



**BAlSmag**

NOVEMBER 2024 • ISSUE 39

# A Survival Guide to your 20s



BAlSmag



# Editor's note

Dear Reader,

In your hands (or on your electronic devices) you have the first edition of the 2024-2025 BAISmag magazine. Our team thanks you for taking some time to appreciate our work, especially since you actually bothered to read the editor's note! Before you get bored, the topic of the magazine is something relatable to all of us since everyone has been/ is/ will be in their 20s at some point in their life, (un)fortunately. Sure, your 20s are often portrayed as 'the golden age' to look back on with nostalgia when you get older- yet the reality is more complex. However, sometimes the experience of entering the third decade of life is laced with confusion: feeling confused about your relationships with people, your life choices, your 'place in the world'. We hope that this magazine will give you some of the answers you need to manage your 20s, or at least make you feel better since you are not the only one struggling. Hope you enjoy it!

Mariia Ignateva  
Editor-in-chief

Issue 39

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Online version of this magazine can be found at: [www.baismag.com](http://www.baismag.com)

# Table of Contents

- 3** Becoming an adult around the world
- 5** How's life in your 20s
- 7** Making Cents of your 20s: A Financial Guide
- 9** Procrastination, pigeons, and wisdom from dead birds
- 11** The Importance of Hobbies in your 20s
- 13** Never Mind
- 15** What I Wish I'd Known Before Turning 25
- 17** Weekend Escapes in The Netherlands: A Travel Guide for Students at a Loose End
- 21** Survival Guide to Your 20s
- 25** The Movies Guide To Survive Your 20s





# Becoming an adult around the world

As our dedicating an entire issue to it makes clear, a person's transition into "young adulthood" is a topic we humans find very important and ponder about much. The importance of the topic leads to us to treating it like we treat everything we care about, we try to make sense of it our own way, to quantify it, to make it palpable. This means we make symbols to emphasize the importance of these matters, and these often take the form of traditions and customs. Here we look at two different customs from the diverse cultures of our planet to see humans engage with the journey of coming of age.

In Japan the reaching of adulthood and the rights that come with it like, drinking, voting and driving, are officially celebrated on Seijin No Hi or coming of age day celebrated on the second Monday of January. Prefectures hold lengthy speeches during the ceremonies reminding youth of their new rights and responsibilities. More excitingly, fashion is a necessity on this day, as the streets are filled with girls wearing traditional Furisode long-sleeved kimonos for the first time, some of them combining it with modern colored hair, while boys increasingly trade in traditional suits of western attire. Of course after the ceremonies the new adults exercise their rights to get drunk at local bars.

Coming of age rituals have been a part of Japanese culture for centuries, but were made into a public holiday just after the Second World War. After Japan's heavy losses, it was found important to strengthen the belief of a new generation capable of restoring the nation.

Japan has recently changed the legal age of adulthood from 20 to 18, which brings a new demographic for the tradition but also complications, as 18-year-olds still cannot legally drink and can't thus participate in the usual bar activities and their high school test takes place around the same time as the ceremony. This change of official adulthood can be seen as an attempt to conform to international standards and as a way to further empower youth.

Traveling across southward to the southern part of Pentecost island of the pacific nation of Vanuatu. The Sa speaking people practice Naghol or "land-diving", where men build a large wooden structure and jump off it with vines strapped to their ankles. This tradition is meant to secure a bountiful yam harvest during the next season, but it's also a rite of passage into manhood. Young boys that are circumcised become men after they jump off the platform for the first time. The boys jump off the lowest level, and as they grow up and get more skilled, they jump from higher divisions of the structure. These divisions are based on different parts of the body, the lowest part being the heel and the highest being the top of the head. When they jump off the top segment, about 30 meters from the ground, the way to get a successful dive is to brush the ground lightly with the shoulders. In the age of global travel, Naghol has become a tourists' attraction, which provides income to the community but also raises questions and fears about the commercialization of culture.

These two traditions are just a taste of the different ways in which we convey the meaning of our jump into a new stage of life. Just like our lives, these traditions too are subject to constant reinterpretation and change.

By Damian Tavera van Gemert





# - How's life in your 20s -

Your twenties can seem scary at first, that's why we decided to ask our students some questions.

Elena, 26 years old, from Switzerland, doing her master.

**Your twenties are usually a time of changes where you have a lot going on and sometimes it's hard to keep up with everything. How do you balance your study and social life?**

When I was studying in Geneva it was a little bit more difficult because i was commuting between my city and the city where the university was so i think i tried to make friends that were also living in my hometown so we could just commute together and most of my social life was based on going to cafès after classes and that was pretty much it because i couldn't stay there for the night, otherwise i wouldn't had been able to go back home. So yeah, mostly cafès and just hanging out after the lectures, having lunch together or staying out at the library. Here is way easier because i live close to the university, but i do reccomend to try to make friends in your class or with people that attend the same lectures as you because it's better and easier for your schedule too.



