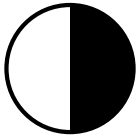
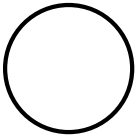
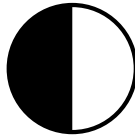
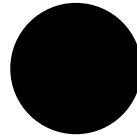


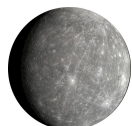
What's Up - May 2025

Moon

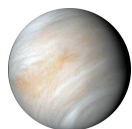
 <p>First Quarter 4 May 2025 15:52</p>	 <p>Full Moon 12 May 2025 18:56</p>	 <p>Last Quarter 20 May 2025 13:59</p>	 <p>New Moon 27 May 2025 05:02</p>
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The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 26/05 at 03:27, at a distance of 359 024 km.
It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 11/05 at 02:47, at a distance of 406 244 km.

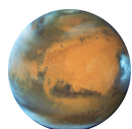
Planets



Mercury (in Aries)
↑ 06:11 ↓ 17:09



Venus (in Pisces)
↑ 03:58 ↓ 15:45
Near the Moon on 23/05



Mars (in Cancer)
↑ 13:04 ↓ 23:24
Near the Moon on 03/05 and 04/05



Jupiter (in Taurus)
↑ 09:52 ↓ 19:44
Near the Moon on 25/05



Saturn (in Pisces)
↑ 03:06 ↓ 15:21
Near the Moon on 02/05

All the details (apart from the proximity to the Moon) are for mid-month in Cape Town.

More information



Scan the QR code for more information about the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) and for details about visiting the SAAO in Cape Town or Sutherland.

Some bright stars in the evening sky

Altair: white star, brightest star in Aquila
Antares: red supergiant in Scorpius
Arcturus: red giant in Boötes
Betelgeuse: red supergiant in Orion
Canopus: yellowish-white star in Carina
Procyon: yellowish-white star in Canis Minor
Regulus: blue-white star in Leo
Rigel: blue supergiant in Orion
Sirius: brightest star in the night sky, in Canis Major
Spica: bluish-white star in Virgo
The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

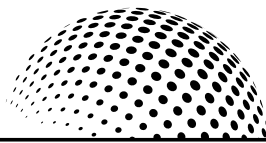
Meteor showers

The eta-Aquariids are active from 19/04 until 28/05, peaking on 06/05 with 50 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 03:30 and 05:30.

Fun facts

Did you know that Canopus was the most watched star by the indigenous people of Southern Africa? The Sesotho and Setswana speaking people called it Naka, the Vhavenda called it Naga and isiXhosa speaking people called it uCanzibe. The month of May in isiXhosa is called “ekaCanzibe”, named after Canopus.

