

WHEN TO COME TO LEUVEN

!!! WARNING !!!

Don't come on weekends during the school year! For some reason, all the students go home to their mothers for the weekend. Then things become really really quiet, unless you're lucky enough to find local house parties in places like Rumba, Silo and Der Machine. But basically, Leuven remains a student party town, so come during the week if you want to dance on the table.

11-14 FEBRUARY

KULTURAMA FESTIVAL

Everyone who has something to do with art, culture or music participates in the Kulturama festival. Spread over venues all over the city, international (pretty alternative) acts such as Tinariwen, Pendulum, Lars Horntveth, Nurse With Wound, and local acts like Lyenn and Selah Sue play concerts. There's a retrospective and a premiere of American director Wes Anderson and the streets are full of art as well.

Prices and tickets // www.kulturama.be

2 - 9 - 16 - 23 JULY 2010

BELEUVENISSEN OPEN-AIR MUSIC

No need to come to this one all the way from the States or the Far East, but if you happen to be around on a Friday in July, you'll enjoy the easy-going jazz, world music or blues in open air on one of the Leuven squares: Beleuvenissen. And it's free, so why not?

Free // www.beleuvenissen.be

1 AUGUST 2010

BARKEEPER RACE

You already smell it when you step out of the train and the wind comes from the right direction: Leuven is the beer capital of the country. It's Stella beer ferment that you smell. Anyway, we take beer seriously. For the yearly barkeeper race, every self-respecting bar selects the best barkeeper, who runs against the others with a plate full of shaking beers, trying to keep the glasses full while racing against time. You can imagine how it ends: broken glass and beer in the gutter. Good local fun, with snacks served outside.

Free // hapjetapje.leuveninscene.be

14-15 AUGUST 2010

MARKTROCK MUSIC FESTIVAL

This rock festival lands wham-bam in the middle of the historical centre, on an old market square surrounded by bars. No bands announced yet, but expect a mix of Belgian topacts and young local talent. The most important thing is the afterparty though. By then, people usually have had enough Stella and the whole square jumps like crazy. Marktrock used to be every Leuvenaars' pride in the old days when it was long-haired and crazy, but now that it's gotten big, many locals leave town to avoid it.

Free // www.marktrock.be

23 SEPTEMBER 2010

FRESH STUDENT MEAT!

"What's that sound, grandma?" "That's the students coming, my love." On around 35.000 old bikes, the new boys and girls invade the streets. It's a good time to check out the bar life, especially in the Tiensestraat. You recognize the first-year students because they look a bit paler than the rest after midnight. Official student welcome party today, with free concerts and DJ sets on the Oude Markt.

NOVEMBER 2010

(exact dates not confirmed yet)

PLAYGROUND FESTIVAL

If you're into cutting edge visual arts, international theatre, or performance art, you may want to consider coming to Leuven. STUK arts centre opens all its 9 rooms and halls to international artists. They mix and shake those artists until something fresh comes out. Visual artists are introduced to choreographers and video artists are tricked into making a theatre play. So you definitely see unique performances.

Prices online // www.playgroundfestival.be

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2010

(exact dates not confirmed yet)

SHORT MOVIE FESTIVAL

Short movies in a long festival. Don't worry: about 60% of the movies are from other countries and subtitled in English. Leuven's short film festival has built up quite a reputation, and you will always meet a lot of the young directors. Different programmes for fiction, documentary, experimental movies, animation and music videos.

Prices online // www.kortfilmfestival.be