*"Do mistakes and remember that nothing is permanently decided yet. You can always change something or do something different with your life."*

**For a lot of people being twenty means have to experience living alone for the first time and one of the main struggle might be managing your finances. Is there any strategy? How do you do that?**

Very badly. I'm not good with finances to be honest. I would say that you have to prioritize food and stuff that you really need to live and then see what you have left. Also, i think money is a mean to make your life easier and more comfortable so you should always prioritize things that make you comfortable or bring you joy. First prioritize what you really need to buy and then prioritize what makes you feel good!



**Living alone in your twenties also means experiencing homesickness, how are you dealing with that ?**

I feel like it really depends on if you like where you are living or not. If you don't, it's going to make your homesickness worse. How do you deal with it? It's not always a good idea but i would say try to find something that reminds you of home. For example, now that is autumn, since in my country we have a lot of trees and the nature is very present, i try to find beautiful autumn paths so that they remind me of my town. Another thing that i think is very important is making friends, their support can really help you overcome homesickness and you can take care of each other. I would also reccomend to try to keep in touch with people from your hometown. Try to call them often because otherwise you are going to feel like your missing out on their lives and that they'll forget about you.

**If you had to describe your twenties what would you say? Are they a scary experience?**

I mean your twenties can be very overwhelming, especially because, at least in my case, i think i felt more social pressure on me, about finding a job, knowing what you want to do with your life... The closer you get to thirty the more the societal expentations grow on you. Something that i noticed is that people around you expect you to have more or less a good idea of what you want to do with your future about the time you turn twenty. It's fine if you don't, but you can really feel this preasure on you. But the most important thing to remember is that your twenties are supposed to be like a test run about what your life is going to be. They are about making mistakes so this is a good time to make mistakes because this is the only way you'll learn how to deal with adulthood. So If i had to describe my twenties with one words it would probably be "rollercoaster".

**Do you have any other advices that you would like to give to people who are about to enter their twenties or who are already living through them?**

Do mistakes and remember that nothing is permanently decided yet. You can always change something or do something different with your life. You should always remind yourself that changes aren't that dramatic.



# MAKING CENTS OF YOUR 20S

## A FINANCIAL GUIDE

You're an adult now, and money is real. Does that sound terrifying? It doesn't have to be! While dealing with finances may seem like a daunting task, taking small steps to build healthy financial habits now will pay for itself in the future. As a student, you probably don't have much money to spend in the first place, and that's totally ok.

Below, I've included a few tips to keep you and your wallet happy.

### BECOME A GROCERY GOD



Food is pricey, but there are absolutely ways to eat without eating a hole into your wallet. Try doing parts of your weekly shopping at Haagse Markt, as the fruit and veg is often significantly cheaper (and sometimes fresher) than at the supermarket. When it comes to supermarkets, shop around. Discount chains like Aldi and Lidl often have staple foods at a fraction of the price of flagship supermarkets. If you're lazy like I am and still do most of your shopping at Albert Heijn, utilize the bonuskaart! By tailoring my shopping to what is on bonus, I can save 10-15 euros per week. If you have the Albert Heijn app, you can activate weekly personal bonuses that help push that grocery bill down even further. If you're not big on cooking, then hop on Too Good to Go to get restaurant quality meals at deliciously low prices while fighting food waste in the process.

### MAKE A BUDGET



To make the most of your student budget, you must first create one. It's pretty simple really, just take your monthly income and subtract how much you're spending on your expenses. The general rule is 50-30-20 (50% for necessities, 30% for wants, 20% for savings) but depending on your personal situation, these numbers can be tweaked. There are multiple ways to actually create your budget. Some people like excel with its numerous ready templates while others prefer the good ole pen and paper method, but I would recommend downloading a budgeting app, as they make creating categories for expenses and inputting spending on the go quick and easy. Ultimately, it doesn't matter what method you use, just stay consistent!

### START SAVING IF YOU CAN



Saving money is very important, and your 20s is the best time to start. You don't have to have Jeff Bezos level investments, but at the very least, you need to have an emergency fund to cover unanticipated expenses. Start putting aside a bit of money every month, even if it's only 10 or 20 euros. For now, aim to have a few hundred euros for bike repairs, broken phones, or an emergency flight home. Once you have a full time job however, it's recommended to have 3-6 months of living expenses saved up.

### BUY USED!

It's honestly insane how much money you can save by buying used. If you have the time to shop around, go to the thrift! I once got shorts that retailed for 40 euros (tag still on and everything) for 5 euros. True story. Plus, second hand shops usually have fun knick knacks lying around. Just don't buy used underwear or something. You're cheap, not classless. Don't shy away from FB Marketplace either. Oftentimes, people will give away furniture, appliances, and everything in between for free!



### FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO YOUR HOBBIES ON THE CHEAP

Hobbies are a great way to enrich yourself, meet new people, or simply de-stress and have fun. Being budget conscious doesn't mean you have to say goodbye to your favorite activities, but chances are, that there are ways to make many of them more affordable.



For example, I love to read, and I realized that going to the library and utilizing my e-library membership on my kindle saves me a ton of money over the course of the year. Since I don't have to budget for books, I can read as much as I want! If you're more of a fitness enthusiast, then finding gyms with student memberships or group classes (like those offered at Beehive) are a great way to break a sweat without breaking the bank.

