



Cornell University



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About the country and city

Cornell University is located in Ithaca, a small and beautiful town in upstate New York, which is 4 hours away from New York City. Getting there by bus is really simple. It is also around 4-7 hours from other major cities like Toronto, Philadelphia, Boston, etc.



Cornell campus, January 2019

In Ithaca you get to enjoy both student's life and in addition you can go out to visit the big cities - so you can get the best of both worlds.

*Ithaca's weather is varied. In the winter it gets really cold (it was minus 23 when I got there) and snowed every day. However, when it got warmer around April-May it was beautiful and green, you can enjoy more of the lakes and waterfalls in the area.

Cornell Campus, May 2019

About the Host University

The Cornell campus is one of the most beautiful campuses in the U.S and is one of the Ivy leagues, top universities in the U.S. You get to enjoy a campus that has an atmosphere of an ancient castle, surrounded by beautiful lakes, waterfalls and beautiful nature.



Cornell was founded in 1865 and since then it preserves the 'true' American student life. Johnson Business School really encourages socializing and networking, therefore there is an event called 'Sage Social' every Thursday night. All the MBA's are gathering for free food and drinks at Johnson's Sage Hall, which always gives opportunities to meet new people.

Courses

All the classes I had taken taught me a lot and were with top professors. Johnson is really encouraging entrepreneurship and leadership and therefore I recommend to take one of these types of courses.

Classes I took

RE Tech & Innovation- The class took place at Cornell Tech campus in NYC, for 3 weekends throughout the semester. The class was interesting and included some good speakers. It was a good reason to visit NYC (there were shuttles to the city) and enjoy the opportunity to see the beautiful new campus.

Intro to Design and Innovation- the course was different from all the classes I have ever taken. It will open your mind to think outside of the box and understand the process of product designing.

The Business Idea Factory- this course is one of the best entrepreneurship and start-up classes in Johnson. It will inspire you to come up with many ideas for start-ups.

Electronic Business- this course is all about the E-commerce. The classes were also accessible online.

Digital Marketing- interesting class, good instructor.

Women and Leadership- an interesting class with the professor Michelle Duguid. It included very powerful and inspirational women speakers. This class is all about the position of women in work places and the balance between personal life and work. The course demands include cases study, class participation and a final paper.

Core leadership skills for VUCA- this class is taught by a former chief in the U.S army, which is really an inspirational person. It is all about leadership and how to be a good leader in this uncertain world. The class takes place over 3 weekends.

Startup Learning Series- this course included many different speakers who are very successful entrepreneurs or start-ups founders (every class a different speaker). In the end

you need to submit a final paper with thoughts and take-aways from all the speakers. You get to learn from true experience of talented people.

Accommodation

Unfortunately, there were no student housing for one semester, at least at the time of my stay. However, these are my recommendations:

*Join the Facebook group: Israelis in Ithaca. It's always a good idea to post and ask for help or recommendations from people who are already there. Let them know you are coming and you might get some relevant help.

*After you have got your NetID from Cornell you can ask to join the Facebook group 'Sublets at Cornell'. There are always people who are leaving Cornell to do exchange abroad like us and therefore are subletting their apartment or room for a semester.

*Focus your search in the Collegetown area. This area is the closest to campus and to the Business School (around 10 minutes' walk, as opposed to the downtown which is a tough walk on a hill). There are bars and restaurants and it is where most students live.

*You can try to negotiate the price of housing- it is common to ask for a lower price.

Visa

After you get the I-20 from the university and pay SEVIS fee online, you can fill in the DS-160 and apply for F-1 visa request at the U.S embassy and then schedule an interview for the final stage. My interview was few minutes and I was told that I got the visa on the spot. Normally as long as you have the I-20, which is the university acceptance, the process is easy, you just need to follow the instructions and the steps which you can also find online. You have to bring the I-20 with you, because they ask to see it when you enter the U.S!. And in general you should take it with you everywhere you go if you are taking a flight in and out the U.S during the period of the semester.

*After the semester officially ends the F-1 visa allows you 60 days to leave the U.S. If you want to travel during these 60 days you can travel in the U.S or Canada and Mexico, But if you leave the U.S you won't be able to re-enter with the F-1 visa during this period of time.

Transportation

Ithaca offers a free bus system with the Cornell student card which will be given to you at the beginning of the semester. Going to further places- there is an Enterprise renting Car Company in downtown Ithaca. Or if you need to go to major cities like Manhattan, I recommend booking a bus ticket through the website: BusBud.com.

Insurance and Health Services

Soon before the semester starts you will get emails from Cornell about the health insurance. You will have to get the university insurance which is mandatory for every student and will cost around 1000\$. This will cover you for the whole semester (no additional insurance is needed). As soon as you get to Cornell you have to make an appointment with a nurse at the health center to check your immunizations records (make sure you bring it with you or scan it and upload to the health website before you go).

In case you need to see a doctor, the health center is right on campus and it is very convenient and easy to make an appointment through the health website (seeing a nurse is with no cost, if she directs you to see a doctor it is 10\$). There is also a pharmacy there in case you need some medications.

Food

There is a long list of good restaurants in Ithaca. There are really good organic groceries stores: such as Green Star (good quality but small and expensive) and Wegmans (really big). Also, there are stores like Target and Walmart in Ithaca, which you can get to with Ithaca's bus. One of the things Cornell and Ithaca are known for is the good ice cream, so you should try the 'Dairy Bar' at Cornell and 'Purity ice cream' in Ithaca. Don't miss 'Insomnia cookies', the famous NY cookies that does delivery until 3AM. Also, starting in April until the end of the fall every Saturday and Sunday there is Ithaca farmers market, which I really recommend to get good varied food.

Also, there are lots of wineries in the area of the big lakes (Seneca and Cayuga lakes), which are part of the Finger Lakes and you should visit them at least once.

Night Life

There are few well known bars which you can have a beer with friends and all the students are going there: Big Red Barn, Rullofs, Hideaway, The Loft, Argos, Level B, etc. On Wednesdays there are Latin nights in Agava, which is a cool dance bar and restaurant, too.

Tips

*As a student in the U.S you get a free Amazon Prime for a year. I recommend to use it and take advantage OF IT.

*Visit the beautiful libraries at the campus at the law school, Olin library and Uris library. There are good places to study and if not you should just go to see them.

***Go to see a sport game of one of the Cornell teams! (hockey, baseball, basketball). It's a true American and a once in a lifetime experience.**

General experience

To conclude, it seems to me that the exchange program was an experience I won't forget, I recommend everyone to do it! Cornell is an amazing place to do it, starting from the high-level classes, get to travel a lot and experience the classic American student life. If you have any question you are more than welcome to contact me via mail.

Photos



