

Astronomy Club of Asheville
August 2022 Sky Events

Conjunction of the Moon with the Bright Star Spica

During evening twilight on the night of **August 30th**, the waxing crescent Moon will form a most striking conjunction with the brightest star in the constellation Virgo – Spica. It is the 15th brightest star in the night sky as seen from Earth.

Spica is an ancient Roman word meaning “ear of grain”. Located close to the “ecliptic” (the approximate path that the Sun, the Moon, and the planets follow across the sky), Spica can be occulted by the Moon and sometimes by planets.

Located about 250 light-years away, Spica is actually two stars, so close together that they orbit each other with a period of only 4 days, and optical telescopes are unable to resolve the pair – it’s a “spectroscopic” binary.

Although Mercury is shown on the chart to the right, it is likely too faint and too close to the horizon to be detected before it sets in the bright twilight.

