

## HOW TO HAVE A GREAT AD&D CAMPAIGN

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Here are some suggestions that I have found helpful in my AD&D campaign. There are rules suggestions, hands-on activities for outside of game time, books to read... all kinds of stuff. I'm a history major, so forgive me if the list is kind of heavy on reading and research. Feel free to discuss.

In no particular order:

1. Go horseback riding (a MUST!).
2. Learn the names for various riding equipment and supplies.
3. Visit an authentic blacksmith's shop. Places like colonial Williamsburg, Virginia are good for this, even if not set in exactly the right time period.
4. Find and wear a replica suit of armor. This is even harder than it sounds; the first thing you will learn is a lesson about the relative sizes of people then and now...
5. Learn fencing. It's good exercise too.
6. Visit an art museum. The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of the best, but if you can get to the Louvre, I won't argue the point. Either way, this is probably the most important thing on the list. While you are there, see the following things:
  - arms and armor
  - clothing and tapestries
  - calligraphy
  - religious relics
  - basically ANYTHING from the middle ages.
  - basically ANYTHING from ancient Egypt, Greece, or Rome. The remnants of a previous time do much to add atmosphere to a campaign.
7. Think back to your art museum trip. Imagine everything you saw was some kind of magical item...
8. Read "Beowulf".
9. Read "The Canterbury Tales".
10. Shoot bows and arrows of various types.
11. Read a book about herbalism. "The Magic and Medicine of Plants" from Time/Life Books is one I recommend. In short, if you don't know the significance of, oh, say, the mandrake, you don't know anything about herbalism, even if you think you do.
12. Play chess, even if it is the degenerate modern variety first recorded in 1518.
13. Sleep under the stars. Ask yourself if any self-respecting 15th level nobleman would do the same.
14. Attend a Wiccan gathering.
15. Attend a Roman Catholic Mass said in Latin.

16. Visit a Gothic Cathedral.
17. Visit an authentic castle. If you happen not to live in Europe, there is a decent replica of one in Loveland, Ohio (!). (If anyone reading this has the address of Chateau La Roche, it would be much appreciated).
18. Read "The Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco.
19. See the movie of the same name. A picture is worth 1000 words, and at 24 frames a second, that's a lot.
20. Be familiar with the following infamous villains and dastardly events:
  - The Spanish Inquisition
  - Sir Francis Drake
  - The Spanish Armada
  - Savanarola vs. the Medici family
  - The Viking attacks on the Anglo-Saxons.
  - The Huns
21. Find some Medieval recipies. Make and eat them, if you dare.
22. Go hangliding. It's probably the closest thing to a flight spell that we'll ever have.
23. Write with a quill pen.
24. While you're at it, learn a little calligraphy.
25. Learn a bit about the language of heraldry.
26. Learn the names for the various parts of a castle and cathedral. And I mean more than just "dungeon" and "altar."
27. Explore a wild (non-commercial) cave. Consider the difficulty of doing the same in armor.
28. Get an illustrated, full-color armor catalogue from an place that makes authentic armor. Sure, the stuff for sale will all cost a lot, but it's the pictures you're after. You may learn a lot just by paging through the catalogue. I once knew someone who had a catalogue like this, but alas, he is lost to the sands of time... Can anyone help?
29. Hear some recordings of early music, ie., that of the troubadours and Gregorian chants.
30. Go wilderness backpacking. Then YOU tell ME if AD&D movement rates make sense.
31. See a demonstration of falconry.
32. See a demonstration of jousting and swordfighting.
33. See a demonstration of archery.
34. Have your fortune told by a live fortune teller (NOT a dial-in psychic). Whether or not you believe in that kind of thing, the magic is in the presentation, and this is what it's all about.

35. Read "The Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett. It's got lots of sex in it (and this is bad?), and it also has a lot of background on life in medieval England and the building of cathedrals. A fascinating book.
36. Ride a carriage over a gravel, dirt, or courdroy road.
37. Read anything by Tolkien, but ignore the humans for the most part. Pay attention to the elves, dwarves, halflings, and humanoids. To keep them interesting, the races should all be SPECIAL and UNIQUE, and Tolkien understands this.
38. Take off your glasses. Now consider the importance of adding a PERCEPTION trait to your character sheet. (As a character, my PER score would probably be around 4 or 5 without my glasses). I'll leave it to you to work out the details.
39. Read the Book of Revelation in the Bible.
40. Read "The Wonders of the Invisible World" by Cotton Mather for information on witchcraft.
41. Read "The Pit and the Pendulum" by Edgar Allen Poe for an idea of what good suspense is like.
42. Read (or see performances of) "Macbeth" and "Hamlet".
43. Forget Monty Python.
44. Forget "Robin Hood: Men in Tights".
45. Forget Greyhawk and Forgotten Realms. Fun, yes. Authentic, no. (The same goes for the above two).
46. Consider carefully the availability of coinage in your world. The vast majority of medieval valuables came in the form of LAND and TITLES, not money. Land is the very basis of the feudal system. If you want easily portable valuables, use jewelry or gems. Coins were much rarer than most AD&D fantasy adventures have you believe. Jewelry is more fun, too.
47. See a replica of a medieval ship, of almost any kind.
48. Carry and use a torch, even a Tiki Torch, while trying to do something else.
49. Read James Michener's "Poland", especially the sections dealing with the middle ages. Heck, the whole thing isn't a bad read anyway.
50. Build a fire without matches or other modern equipment.
51. Remember that most people of the time are illiterate.
52. Remember that most people of the time are short of stature.
53. Remember that most people of the time are superstitious. The existence of actual, working magic will probably do a lot to further this.
54. Remember that most people of the time die young. Adventurers will have longer lives if they can pay for clerical healing, which is vastly superior to any other kind available.
55. Remember that adventurers are extremely rare. Fighters and rogues should be the most common, followed by clerics. Wizards should be the most rare, special, and MAGICAL of all.

