Celestial Highlights of 2017

JANUARY 12 **Venus is at greatest elongation,** shining very high in the west at dusk. In a telescope, this is about when Venus appears half-lit.

JANUARY 31 The **Moon, Venus, and little Mars** shine together in the west during and after dusk.

FEBRUARY 15 The **Moon, Jupiter, and Spica** bunch together in the southwest before dawn.

FEBRUARY 17 **Venus is at greatest brilliancy** this evening, though it's essentially just as bright all month: magnitude –4.8.

MARCH 4 **The waxing Moon occults Aldebaran** for much of the United States and Canada.

MARCH 20 **Equinox:** Spring begins in the Northern Hemisphere (at 6:29 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time).

APRIL 7 **Jupiter** is at opposition: opposite the Sun in Earth's sky, and essentially at its closest to Earth.

APRIL 29 **Spring Astronomy Day;** check your local astronomy club for public events: SkyandTelescope.com/astronomy-clubs-organizations.

MAY 7 **The Moon and Jupiter** pair up above Spica high in the southeast this evening.

JUNE 14–15 **Saturn** is at opposition.

JUNE 20–21 **Solstice:** Summer begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 12:24 a.m. June 21st EDT; 9:24 p.m. June 20th PDT.

AUGUST 11–12 **The Perseid meteor shower** should peak late this night. Light from the waning gibbous Moon will interfere after moonrise around 10 or 11 p.m.

AUGUST 21 The first **total solar eclipse** crosses the U.S. since 1979. All North America gets a partial eclipse.

SEPTEMBER 12 The waning **Moon occults Aldebaran** for western North America in the morning hours.

SEPTEMBER 18 **Venus, Regulus, the thin crescent Moon, Mars, and Mercury** stack up in a bunch low in the east in early dawn.

SEPTEMBER 22 **Equinox:** Fall begins in the Northern Hemisphere at 4:02 p.m. EDT.

SEPTEMBER 30 **Fall Astronomy Day;** check your local astronomy club for public events: SkyandTelescope.com/astronomy-clubs-organizations.

OCTOBER 5 **Close conjunction of Venus and Mars.** Bright and faint, they're just ¼° apart, low in the east in early dawn.

NOVEMBER 5 The **Moon occults Aldebaran** this evening for much of North America. The Moon is a day past full.

DECEMBER 13–14 The **Geminid meteor shower** will find the sky moonless almost all night as it reaches a peak ideally timed for North America. After about 10 p.m. you might see a meteor a minute on average.

DECEMBER 21 **Solstice:** Winter begins in the Northern Hemisphere (11:28 a.m. EST).

DECEMBER 30 The waxing gibbous **Moon occults Aldebaran** for eastern North America during evening.

Events are calculated for North America unless noted otherwise. Most are also accurate for Europe and Asia.

These highlights are courtesy of Sky & Telescope

www.skyandtelescope.com