

100 Things You Should Do To Know the Real New Hampshire

Compiled by Commissioner Steve Taylor

Here are some places, activities, events and diversions that afford insight into the culture and values of the Real New Hampshire—that part of the state that is distinctive and different from the homogenized, mass-market rest of America.

Most of these things don't cost a nickel; the rest can all be done for \$22 or less.

1. Drive Moose Alley, Pittsburg. It's actually U.S. Rt. 3 north of the village for eight or nine miles. Best late afternoon. Beware fast-braking tourists. Bring camera.
2. Attend any lecture on any aspect of New Hampshire history given by Jere Daniell of Dartmouth College. He appears often around the state.
3. Learn and sing the words of "Old New Hampshire."
4. Visit a real working dairy farm; stand in the pit of the milking parlor and watch what happens. Some to try: Graymist Farm, Groveton; Tullando, Orford; Stuarts, Stratham; Pine Lane, Contoocook.
5. Take in the Friday night races at Canaan Speedway. Dress down.
6. Ride around the back roads of Kitteryville and East Colebrook and see a pastoral landscape slipping back to spruce forest.
7. Attend any football, soccer or basketball game between two tough old mill town high schools, as, Newport vs. Stevens of Claremont.
8. Canoe a section of the Connecticut, Merrimack, or, best Androscoggin white water.
9. Stand at the rail of the ox pulling ring at Cornish or North Haverhill Fair and listen to the accents.
10. Drive Rt. 135 from Woodsville north through Bath and Monroe for a glimpse of an unspoiled 1930s New Hampshire landscape.
11. Get out of your car and slowly walk through any New Hampshire covered bridge. Climb down the stream bank and look up under, too.
12. Carefully read the Coos County Democrat, especially the news notes from places like Stark and Jefferson, and anything written by John Harrigan, the bard of the Great North Woods.
13. Ride a jet ski on any lake where it's still legal.
14. See in person every major candidate running in the Presidential Preferential Primary. A great place to find them is Lindy's Diner in Keene, and be sure to try the onion rings when you're there.
15. Join a community theater group.
16. Dance at the Monday contra dance at the Nelson town hall. Some of those tunes trace back to Elizabethan times.
17. Eat fried dough with cinnamon and sugar at Weirs Beach or Deerfield Fair.
18. Watch the sap boil at a sugarhouse and taste syrup hot from the pan. There's a lot of socializing when they're boiling late into the night.
19. Sit in the gallery of any district court on small claims day.
20. Attend a Grange meeting.
21. Ride a snowmobile on any Coos County trail.
22. See the Christmas lights at LaSalette Shrine in Enfield.
23. Tune in Bob Barbin on WMOU, Berlin, when he does his Sunday morning French language broadcast, the last of its kind in the state.
24. Watch the sheep-to-shawl competition at the New Hampshire Sheep and Wool Festival at the Hopkinton State Fairgrounds in May.
25. Get caught in the Columbus Day foliage weekend traffic jam on Rt. 16 in Conway.
26. For a real crowd experience, try Hampton Beach on a hot July 4th.
27. Walk the Amoskeag Millyard and imagine when it was the world's greatest textile complex.