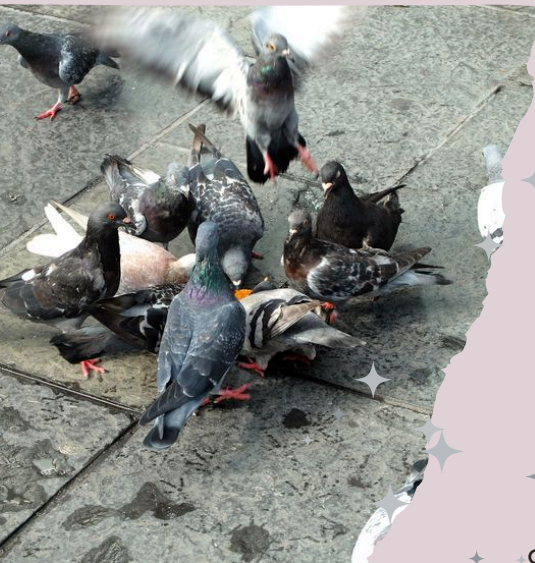
By Krzysztof Witt



# PROCRASTINATION, PIGEONS, AND WISDOM FROM DEAD BIRDS

Thonk. A bird flies into my window. I walk up to the window. From up here, I can't see the street. No clue if the poor idiot survived, but at least it won't be forgotten: on my window is now the imprint of a pigeon, wings spread wide. If you look closely, even the contours of its beak are visible. It'll stay there for a while: these windows are tough to clean, and raindrops are awful at washing bird-shaped stains off the glass.

As sorry as I felt for the poor bird – I shall name him Larry – I must admit his unfortunate collision helped me greatly. A few hours earlier, when Larry was still out and about, catching worms, defecating on cars, and closely avoiding bicycles on the street, I had opened my laptop. Although I had done so with the plan of studying for my upcoming exam, during the hour preceding Larry's highly unsuccessful airborne attempt at entering my living room, I did not make it past page one of the first reading.



Deeply distracted, and much like Larry, I was heading towards disaster. What separated me from Larry, however, was one simple thing: whereas Larry, as he rapidly approached my window, had no one to warn him, to tell him what he was in for, I did: a small guardian angel. A pigeon protector, if I may.

As we hopefully all know, two negatives make a positive, and two instances of distraction bring you back to work.

Had the sudden thud of Larry hitting the window come while I was attentively studying, he would have likely broken my flow. However, as I mentioned, I was not attentively studying: I was instead looking at a set of five randomly selected pictures, each taken somewhere between 1900 and 2020, and attempting to guess the year each picture was taken. Although this site has often been a great friend of mine, saving me from slipping into a state of insanity during some monotonously spoken monologues during classes on rainy Monday mornings, on the day of Larry's incident, this website was my enemy. Fully distracted, like a small deep sea fish being lured toward the light of a hungry angler fish, I had completely forgotten was focused on figuring out the years of these photos, completely forgetting about my upcoming exams.

As sad as Larry's accident was, it did bring good, too. The noise of him hitting my window woke me up from procrastination, and I am happy to say that after briefly inspecting the pigeon shaped stain on my window, I had quite the a very, very productive afternoon.



So what can a dead bird teach us about surviving your twenties, really? Well, sometimes, pausing what you're doing, be it flying toward a window or staring away at your screen without absorbing any information, can save you a lot of trouble. Once a every while, think of Larry, and ask yourself if you too are facing an invisible obstacle.

Larry is likely no longer among us, but thankfully, his sacrifice was not in vain. His unfortunate crash taught me something: just because you can't see the window, doesn't mean you won't fly into it. The most dangerous obstacles are the ones you're unaware of, be it a window, be it procrastination.

To Larry, who probably saved my exams.

