

## HIGH MOON

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Turn your eyes to the sky and watch the moon turn red Sunday evening at Worcester EcoTarium.

"Anything like this total lunar eclipse that doesn't happen often, we want to celebrate," said Rachel Stoff, director of marketing and communications for the EcoTarium at 222 Harrington Way, Worcester.

Gather at the museum to watch as Earth travels between the sun and the moon for the total lunar eclipse. The Midnight Moon Eclipse Party will begin at 9 p.m., and last to 1 a.m.

The EcoTarium has its telescope available, along with another from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.



There will be a total eclipse of a blood red moon on Sunday. (COURTESY PHOTO)



Worcester EcoTarium will offer a view of the moon's eclipse on Sunday. (COURTESY PHOTO)

While clouds might affect how much can be seen through the telescopes, the EcoTarium's lunar filters will allow guests to better see lunar surface features, such as craters and valleys, along with lunar rays. The eclipse will begin at 9:36 p.m., in Worcester, and the total eclipse will be at 12:12 a.m.

As it progresses, the moon will be covered by Earth's red-orange shadow, which can be visible even without a telescope on a clear night.

The viewing area for the EcoTarium's telescope allows about five people in at a time. For more viewing opportunities, the telescope WPI loaned for this event will be at the Sundial Plaza on the main level.

"It overlooks the Worcester skyline, and is quite a pretty view," Stoff said. "All of our educators and partners will be there. Essentially, we're hoping everybody will have access to use one of the telescopes at some time."

She added that although you won't need to use a telescope to see the moon turn red for the total lunar eclipse, it is an extra bonus to see it up close.

Among the activities visitors can participate in while waiting for the total eclipse are:

- n Sipping on hot beverages, including tea and hot cocoa.
- n Practicing navigating the moon with model "lunar rovers."
- n Experimenting with light and wavelengths to learn why the moon turns red.
- n Participating in programs by two astronomy experts on lunar exploration and the physics of eclipses.

The planetarium will be open as well and will show a film detailing this total lunar eclipse and how it happens, along with some great images provided by NASA and the Hubble Space Telescope.

As the first digital planetarium in Massachusetts, the EcoTarium has immersive surround-sound and a 360-degree, multisensory experience. The EcoTarium is also one of fewer than 10 museums in the country with a National Geographic partnership to show its films.

EcoTarium educators, NASA solar-system ambassadors and educators from WPI and the Aldrich Astronomical Society will be facilitating late-night learning.

Stoff said Worcester is "integral to the first nuggets of space travel to the moon and inspiring a man to travel to the moon."

Robert Goddard, born in Worcester and widely known as "the father of the space age," launched the first rocket propelled by liquid fuel in the world in Auburn in 1926.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the lunar landing. The EcoTarium has partnered with the Worcester Historical Museum for a schedule of events in the coming months to celebrate, including a lecture with the curator for the Smithsonian spacesuit collection in April, a space-themed tour of Goddard locations in July, and more.

Although all indoor exhibits will be available for visitors Sunday, you will probably want to return to see the beautiful 45 acres of grounds the museum has, including two ponds, trails and plenty of animal habitats.

"We hope visitors get enticed, when they watch the moon turn red, to explore, another day, another part of the museum," Stoff said. "We really want to support the community we serve so we encourage people to come back and try something else."

Email [juliasarcinelli@outlook.com](mailto:juliasarcinelli@outlook.com) if you have any upcoming events you would like featured in Best Bets.

#### Winter Fun

Visit the Worcester Common Oval, 455 Main St., on Monday, from 1 to 6 p.m., for public ice skating, ice sculptures, gourmet grilled cheeses from the Say Cheese food truck, and other family-friendly activities, all free.

#### Family

Explore the Mass. Audubon Wachusett Meadow at 113 Goodnow Road, Princeton, on Saturday, from 1 to 3 p.m. Learn all about snowshoeing before heading out for a guided walk on the trails, then warm up with hot chocolate after. The hike is on even if there is no snow. Open to families with children ages 7 and older. All levels of experience welcome. Snowshoes available for rent for an additional \$3 per hour for members and \$5 per hour for non-members; children's are free. Register online or call 978-464-2712.

#### Workshop

Create a cute snowman perfect for your winter decor or gift to someone at the felted snowman workshop at In The Meadow Farm at 40 Page St., Lunenburg, on Friday, from 7 to 9 p.m. The cost is \$25. Recommended for ages 8 or older. Choose one of the 2-hour workshops or if you have a group of friends and want to arrange a private party, 978-696-3332 or email [inthemeadow40@gmail.com](mailto:inthemeadow40@gmail.com).