

## [Astronomy Club of Asheville](#)

### March 2024 Highlight

# Lunar Occultation of the Bright Star Antares in Scorpius - after midnight on March 3<sup>rd</sup>

This article is courtesy of the folks at [SKY & TELESCOPE](#)

## Antares Blinks Again

MOST OBSERVERS will have at least one opportunity to see the Moon occult Antares in the next few years. Perhaps it's your turn this month. On the morning of **March 3<sup>rd</sup>**, the last-quarter Moon eclipses Scorpius's brightest star for viewers in the southeastern U.S. and Mexico, Central America, and the northern third of South America. Those outside of the occultation zone will see a very close conjunction. From the southeastern U.S., observers will witness both the star's disappearance and reappearance, but even as far west as Des Moines, Iowa, Antares will pop out from behind the Moon's dark limb just after local moonrise. Be sure to find a location with an unobstructed view to the southeast, as the pair will hover quite low especially at the start of the occultation, around 2 a.m. EST.



*Antares and the Moon, just minutes before disappearance, as seen from Asheville, NC*

Antares is a double star, so if you're located where the reappearance phase of the occultation is visible, you can try to glimpse the 5.4-magnitude companion star, Antares B. Just before 1st-magnitude Antares A and its glare reemerge, carefully watch the Moon's dark limb for the B star. Antares B is just 2.7" west of the primary, so it'll precede its brilliant companion by just a few seconds.

A second occultation occurs on the evening of March 18<sup>th</sup>. That's when the dark limb of the waxing gibbous Moon occults the 4<sup>th</sup>-magnitude red giant Upsilon ( $\upsilon$ ) Geminorum, which is situated 2.4° southwest of Pollux. If you live in the southeastern, central, or western U.S., Central America, or western South America, you've got a ticket for the show. For more details about either occultation, visit the International Occultation Timing website at: [lunar-occultations.com/iota/](http://lunar-occultations.com/iota/). \*\*\*

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### **Additional comments and timing from the Astronomy Club of Asheville:**

This occultation of the red supergiant star Antares by the waning gibbous Moon (53% illuminated) will be visible in its entirety in the Asheville, NC, area. But there are two challenges for observing this event! First, the occultation takes place in the late night hours after midnight, and, second, the Moon and Antares will only be about 6° above the horizon at the beginning of the occultation. You'll need a very low unobstructed view toward the SE horizon – using binoculars or a small telescope will help.

Timing in the Asheville area for this approximately 38 minute event on March 3<sup>rd</sup>:

Antares disappearance – around 2:13 a.m. ET; and reappearance – around 2:51 a.m. ET.