By Diederik Bouwman

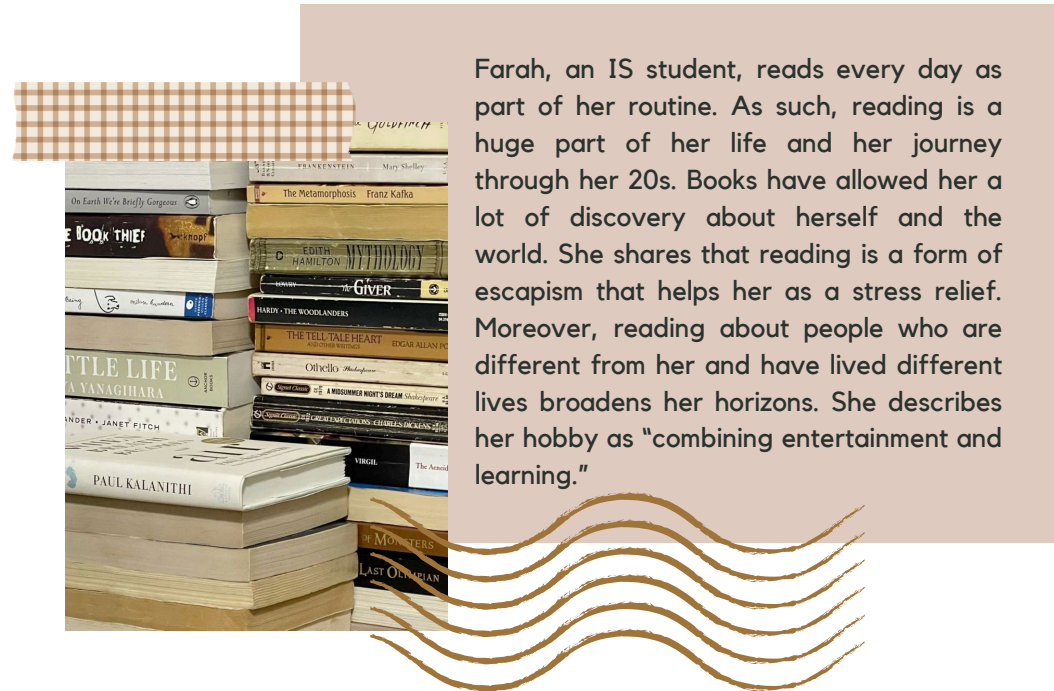
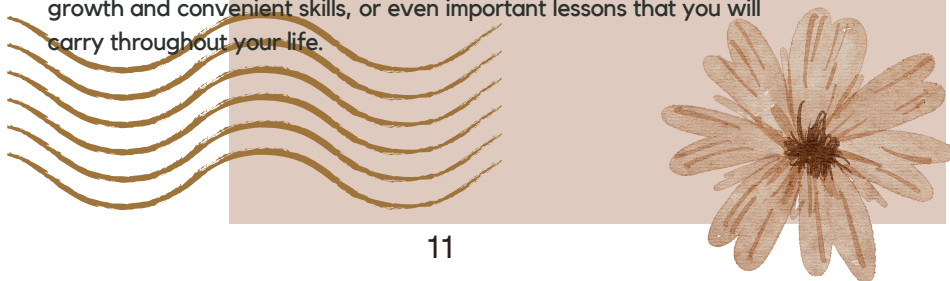


# The Importance of Hobbies in your 20s



An aspect that often gets overlooked in young adults' lives, is how impactful having hobbies can be. The 20s is the period in life when we start to explore who we are and grow into ourselves. It is a time for doubts and discoveries, trying new things and finding your place in the world. Though friends, family, studies and a career are major parts of that experience, hobbies can also play a significant role, one that easily goes unnoticed.

An obvious benefit of having hobbies is helping with stress. All the new experiences that come with your 20s, like new routines, responsibilities and a new sense of independence, can also bring fluctuations in mental health. For that reason, pursuing hobbies can greatly help with relaxation. Moreover, hobbies provide an opportunity to meet new people and make friends through shared interests. Clubs are a great way to create a sense of community, especially if you are newly arrived in that city. Besides, hobbies can serve as conversation starters and motivations behind forming connections. Thirdly, hobbies fit perfectly in the theme of your 20s of finding yourself. Experimenting with different pastimes can be very beneficial for discovering new passions and interests that bring you joy. Additionally, hobbies can be useful for skill development. Whether you are into reading, gardening, cooking, sports, or a creative hobby, these can vastly contribute to personal growth and convenient skills, or even important lessons that you will carry throughout your life.



Farah, an IS student, reads every day as part of her routine. As such, reading is a huge part of her life and her journey through her 20s. Books have allowed her a lot of discovery about herself and the world. She shares that reading is a form of escapism that helps her as a stress relief. Moreover, reading about people who are different from her and have lived different lives broadens her horizons. She describes her hobby as "combining entertainment and learning."

On another hand, Beatriz, a 22-year-old IS student, shares how her passion for journaling has changed her young adult experience. It has allowed her to be creative in a way that is less "strict" than other art mediums. It also encourages her to sit down for 30 minutes everyday in order to "take a break from everyday life." Lastly, it has brought her closer to other people who share her passion.

However, it can also be hard to get into a hobby, which is why I would like to leave you with a few tips. Firstly, a hobby is supposed to be fun and relaxing, so pressuring yourself or creating internal goals or comparisons can dim that excitement. That is why I recommend taking it slow, enjoying the process and appreciating how it makes you feel rather than how the result looks. It can be beneficial to look to others for inspiration and motivation, but be careful not to let comparison ruin the experience. Secondly, dedicate time for your hobby when you are focusing solely on that activity. The stress of our responsibilities and deadlines can have a dire effect on our enjoyment of our free time. Focusing on a hobby has the power to clear your mind of preoccupations and reduce stress.

By Isabela Costa





# NEVER MIND

Being lost means being alive.  
I never believed a path had to be drawn.

A keyboard feels like an inadequate vessel for the flood of thoughts we endure. Life itself feels insufficient... for anything actually. At some point our time was sold and our will was bent by someone we never met. Now, we scramble to make use of time we don't own, chasing goals whose meaning we've forgotten, in a life that feels like it's slipping away.

It seems that it has been a long time since I lost my direction. Hundreds of voices telling me what is best, hands pushing to the correct path, and wills of - I do not know who - deciding my dreams and thoughts of no one ruling my mind.

In the back of my mind, I can hear the need to scream and run, the fear of getting completely lost and not being able to find the light that used to drive me anymore. Doubts, insecurity and this restless unease drive me to flee from nothing at all, only to collide with an invisible wall-fragile, yet unbreakable-blocking every attempt to escape.

