

# October 2017 Sky Events

## Orionid Meteor Shower

- ★ The Orionid meteor shower peaks before dawn on the mornings of **Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>**, with the best chance of catching meteors being during the pre-dawn hours of **Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup>**.
- ★ This shower typically produces a modest **10 to 15 visible meteors per hour** under ideal conditions, lasting for several days. Orionids move swiftly through the sky, striking the atmosphere at **41 miles per second**, and often leave brief glowing trails.
- ★ The Orionids are caused by **debris** from the orbit of **Halley's Comet**. In fact, the Earth passes through this debris field twice per year, creating both the Eta Aquariid meteor shower in May and October's Orionids!
- ★ The first recorded observation of the Orionids was by the Chinese in the year 288 A.D.

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- ★ Like all meteor showers, they are named after their **radiant**, the place where they appear to originate in the sky (near the hunter's club in the constellation Orion.)
- ★ In October, you'll have to rise early to catch this meteor shower. The constellation Orion doesn't appear in the east until well after midnight, meaning the peak observing window will be limited to the hours between **2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m.**, when the constellation is higher in the sky but before the onset of dawn's light spoils the show.
- ★ The good news is that because this meteor shower peaks near the New Moon in 2017, **moonlight will not interfere** with pre-dawn observing!
- ★ The peak lasts for 3 or 4 days, so try your luck on the mornings between Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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