28. Find a good junkyard where they'll still let you pull your own car parts out of the hulks.
29. Ride the Thomas Loughton to the Isles of Shoals.
30. Sit in a bob house and fish through the ice.
31. View the landscape paintings of Durham artist John Hatch.
32. Quietly paddle Grafton Pond at dusk just as the loons are calling..
33. Drink soda by Squamscot Beverages of Newfields from a returnable bottle.
34. Join the blessing of the motorcycles at the Shrine of Our Lade of Grace in Colebrook.
35. Pick your own berries or apples at a nearby farm.
36. Watch the lobstermen offload the day's catch at Saunders Lobster Co. in Portsmouth Harbor.
37. Climb to a fire tower and talk with the observer. Hurry, they may not exist much longer.
38. Follow Ray Burton around on one of his North Country tours. Or go to his annual lawn party, he'll be happy you came.
39. Dig clams in the Hampton River.
40. Spend a day at the Sunapee Crafts Fair.
41. Get yourself to the summit of Mount Washington on a clear day.
42. Buy fresh cider, pumpkins and Indian corn at a local orchard.
43. See the gigantic world-record-setting jack o'lantern display in Keene.
44. Go on a coon hunt through Connecticut Valley corn fields, or try fishing for horned pout.
45. Study the New Hampshire photography of Peter Randall.
46. Bid on antiques or collectibles at country estate auction.
47. Stay overnight at an AMC high mountain hut.
48. Observe a purple finch, the New Hampshire state bird.
49. Chat with a skier who went from New Hampshire to soldier with the 10th Mountain Division in World War II, especially one who once competed at Berlin's Nansen Jump.
50. Serenade your sweetheart as you stand beneath the Great Stone Arch in Tilton.
51. Subscribe to the Weekly Market Bulletin.
52. Walk the grounds of the Balsams Hotel, Dixville, and take in the sight of 35,000 flowering plants.
53. Take in the play "The Old Homestead," produced every year without fail in Swanzey.
54. Read an Ernest Hebert novel and see if the characters sound like some people who live in your town.
55. Head into an alder swamp in April and pick fiddleheads, then take them home and fry them in butter.
56. Turn on a radio in Pittsburg and see if anything comes in.
57. Ride the train that passes through Crawford Notch.
58. Buy—or make—tortiere for a Christmas feast.
59. BYOB and try line dancing at Circle 9 Ranch in Epsom.
60. Talk to a professional logger and learn the difference between a feller-buncher and a slasher, and about the changes taking place in the wood harvesting business.
61. Observe the importance of small town identity at the state high school Class S basketball tournament at Plymouth State.
62. Enjoy souvlaki and listen to old men arguing in Greek at the Gaslighter in Concord.
63. Find somebody who makes good hard cider.
64. Stand in the studio at Saint-Gaudens National Historic site and visualize the sculptor at work on his seated Abraham Lincoln.
65. Learn how to use a scythe and snath and try to make some hay while the sun shines.
66. Sample the breads and pastries made in Finnish family kitchens and sold in stores around New Ipswich.
67. Talk to some of kids at the Harrisville elementary school and have them tell you how they got the pumpkin made the official state fruit.
68. Study the layout of the villages of New Castle and Sandwich as examples of the 18th and 19th century vision and planning, respectively.
69. Watch the sun rise at the Cathedral of the Pines in Rindge.
70. Bet the dogs and sniff the cigar smoke at Hinsdale Raceway.
71. Hunt up Muriel's Donut Shop in Lebanon and have a cruller straight from the kettle.

72. Match wits with the judge who picks the winning heifers in the Cornish Fair dairy cattle show.
73. Enjoy chocolate milk bottled in glass at Hatchland Dairy of North Haverhill or McNamara Dairy in Plainfield.
74. Sit in the audience any day the House Municipal and County Government Committee is taking up bills relative to dogs.
75. Join a crew raking wild blueberries in Gilmanton and Brookfield.
76. Order poutine at Chez Vachon on Manchester's Westside.
77. Watch the Moran tugboats nudge an oil tanker up the Piscataqua River into Portsmouth Harbor.
78. Sample the fare at at least a half dozen church suppers, and take seconds on pie whenever they're offered.
79. Attend town meeting without fail.
80. Kick the tires on the used log skidders and farm tractors at Eddie Nash's equipment emporium outside Colebrook and talk to the guys looking to buy this stuff.
81. Take in a rowdy "rafting" party on Winnepesaukee or the Saco River.
82. Learn why the road agent is the most important person in a rural community.
83. Look up at a clear New Hampshire winter sky at dusk and see where the term "Maxfield Parrish Blue" came from.
84. Hang around the crowd at the first farm auction in the spring.
85. Know what an "intervale" is and what Robert Frost thought about it.
86. Listen to the Shaw Brothers sing "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" and "New Hampshire, Naturally" at a nice benefit concert.
87. Get a DeLorme's Atlas of New Hampshire and use it to explore places like Bungy, Hemlock, Poocham and Granite.
88. Tap your feet in time with the fiddlers at the Stark Fiddlers Festival.
89. Savor the influence of Bulfinch, Morey and other great American architects on the Seven Swans, the great mansions on The Ridge in Orford.
90. Try to count the yard sales, collectibles merchants and antiques dealers along U.S. Rt. 4 through Northwood.
91. Climb Monadnock and see what makes it the Most Climbed Mountain in the western hemisphere.
92. Make sugar on snow.
93. Read the New Hampshire-focused essays of Donald Hall and novels of Thomas Williams.
94. Find the prettiest town commons. Start in Haverhill, and don't forget Acworth, and Walpole's Washington Square.
95. Compare and contrast the annual business meeting of a big regional school district with that of a small single-town district.
96. Watch and listen to goings on at a deer weighing station.
97. Live through a good chimney fire.
98. Cheek-to-cheek dance at the Rockingham Ballroom in Newmarket and dream what it was like when the Dorseys and Paul Whiteman played there.
99. Staff a community recycling center a few days.
100. Eat at any diner that still serves good fried tripe.