That's what your twenties feel like. And you know you're there when everyone responds to your confusion with an awkward laugh and a "same, haha..."

But then, one day, you catch a glimpse of sunlight through the curtains. You get surprised by the smell of coffee and your sincere laugh with your friends. You still do not know your path, or if it's supposed to be one. But somehow, you've found peace in that uncertainty. You no longer care as much, because maybe life isn't meant to be neatly understood. There are fleeting moments of clarity, but they're born out of a futile attempt to control the uncontrollable winds of life.

Because we're like clouds.  
Sometimes we're more like rain, or even snow.  
But we're still just clouds.

And this is something, strangely enough, we're all meant to go through.  
Not to find a path we don't need, but to embrace the search itself.

- Clara González

# What I Wish I'd Known Before Turning 25

Looking back at how my 20s have gone so far, I've concluded that it is a long pathway of your highest highs and your lowest lows sprinkled with the eventual spirals, loops and reroutes. Sometimes you feel like an unstoppable force with endless possibilities in front of you and sometimes you find yourself eating the same hyperfixation meal 7 nights in a row, because merely the idea of having to making another choice, even if it's just for dinner, makes you sick. In conclusion: your 20s are a time of immense growth, but also of some hard-learned lessons. So here's a little advice I'd give my younger self -and all of you who still have this pathway in front of you- to make the ride a little smoother.

## 1. Don't Believe Everything 'Professionals' Tell You

In our society we are conditioned from a very young age to trust the 'grown-ups' and the 'professionals' and while it might sometimes be a good idea to consult someone with more experience, it's good to remember that professionals are also just people – and people make mistakes. This advice touches on many areas of life—health, career, education, family, and all the other areas where an uncomfortably large number of people feel compelled to throw in their opinions. Whether it's doctors disregarding your symptoms or career counselors insisting on one "logical" path, remember that you are allowed to question advice and get a second or even third opinion. Take charge of your own life, ask questions, think outside the box, and trust your gut when something doesn't feel right. Guidance is valuable, but it's just that—guidance, not an instruction manual that has to be followed step by step. Learning to trust your own instincts is a skill that will help you navigate the ups and downs of adulthood.

## 2. Manage Friendships, and Know That Not All of Them Are Meant to Last

Your 20s are a time of intense change—graduation, moving, starting a career, and all the other life-altering events that disrupt the familiar. Balancing the process of shedding your old self while holding onto what truly matters will become a central focus, even when it comes to those closest to you. Friendships that once felt unbreakable may start to shift, and that's okay. Outgrowing some relationships is natural. Still, take a moment to recognize who in your life is worth holding onto, and make an effort to nurture these connections, even when life gets busy. It's all too easy to get caught up in new routines and forget about those who were there for you in what feels like another lifetime. New chapters bring new faces, but it's worth sticking to some recurring characters who know you and where you come from. Growth doesn't have to be a solitary journey.

## 3. Careers Are Not Linear (and Failure Is Part of the Process)

Most of us grow up believing that success follows a straight line: study hard, get a degree, land the perfect job, and voilà – happily ever after. But reality is a bit messier. Detours are normal along the way. You might start one degree only to discover a new passion, or end up taking a job that has nothing to do with what you studied, because after the 100th rejection letter anything that won't completely crush your pride looks appealing. This doesn't mean you've failed – life isn't a fairytale, and that's okay. Some setbacks will turn out to be the happiest accidents, leading you down paths you never considered. Others will be lessons you needed to learn to better understand what you truly want. And some setbacks will just hurt – it's okay to take time to grieve what wasn't meant to be. As cliché as it sounds, life does tend to work itself out, and you're not alone in this. Despite what LinkedIn might have you believe, few people have a perfectly linear career filled with elite schools and top-tier organizations. So take a breath, embrace your so-called 'failures' and expect the unexpected.

## 4. Use the Freedom of Your 20s – Some Things Are More Important Than Your GPA

While academics matter, remember that university (and your 20s in general) is about more than just maintaining a high GPA or securing the perfect career. Your 20s are likely to be one of the most flexible, adventurous times of your life. Take that spontaneous road trip, pick up random skills, and embrace as many new experiences as you can. Chances are, you'll remember these moments far more vividly than whether you passed that Econ exam on the first or second try. One failed exam or a rough semester doesn't mean a future without a job or prospects. Your 20s are about more than just launching your career – they're also about personal growth and savoring that journey. Sometimes, a wild night with friends or exploring a new destination will teach you more than any class ever could.

## 5. Embrace the Chaos – You Don't Have to Have Everything Figured Out

If there's one thing everyone in their 20s seems to face, it's a quarter-life crisis (yes, you will either decide to train for a marathon, get really into baking or start your own podcast). It's a time of questions, and some of them will make you rethink every decision you've made. People will come and go from your life; you'll make career choices that feel shaky; and at some point, you might even question if you ever really knew who you are. It's all part of the journey, and while it feels uncertain, it's also exciting. You're still young, and you have time to explore, make mistakes, and change directions. Embrace the fact that you don't have to have all the answers just yet. There's beauty in uncertainty and trusting that things will eventually fall into place.

