ninety wineries to Watkins Glen raceway, July 12-14.

99. Nibble dozens of cheeses by local makers, plus listen to live music and shop for produce and crafts, at the Finger Lakes Cheese Festival in Odessa, July 27.

100. Savor fermented cabbage in all its glory at the Phelps Sauerkraut Festival, August 1-4.

101. Celebrate all things apple at the annual Apple Harvest Festival on the Commons, September 27-29.

102. Drop in to tasting rooms and enjoy pairings at local restaurants during Finger Lakes Cider Week, September 27-October 6.

103. Sample the wares of breweries, distilleries, and cideries at the Ticket Galaxy Beer Festival at Watkins Glen raceway, October 26.

Festivals & Events (General)

104. Revel in the wonderful weirdness that is the Ithaca Festival Parade—featuring the tutu-clad autos of the Volvo Ballet and so much more—snaking through downtown the evening of May 30.

105. Enjoy a plethora of performances, food vendors, and crafts at the annual Ithaca Festival, May 31-June 2.

106. Groove to the music of some eighty bands at the Finger Lakes GrassRoots Festival, in Trumansburg, July 18-21. (Camping available.)

107. Take in an old-time country fair—from fried dough to animal exhibits to carnival rides—at the Trumansburg Fair, August 20-25.

108. Get an up-close look at Ithaca-area agriculture at Cornell Cooperative Extension's Open Farm Days weekend, August 10-11.

109. Immerse yourself in an American tradition, complete with deep-fried delights and vendors galore, at the New York State Fair in Syracuse, August 21-September 2.

110. Walk around Ithaca's Fall Creek and Northside neighborhoods while listening to concerts at Porchfest in September (date TBA).



111. Admire vintage autos and stroll the grounds at an antique car show at Sonnenberg Gardens & Mansion State Historic Park in Canandaigua, September 21.

112. Fly high on Airport Day at the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport; festivities include a 5K race on the runway, sightseeing flights, and a pancake breakfast (date TBA).

113. Wield your wand at Ithaca's popular Wizarding Weekend, a Harry Potter-inspired event (now with a generic Halloween theme, thanks to objections from Warner Brothers) held downtown, October 26-27.





Theatre & Film

114. See a play or musical at the Kitchen Theatre (in downtown Ithaca), Hangar Theatre (in a former airplane hangar near Treman Marina), or Cortland Repertory Theatre (located about a half-hour away in a picturesque lakeside spot).

115. Catch an old-fashioned drive-in movie. The Elmira Drive-In (which holds double features) and Auburn's Finger Lakes Drive-In (which holds *triple* features) are each located about an hour from Ithaca.



116. Attend an avant-garde performance at Ithaca's Cherry Artspace, located on Cayuga Inlet.

117. Go retro with a silent movie. The Wharton Studio Museum hosts a screening at Taughannock Falls State Park each August; in October, it holds a celebration of silent films with events at

Cinemapolis, Cornell Cinema, and Sage Chapel.

118. Take in one of Ithaca Shakespeare Company's outdoor shows in Treman State Marine Park; *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are in July.

119. Watch a free outdoor movie in Stewart Park (every Friday in August).

120. Enjoy a Victorian-era classic: a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta by Binghamton's Summer Savoyards. This season's show is *The Yeomen of the Guard*.

121. View an arthouse movie (and munch on delicious popcorn, with real butter and tasty toppings) at Cinemapolis, Ithaca's nonprofit cinema just off the Commons.



Fine Arts

122. On Gallery Night, held the first Friday of each month, take a walkable tour of Ithaca art openings.

123. Visit artists' studios on the Greater Ithaca Art Trail; a select number of artists welcome guests the first Saturday of each month, and large "open studio" weekends are set for October 5-6 and 12-13.

124. Create your own artwork (and BYOB) at Ithaca's Wine and Design, a studio located just west of the Commons.

Music

125. Rock out at a show at the State Theatre, which hosts major acts from around the country.

126. Bring a picnic and enjoy a summer concert at Taughannock Falls State Park.



127. Attend a free concert on the Commons, held on Thursday evenings throughout the summer.

128. Sip vino and listen to music at one of the wineries, such as Treleaven and Americana, that host summer shows.

129. Mark the fiftieth anniversary of Woodstock with a three-day music festival (organized by a co-producer of the original show) at Watkins Glen raceway, August 16-18.

