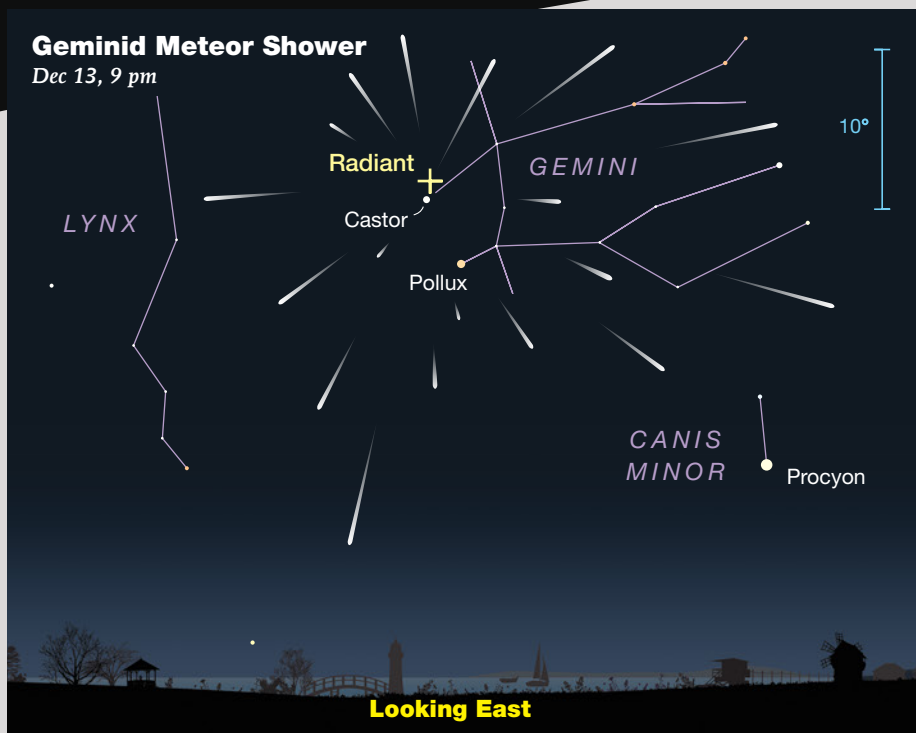


## DECEMBER 2022 OBSERVING Celestial Calendar



# Geminids Add Seasonal Sparkle

**WHILE THE COLD CAN** sting fingers and face alike, December is one of the best months for meteor watching. The annual Geminid shower is the most productive of the year, with more than 100 meteors per hour under perfect conditions. Unfortunately, a 70%-illuminated waning gibbous Moon will make conditions something less than perfect on the **peak night of December 13–14**. Lucky for us, the Geminids are fairly active before midnight. With nightfall starting shortly after 6 p.m. local standard time and the Moon rising about 9:30 p.m., we'll have three good hours of moonless skies.

The shower's peak occurs about 13h UT (8 a.m. EST) on December 14th. That means activity will still be good the following night (December 14–15), when the Moon rises an hour later.

On a separate note, the Moon occults 3.5-magnitude Eta ( $\eta$ ) Leonis soon after moonrise on the night of the 13th. This will be viewable for observers living in the eastern U.S. and elsewhere. For details visit <https://is.gd/etaleonis2022>.

To maximize comfort on winter nights, slip chemical handwarmers into your mittens and boots to keep your fingers and toes from freezing. Once prepped for battle, you can ease into your reclining chair and blissfully watch the meteors fly by. \*\*\*