### In the End, You'll Be Glad You Took the Scenic Route

So, here's the big takeaway: your 20s are a wild ride, full of growth and change. Trust yourself, stay open to learning, and remember – it's okay to be a little lost. The destination matters less than the journey, so take a breath and enjoy the view. You've got this.



# Weekend Escapes in The Netherlands: A Travel Guide for Students at a Loose End

Going off your own beaten track can be a daunting prospect. You may feel you know certain areas of The Hague or Leiden very well as a student – perhaps you have been living there for months, or even years by now. But, if you ever find yourself wondering what else there is to do on weekends, outside of your personal favourite spots, I'm here to give you some ideas!

The Hague and Leiden offer some excellent museums, gardens, and restaurants to those who are willing to explore it. However, the constraints of student budgets must be respected, so this travel guide will help you plan a wonderful weekend without spending a fortune.

## Exploring The Hague

The Hague itself is home to some world-class museums, many of which offer discounts for students. Check them out for hours of cultural enrichment.

### Atlantikwall Museum

For those with an interest in Second World War history, the Atlantikwall Museum provides a unique opportunity to explore the old Nazi bunkers from WWII. It is situated in Scheveningen, where people head to Scheveningen to enjoy an afternoon at the beach, but this is a more sobering, yet deeply interesting experience. The entrance fee is €8 and provides the opportunity to learn about a piece of hidden and lesser-known history, nestled in the dunes of Scheveningen.

- Atlantikwall Museum can be found at Badhuisweg 119-133, 2587 CE The Hague



### Mauritshuis (Art Museum)

Houses masterpieces from the Dutch Golden Age, including most famously Vermeer's Girl with a Pearl Earring. Tickets are priced at €19, but student discounts are offered.

- Mauritshuis can be found at Plein 29, 2511 CS Den Haag

### Kunstmuseum

Did you know that until the 26th of January 2025, the Art Museum of The Hague is showcasing a collaboration with the House of Christian Dior? Tickets to the museum cost €8 at the student rate, and grant you full access to the museum, where you can marvel at delftware ceramics, sculptures, interactive exhibitions, and - of course - the Dior collection. This is an activity not to be missed for those with an interest in art and fashion!

- Kunstmuseum Den Haag can be found at Stadhouderslaan 41, 2517 HV The Hague

### West Den Haag

A contemporary art space, situated in a building that was previously the American embassy. They showcase bold and experimental exhibitions, featuring avant-garde artists. The best part of this is that this organisation endeavours to make their exhibitions free, or very low cost (only €3-€5 for certain exhibitions), making it the perfect stop for art-loving students who are looking for something off the beaten track.

- West Den Haag can be found at Lange Voorhout 102, 2514 EJ The Hague



## Exploring Leiden

Leiden is only a 15-20 minute train ride from The Hague, and is, of course, where the main campus of Leiden University is based. Whether you have rarely visited Leiden, or know it extremely well, there are always fun things to do there, with many activities for students!

### Cycle From The Hague to Leiden

...or the other way around if this suits you better! This is a way to get between the two cities without paying approximately €10 for a full-fare train ticket, and enjoy the beautiful nature of the country lanes along the coast! The route from the beach to Leiden city centre is roughly 23 kilometres, and treats you to views of The Hague, and the countryside, that you would never have known existed otherwise. If you're up for the challenge, you can also cycle back – otherwise, you can take the train back (with an €8 surcharge for having your bike with you).

### Sophie Kattencafe

If you're an animal and food lover, this is the place for you. A cafe in which you can enjoy a delicious lunch, sweet treat, or coffee, whilst in the company of eight charming cats, who previously lived in a shelter. An excellent place to chill with friends, and spend time with some furry companions.



For this, it is good to know that there is a €3 entrance fee for spending time with some well-cared-for cats!

- Sophie Kattencafe can be found at Haarlemmerstraat 241 2312 DR Leiden

### Hortus Botanicus

These beautiful botanical gardens are a part of Leiden University, and thus can be enjoyed free of charge by all LU students with just a tap of your student card at the gates! It has existed since 1590 as the study garden of the University and houses greenhouses, exotic plants, and special gardens. Hortus Botanicus is a charming place to spend an afternoon unwinding with friends, or alone.

- Hortus Botanicus can be found at Rapenburg 73 2311 GJ Leiden



Stepping outside of your usual spots, whether they be in The Hague or Leiden, can provide plenty of new experiences! From cycling scenic routes to discovering new gardens and museums, there's plenty to explore in these cities without stretching your budget. So, next time you're at a loose end, why not try one of the activities on this list?

By Cicely Hodge



# Survival Guide to your 20s

Surviving your twenties may seem like an easy task to do, as portrayed in most Netflix shows or classic American movies. Well, it rarely works that easily or even remotely resembles what you see on screen. The behind-the-scenes factors, unseen by viewers, create most of the story. Imagine your life as a series or movie: it's full of plot twists, sudden changes in the characters and surroundings, character developments, detours and drama, but in this case, you're the director. It's in your hands to decide what kind of genre it will be and for how long. I prefer the analogy of a series because the number of seasons and episodes within one show is unlimited and purely up to your imagination.

