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On **August 30<sup>th</sup>** as twilight begins to fade after sunset, look to the east-southeast to catch **the full Moon rising along with Saturn**, which is some  $5^\circ$  above and to the right. This conjunction is notable for a couple of reasons.

First, this is the closest full Moon of the year, so you can expect lots of talk about a “super-moon.” Astronomers, however, refer to this as a “**perigean full Moon**”, that is, a full Moon occurring when the Moon is at perigee — its closest approach to Earth during its monthly trip around our planet.

Second, **Saturn is just three days past opposition**, which is why the Moon is nearby. You can think of the full Moon as our satellite’s “opposition” since it lies opposite the Sun’s position in the sky, with Earth in between. To put it another way, consider that if you drew a line from the Sun, through Earth and continued it onwards, the line would bring you to the Moon and then, much farther out, to Saturn and beyond. From our earthbound perspective, the two objects simply appear in the same patch of sky.\*\*\*

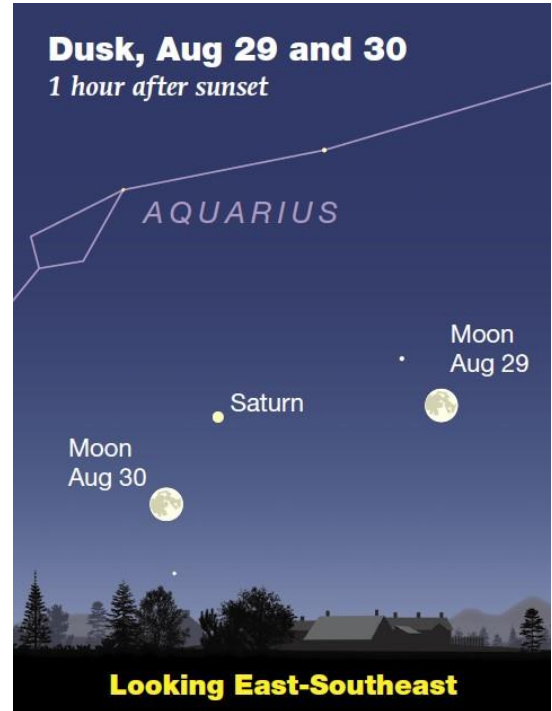


Illustration courtesy of [SKY & TELESCOPE](#)

The [Astronomy Club of Asheville](#) adds a third reason that this is a special conjunction of Saturn and the Moon. This August 30<sup>th</sup> Full Moon is the 2<sup>nd</sup> full moon in the calendar month – the first one was on August 1<sup>st</sup>. One of the common definitions of a **Blue Moon** is “a **2<sup>nd</sup> full moon in a given calendar month**”. Typically, there is one full moon in each calendar month. Because this 2<sup>nd</sup> full moon in August creates a 13<sup>th</sup> full moon in the calendar year 2023, it clearly qualifies as a Blue Moon.

For more information on Blue Moons, including how frequently they occur, [follow this link](#).