

Celestial Highlights of 2018

JANUARY 6 **Jupiter and Mars** appear only $\frac{1}{3}^\circ$ apart in the south-southeastern sky before and during dawn. Jupiter, on the left, is 20 times brighter than Mars.

JANUARY 31 **Total eclipse of the Moon** before or during dawn for the western half of North America.

MARCH 20 **Equinox:** Spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 12:15 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

APRIL 21 **Spring Astronomy Day;** check your local astronomy club for public events: <https://is.gd/astroclubs>.

MAY 8–9 **Jupiter is at opposition** tonight: opposite the Sun in Earth's sky, essentially at its closest to Earth for the year.

JUNE 21 **Solstice:** Summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 6:07 a.m. EDT.

JUNE 27 **Saturn is at opposition.**

JULY 9 **Venus and Regulus** are paired 1° apart very low in the western twilight. Of the two, Venus is 200 times brighter! Use binoculars.

JULY 15 **Venus and the crescent Moon** are paired beautifully close together low in the western twilight.

JULY 20 **The Moon stands close over Jupiter** at dusk.

JULY 26–27 **Mars is at opposition** tonight. The full Moon, also at opposition (opposite the Sun in our sky), shines with it all night.



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JULY 30–31 **Mars is closest to Earth**, closer and appearing larger than at any other time from 2003 to 2035. This week it shines at a blazing magnitude -2.8 , and in a telescope it appears just over 24 arcseconds wide.

AUGUST 12–13 **The Perseid meteor shower** should be at its peak this night. Conditions are excellent; the Moon, just past new, is completely out of the night sky. Best time to watch: from about 11 p.m. until the first light of dawn, when you might see a meteor a minute on average if you have a reasonably dark sky.

SEPTEMBER 22 **Equinox:** Fall begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 9:54 p.m. EDT.

OCTOBER 13 **Fall Astronomy Day;** check your local astronomy club for public events: <https://is.gd/astroclubs>.

OCTOBER 14 **Saturn and the Moon** shine together in the dusk.

Above: The partially eclipsed Moon on the evening of September 27, 2015, as seen over Crested Butte in Colorado.

OCTOBER 21, 22 **The Orionid meteor shower**, moderately weak, should be most active in the hour or two before dawn on these mornings, after the Moon sets.

NOVEMBER 30 **Venus is at greatest brilliancy** in late November and early December, shining in the southeast before and during dawn at an unusually bright magnitude -4.9 .

DECEMBER 13–14 **The Geminid meteor shower** should be at its peak late this night. The sky will be nicely dark from around midnight, when the Moon sets, until the first light of dawn. During this period you might see a meteor a minute on average. Some also appear in the evening.

DECEMBER 21 **Solstice:** Winter begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 5:23 p.m. EST.

These highlights are
courtesy of Sky & Telescope

www.skyandtelescope.com

Events are calculated for North America unless otherwise noted; most are also accurate for Europe and Asia. Eastern Standard Time is Universal Time (UT, UTC, or GMT) minus 5 hours. Eastern Daylight Time is UT minus 4 hours.