## 01 Eat

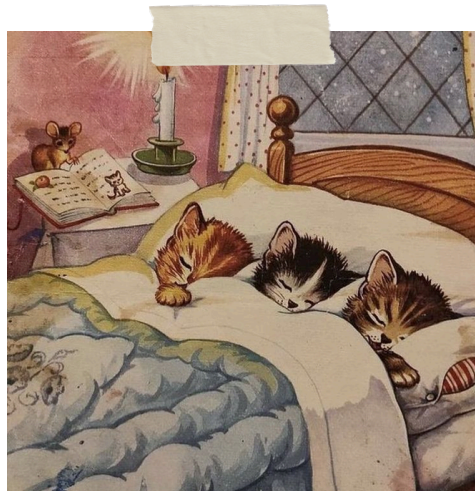
Learn how to cook the basics, eat well, and just stay healthy. Functioning on an empty stomach is the worst thing to do as nothing is enjoyable, and who doesn't like good food? It's one of the most important things. Even love goes through the stomach, as the saying goes, so developing cooking skills is never a waste.

## 02 Sleep

...or at least try to get some decent hours of sleep. If it is preferably more than 5, that would be excellent. Of course, that is not always manageable, sometimes due to uni or work deadlines, other times due to celebrating life and escaping reality, it doesn't matter. Just try to get some sleep. Bonus points if you have a comfy Ikea mattress.

## 03 Always set multiple alarms

Waking up in the morning is hard and leaving the comfort of your bed is even harder. Therefore, set multiple alarms, if you aren't doing so already. Maybe the fifth one will eventually wake you up.



## 04 Keep a calendar

The best thing to do is keep a calendar. It doesn't matter if it's a Google calendar or just a diary with all the important dates, birthdays, events, deadlines and plane tickets written down. Keeping a calendar is a great thing to be organized and at least pretend to have your life together. We're getting old, 20 is half 40, so it's always a good choice to have a backup in case of minor memory loss or slight blackout.

## 05 Move, dance or do some sports

Because it's healthy obviously, produces serotonin and makes you happy. It's not a hard task to argue why, so just google it. Also, the 20s are the age when everybody either starts to train for a marathon or begins their bouldering journey, so no one is going to judge. Find the thing you like and it will make your life easier. You may meet new people and establish new friendships for life.

## 06 Do your assignments

Even if you don't want to. It's one step at a time and helps with building discipline. Your grades will be better and your transcript will look fine. You may find some information during the process that may benefit your life or just broaden the horizons of knowledge which may come in handy later.

## 07 But it's okay to skip the readings

If it makes you happy. Overly stressing and pressuring yourself with tasks leads nowhere good. I'm not saying to avoid the readings or not do them if you enjoy the full pages of lengthy documents, but it won't be the end of the world if you don't do them. You just have to find your sacrifice, but sacrificing one's mental health is not worth the task.

## 08 You need vitamins

Preventing illnesses and injuries is a crucial task to do. Vitamins B, C, D, E, zinc, selenium, magnesium, probiotics, iron and the list goes on. Accommodate the list to your needs. Vitamins won't do any harm.

## 09 Have a savings account

No questions asked. Money is important. Start saving up for your future adventures now.

## 10 Spend your time with friends

There's nothing more beneficial than spending some time with friends, since our friends are the family we get to choose ourselves. Whether it's keeping up with the gossip over coffee or just having a good time by being around each other, cooking dinner or creating new memories on the most spontaneous trips or nights out, it's always better than being alone.

## 11 Travel

There's nothing better than travelling. Just the classics: meeting new people, discovering new places and cultures or just changing the scene and background of the series, creating some special episodes of your life. It can be just taking a train to the city nearby and randomly discovering the hidden vintage shop with the best pieces or biking to the beach. Changing the scenery is a good and sometimes a very needed idea.

## 12 Relationships should serve you, not otherwise

Have fun, it's not that serious. You may have already met the one, but if you haven't, that's perfectly fine. Dating in your twenties is finding out what and who you like. If you have a list of people you want to date before you settle down, go for it. It's not like you're getting married in an instant. If you don't want to participate in the dating culture for a while- just don't and take your time.

## 13 Find a hobby

Finding a hobby is a lifesaver. It can be anything, from sports to arts to developing new skills or languages, find something you like and something that makes you happy. Try as many hobbies as you like, since we have time to do so now.



## 14 Find your comfort movies and favourite shows

Let's be honest, everybody is or has watched a series or a movie at some point in their life and we all have our favourites we come back to and rewatch every time. Friends, the Office, Sex and the City, Gilmore Girls, Doctor House, Mean Girls, How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, Devil Wears Prada, the Marvel movies, the variety is wide.

## 15 Change jobs, and find out what's fun

Do as many side quests as you can. Treat your CV as a journal stamp book and collect all the various stamps you can. You'll be stuck with big-time serious adult jobs for the rest of your life, so why not spice it up a little while you can? Gaining insight, experience and qualification is only beneficial.

