

Sweet escapes

Come winter, chocolate's a tradition held close to heart — and there are countless ways throughout the state to get it there.

Chocolate martini or chocolate quesadilla? Sample both at the **4th Annual Chocolate Covered Boyne**, Feb. 10-11. Pick up discounts on cocoa-flavored treats, themed jewelry, specialty cookbooks and more at 30-plus sweet spots (www.boynechamber.com).

Shanty Creek Resort in Bellaire (www.shantycreek.com) offers its first **Mid-Winter Chocolate Therapy Escape**, Feb. 3-5, iced with tastings, cooking competitions, spa treatments and more.

Nestled in the heart of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, The Homestead Resort (www.thehomestead.com) delivers a **Decadent Chocolate Escape** including a chocolate massage,

glass of wine and candies at Spa Amira. Nearby on the Leelanau Peninsula, award-winning wineries pair their varietals with chocolate small plates during "**Taste the Passion**" Feb. 4-5 (www.lpwines.com). For extra sweetness, visit Grocer's Daughter in neighboring Empire, where chocolatier Mimi Wheeler offers gourmet classes (www.grocersdaughter.com).

In Michigan's extreme southwest, Harbor Country's eight quaint communities celebrate their annual **Chocolate Classic** throughout February. Weekend cooking classes, truffle body wraps and a decadent Vosges Haut Chocolat are among sweet treats awaiting (www.harborcountry.org).

Chefs and culinary students craft edible masterpieces all crafted out of chocolate during the **MSU Museum Chocolate Party** on Feb. 26 (www.museum.msu.edu). Restaurants, caterers, bakeshops and candy makers showcase their skills, too, with tortes, cheesecakes, fountains and more.

Visit picturesque Chelsea on Feb. 11 during the city's annual **Chocolate Extravaganza**. (www.chelseamichamber.org). Nearby, Chief Executive Chocolatier Nancy Biehn at Sweet Gem Confections in Ann Arbor offers free samples on Feb. 12 (www.sweetgemconfections.com).

— Tai Alexander



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