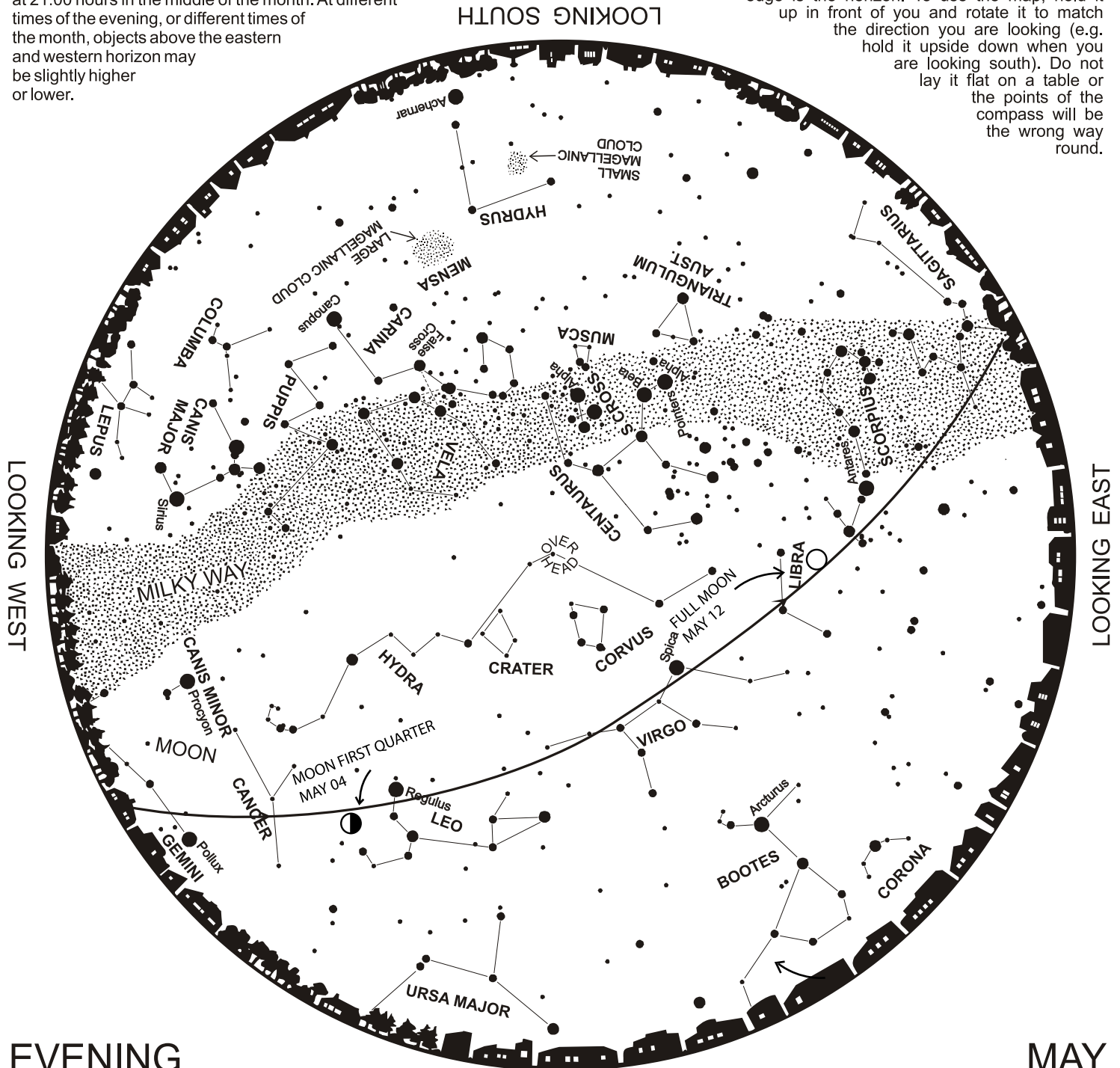
Our beautiful planet, the Earth, has one moon. It was probably created when the Earth collided with a Mars-sized object in the young solar system. Did you know that Saturn, the beautiful ringed planet, has 274 known moons with sizes ranging from a moon larger than planet Mercury called Titan to small moons with sizes comparable to that of a sports arena? 128 of these Moons were confirmed only in March 2025. Venus and Mercury are the only planets (within our solar system) that have no moons.



IZIKO PLANETARIUM AND DIGITAL DOME

The map shows the night sky visible above the Cape at 21:00 hours in the middle of the month. At different times of the evening, or different times of the month, objects above the eastern and western horizon may be slightly higher or lower.

The centre of the map is the overhead point, the edge is the horizon. To use the map, hold it up in front of you and rotate it to match the direction you are looking (e.g. hold it upside down when you are looking south). Do not lay it flat on a table or the points of the compass will be the wrong way round.



EVENING SKY

MAY
2025

This month we say farewell to Orion (hunter) as it sets in the early evening and welcome back the prominent winter constellations Scorpius (scorpion) and Sagittarius (archer) situated low on the eastern horizon. Try to see where the Milky Way appears to broaden around these two constellations (requires dark conditions) – this region encompasses the Galactic Centre with Sagittarius A*, the supermassive black hole at its core. Just south-west of Vela (sail), lies Carina (keel) and the bright star Canopus, also known as 'Nanga' or 'Naka' (the Horn Star) across Southern Africa. According to Tswana tradition, the reappearance of Naka just before sunrise (at month end), heralds the coming of winter and the need to start breeding sheep.

A waxing crescent moon welcomes us at the beginning of the month, with Full Moon ('Frost Moon') on the 12 May. The eta-Aquariids meteor shower (caused by leftover debris from Halley's Comet) is active from 19 April to 28 May, peaking on 6 May between 03:30 and 05:30 am SAST. Look out for the planets Mars (in Cancer) and Jupiter (in Taurus, close to the horizon) in the early evening. You will then need to wake up early if you wish to see Venus and Saturn (both in Pisces), followed later by Mercury (in Aries), as they only rise just before sunrise (towards the east).