## 16 Comparison is the thief of joy

Just don't do it. It's not worth your time and energy. It's extremely easy to do, but why bother? It's not like somebody else can be the same version of you.

## 17 The process takes time

You don't have to have it all figured out. Kudos if you do though. Sometimes going off the script is the best thing to happen because it can lead to new opportunities and discoveries. There is a saying I always use "Všetko zlé je na niečo dobré." (Blatant translation: Everything happens for a reason).

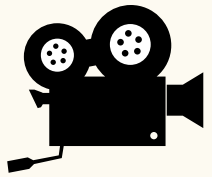
## 18 Just do it for the plot

We are not getting any younger and the best time to do something is now. All the reckless decisions you've been thinking about for a while. Dye your hair or cut it if you'd like, change your style, go out with that person, and apply for the internship, because why not? Internships, random trips, going out with that person or whatever you've been thinking of and delaying for later. We all need stories to tell when we get older, so it's about time to start thinking of the direction of your memoir.

By Andrea Val'ková







# The Movies Guide To Survive Your 20s

Unfortunately, this guide is not a list of 'Four Inspirational Movies That Will Make You Believe That Everything Is Possible When You Are In Your 20s'. Your 20s are undoubtedly fun but this period in your life is also often marked by moments of crisis, including a quarter-life crisis when you graduate from university and are supposed to start living a 'real' life. It is a truly bewildering moment and to quote the classics, you sometimes might feel that "nobody likes you when you're 23". Maybe the problem is that our prefrontal cortex is not yet fully developed. Or early exposure to sad British pop music. Whatever the reason, this guide recommends movies that describe this 'weird' period of confusion, instability, mistakes, discoveries, and eventual character development which people experience in their 20s.

## SCOTT PILGRIM VS. THE WORLD

This movie (and even to a greater extent the comic book) is a quintessential 'surviving your 20s' story: it perfectly portrays the confusing stage in your life when you just graduated from university and have no clue what you want to do next. Naturally, you also do not have any money, do random shitty customer service jobs, have to share your apartment with a (hella funny) gay roommate, and spend most of the time playing in a rock band named Sex Bob-Omb. And of course, you fall in love with a cool girl from Canada who has quite heavy and unpacked emotional baggage (who doesn't in their 20s tho?).

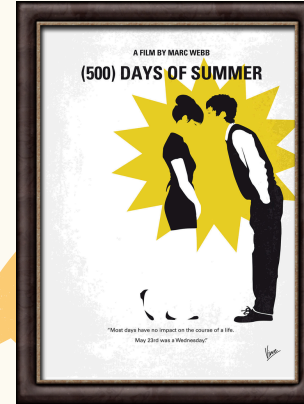
While the movie has typical fantasy elements of comic books/video games, I feel that the world of Scott Pilgrim feels quite real and relatable. Everything that could bother you in your 20s is in this movie: learning how to open up to people that you love; how to start taking full responsibility for your actions and stop being an immature loser with no job; and, of course, how to fight your girlfriend's seven evil exes.

**Favourite quote:** 'We are Sex Bob-Omb and we are here to make you think about death and get sad and stuff'.



## 500 DAYS OF SUMMER

This is not a love story- this is my personal favourite Halloween horror movie. The movie is about young people, who are enjoying their lives in one of the most beautiful cities in the world and want to have fun and 'save the serious stuff for later'. Sounds fun, doesn't it? Why is it a horror movie? My controversial take: I think it perfectly depicts the main problem of dating in the early 20s- it feels like there are only 2 options sometimes and everyone from Bumble picks one: either being delusional and anxious or being emotionally unavailable (disclaimer: only according to Tik Tok therapists).



So naturally when these two types of people meet it is a disaster- and this is what this story is about. But if we are serious for a moment, this movie also makes you think about the different meanings of love and if there is some sort of destiny when it comes to meeting a significant other. And it gives a good lesson on the importance of setting personal boundaries and how to overcome your first serious heartbreak. Anyway, it's the perfect movie if you recently had another failed situation in your life. Or if you love the Smiths.

**Favourite quote:** 'Just because she likes the same bizzaro crap you do doesn't mean she's your soulmate'.

## FLEABAG

I know true fans will tell me immediately that the main characters were in their early 30s in the movie. I don't care. Maybe we do not have the money in this economy to open a guinea pig-themed cafe in our 20s, but many other things in this series are still super relatable. Who hasn't, similar to the main character, experienced awkward dinners with your relatives and struggled how to deal with the expectations of your family? In their 20s, many experience grief for the first time and tragic love stories. And overall, your life might seem like a whole mess and you might doubt every single decision.

It is nice when someone ironically reflects on all those mistakes and their stories of 'failure', instead of just pretending that everything is under control. And it is especially nice if this someone is Phoebe Waller-Bridge.

**Favourite quote:** "I want someone to tell me what to wear every morning. I want someone to tell me what to eat, what to like, what to hate, what to rage about, what to listen to, what band to like, what to buy tickets for, what to joke about, what not to joke about. I want someone to tell me what to believe in, who to vote for, and who to love, and how to tell them. I just think I want someone to tell me how to live my life, Father, because so far I think I've been getting it wrong."

