



The heart-stopping Lake Michigan vistas that make Traverse City a summer vacation hotspot don't disappear in winter. Indeed, in colder weather the entire glacier-carved landscape becomes a sparkling white playground for skiers, snowmobilers and snowshoe hikers. Fresh-air fun and spectacular scenery combine with great food, good wine and unique shopping options to make Traverse City one of the Midwest's premier winter destinations.

Check out these Traverse City specifics:

1. SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE – Viewers of *Good Morning America* recently voted this spectacular stretch of the Leelanau Peninsula, a scant 20 minutes west of Traverse City, the Most Beautiful Place in America. Each summer millions of visitors flock to the park to climb the 400-foot dunes, comb the sandy beach and enjoy the jewel-bright waters of Lake Michigan. In winter the crowds disappear. Travelers who do visit the snow-shrouded ridges and bluffs can explore large portions of the park accompanied only by wildlife. Deer, coyote, fox and otters all become more active and are more easily spotted once the summer throngs thin out. The lovely views become more expansive in winter. The backbone of the land and glacial markings are visible, so too more lakes and islands. It's a wild and primeval setting for skiers, snowshoe hikers, anglers and campers. Some roads, including the popular Pierce Stocking

Scenic Drive close to traffic. However, many of them including Pierce Stocking Drive are popular with cross-country skiers all season long. A variety of other Nordic trails crisscross the park, and many amenities including the Philip A. Hart Visitor Center are open. On weekends in January and February, rangers lead snowshoers to some of the most interesting features. (A limited number of snowshoes are provided for participants who don't have their own.) Fishing is also permitted year-round.

2. SKIING - Three ski hills serve Traverse City. Less than five minutes from downtown, Hickory Hills, a friendly municipal area nestles in a deep bowl of tree-covered hills. Great for families, it offers eight runs served by old-fashioned rope tows that harken back to a simpler time. Mount Holiday, east of town, presents a more sophisticated ski experience with 16 runs, two chairlifts, a terrain park, tubing hill and pleasant day lodge. It also affords amazing views of East Bay. A luxe resort experience waits just 30 miles northeast of Traverse City, where Shanty Creek Resorts sprawl over 4,500 acres in the Chain of Lakes. Named the Midwest's best ski destination in terms of dining, lodging, weather and activities by *Ski Magazine*, Shanty Creek features a 450-foot vertical drop with 49 runs, four snow-

boarding parks and a tubing park. This is a full-service resort where skiers and boarders from beginners to black diamond experts find their own brand of fun.

3. SNOWMOBILING - More than 200 miles of the nation's finest and most diverse snowmobiling trails pass through the Boardman and Jordan river valleys south and east of Traverse City. Every outing brings the potential for new experiences—whether it's twisting through dense hardwood forests, racing across open spaces or zooming up hills and over waterways. The 81-mile long Boardman Valley Trail, just minutes from downtown, takes riders into the Pere Marquette State Forest where deer, eagle and other wildlife abound. The Jordan Valley Trail extends for more than 130 miles not far from Shanty Creek and the quaint village of Bellaire. Both trail systems are close to Traverse

City's hotels, resorts and restaurants, adding a dash of creature comfort to every adventure.

4. DINING - Astute gourmards know Traverse City as the cherry capital



time to discover



This winter, wake up to fresh powder and days of outdoor adventures with snowshoeing, ice skating and cross-country skiing. Pick up the pace with snowmobile rides, then warm up by the fireplace and experience a world-class meal at one of our outstanding restaurants. Join us for two nights, including breakfast for two for only \$249* in the Hotel.

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of the universe, but there's much more to the regional cuisine than piping pies and tantalizing tarts. Last year *Bon Appetit* named Traverse City as one of America's Top Five Foodie towns. The magazine was impressed with innovative cuisine at restaurants like Tattoria Stella—a friendly, family-owned establishment that changes the menu daily, uses fresh produce year-round, makes pasta in-house and even manages to procure all meats from local farms. The fabulous location in the Village at Grand Traverse Commons—repurposed Victorian buildings, once used as a state hospital—is a plus. Traverse City is also home to a burgeoning wine industry and wine tasting never goes out of style. Tasting rooms are open all winter long.

5. SHOPPING – Visitors are charmed by Traverse City's picturesque turn-of-the-century downtown, home to more than 150 boutiques, shops and restaurants. Just one mile from the heart of town, the Village at Grand Traverse Commons offers a delightful mix of galleries, upscale retailers, and purveyors of artisan baked goods, fresh meat, cheeses and outstanding wine. Whether you're in the mood for fine furs, funky jewelry or a little window shopping, Traverse City does not disappoint. ■



Closing night fireworks over the snow at the Winter Wow!Fest

SAVE THE DATE

January 14-15 | **Kalkaska Winterfest**

Admirers of canine speed, stamina and teamwork don't have to travel all the way to Alaska for an exciting sled-dog competition. The annual Kalkaska Winterfest features a series of races, tests of strength and lots of other events and games.

February 4 | **White Pine Stampede**

This Michigan Cup cross-country ski race (in 10k, 20k and 50k loops) starts in the village of Mancelona and travels a hilly course through the wooded forests around the Shanty Creek Resorts.

February 17-19 | **Cherry Capital Winter Wow!fest**

Three days of winter fun salute a Traverse City winter with activities held downtown, at the Grand Traverse Resort & Spa, Mount Holiday and Shanty Creek. Games, a carnival, ice carvings, snow sculptures, fireworks and music are all part of the fun.

IMAGE: TRAVERSE CITY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Winter WOW!

Sleeping Bear Dunes

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- ABC's Good Morning America



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