130. Catch an outdoor rock concert at Tag's in Big Flats. (During the Halloween season, the venue transforms into Tag'sylvania, a hard-core haunted house.)

Museums & Centers

131. Tour the Corning Museum of Glass, which includes not only a vast collection but glass-blowing demonstrations and hands-on workshops.

132. Check out the Paleontological Research Institution's Museum of the Earth, whose highlights include one of the most complete mastodon skeletons ever discovered.



133. View the collection at Syracuse's Everson Museum of Art—whose dramatic concrete building, like Cornell's Johnson, was designed by star architect I.M. Pei.

134. Take a guided tour of the Harriet Tubman Home and National Historical Park in Auburn.



135. Learn about the suffrage movement and more at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls.

136. Meet the rescued agricultural animals—turkeys, pigs, cows, and more—at Farm Sanctuary in Watkins Glen (co-founded by a Cornell alum).

137. Visit the Rockwell Museum, a Smithsonian-affiliated museum of American art in Corning.



#118



#125

#131





#144



#140



#138



#143

Sports

138. Play a round of golf. The numerous area options include Ithaca's nine-hole municipal course—and Cornell's own eighteen-hole course, designed by Robert Trent Jones.

139. Attend a minor league baseball game. The Auburn Doubledays (a single-A team), Binghamton Rumble Ponies (AA), and Syracuse Mets (AAA) are each about an hour's drive from Ithaca.



140. Get revved up at a NASCAR, vintage auto, or other race at Watkins Glen International.



141. Learn cartwheels, handstands, and more with an adult (or youth) tumbling class at Ithaca's Circus Culture school. Other sessions that welcome drop-ins include juggling, unicycling, and "Family Circus Jam," which includes wire walking and aerial work.

142. Play miniature golf at two venues in nearby Cortland—the pirate-themed Shipwreck Golf and, just down the road, a classic course (complete with

windmill) located next door to one of the Northeast's few remaining A&W restaurants.

143. Watch a roller derby bout by the Ithaca League of Women Rollers at Cass Park rink.

144. Saddle up for horseback riding at one of several local stables.

145. Experience what it's like to be an auto racer with Drive the Glen, which lets visitors do laps in their own car or truck around Watkins Glen's Grand Prix circuit.



#148



#151



#147

Lodging

146. Reserve a cabin at Buttermilk Falls or Lower Treman state parks.

147. Rent a house on Cayuga Lake; which shore you choose depends on your preference for sunrises or sunsets.

148. Go "glamping" (luxury camping) at sites such as Ithaca's La Tourelle, which offers well-appointed tents on its grounds.

149. Stay in a yurt in a nearby town like Newfield, Trumansburg, or Romulus.

150. Book a guestroom on a farm or at a farm-based B&B.

Shopping

151. Browse the newly renovated Ithaca Commons, which features boutiques, restaurants, and an outpost of the Cornell Store.

152. Peruse high-end home décor at MacKenzie-Childs's headquarters and flagship store in Aurora. Its wildly popular barn sale is July 18-21.



153. Go antiques. Local venues include the Found in Ithaca multi-vendor market and Significant Elements, a nonprofit purveyor of salvaged architectural pieces, from light fixtures to doorknobs.

154. Buy an "Ithaca Is Gorges" T-shirt (or other keepsake, from coffee mugs to baseball caps) at one of many places around town.

155. Explore "micro retail" in Press Bay Alley, a cluster of tiny shops located behind the *Ithaca Journal's* former printing facility off West Green Street downtown.

Etcetera

156. Drive around Ithaca and marvel at all the recent high-rise construction downtown and in Collegetown.

157. In honor of Carl Sagan's description of Earth as a "pale blue dot," put a marble on his grave in Ithaca's historic Lake View Cemetery, the final resting place of many prominent Ithacans.



158. Get a free massage from a student at the Finger Lakes School of Massage.

159. Attend (or participate in) the annual reading of the Declaration of Independence, held the morning of July 4 on the Homer town green.

160. Take your teen on a tour of (gasp!) another area school; options include Ithaca College, SUNY Cortland, Wells College, Binghamton University, and Syracuse University.

161. Pick any of the activities from the original "161 Things" list you didn't get to do when you were a student, and do it.