

A Waxing Crescent Moon Overtakes Mars

On the nights of July 27-30, catch the waxing crescent Moon as it overtakes the planet Mars in our early evening skies. In the constellation Virgo, the Moon and Mars will appear closest on July 28th. On July 30th the Moon will appear to make a close pass below the bright star Spica.

The Moon orbits eastward, about 13° along the “ecliptic” (the path across the sky that the Sun, Moon, and planets appear to follow), from one day to the next, or about $\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ per hour. This shift means Earth needs to rotate a little longer to bring the Moon into view, which is why moonrise is about 50 minutes later each day. On these warm summer evenings, try following this daily lunar movement across the sky.

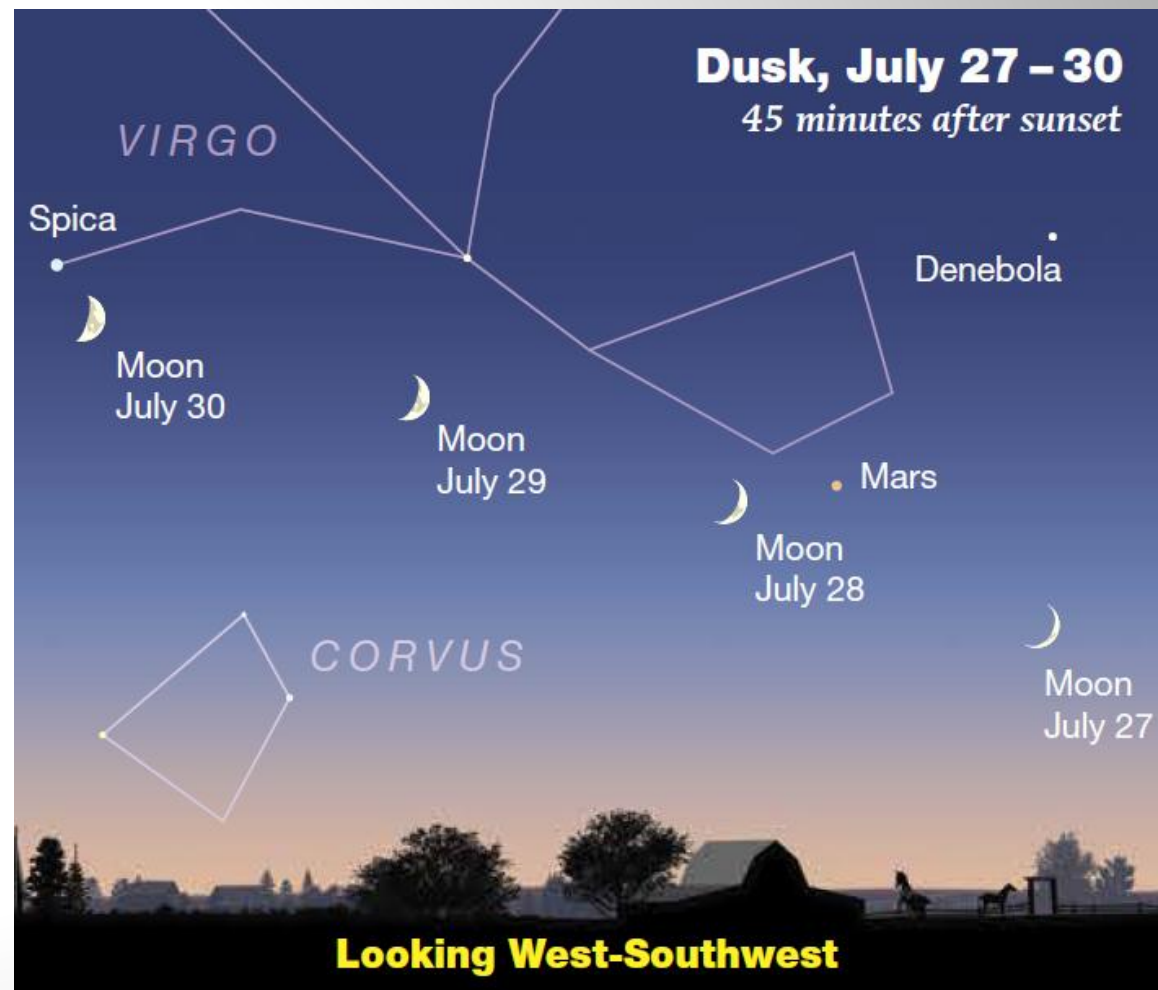


Illustration courtesy of [SKY & TELESCOPE](#)