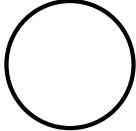
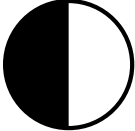
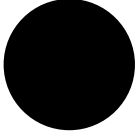
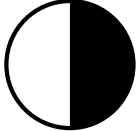


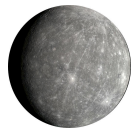
## What's Up - December 2025

### Moon

 <b>Full Moon</b> 5 December 2025 01:14	 <b>Last Quarter</b> 11 December 2025 22:52	 <b>New Moon</b> 20 December 2025 03:43	 <b>First Quarter</b> 27 December 2025 21:10
---	---	--	--

The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 04/12 at 13:06, at a distance of 356 962 km. It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 17/12 at 08:09, at a distance of 406 324 km.

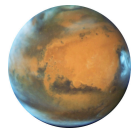
### Planets



**Mercury** (in Scorpius)  
 ↑ 04:22 ↓ 18:19  
 Near the Moon on 18/12



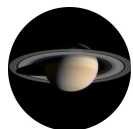
**Venus** (in Ophiuchus)  
 ↑ 05:09 ↓ 19:28



**Mars** (in Sagittarius)  
 ↑ 05:56 ↓ 20:23



**Jupiter** (in Gemini)  
 ↑ 21:47 ↓ 07:47  
 Near the Moon on 07/12 and 08/12



**Saturn** (in Aquarius)  
 ↑ 12:42 ↓ 01:07  
 Near the Moon on 26/12

*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  
 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  
 The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

### Meteor showers

The Northern Taurids are active from 20/10 until 10/12, peaking on 12/11 with 5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 21:30 and 03:30. The Puppis-Velids are active from 01/12 until 15/12, peaking on 07/12 with 10 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 22:30 and 03:30. The Geminids are active from 04/12 until 20/12, peaking on 14/12 with 150 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 23:30 and 03:00.

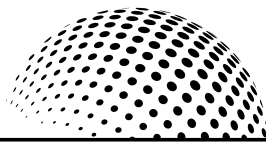
### December solstice

The December solstice takes place on 21 December at 17:02:36. This marks the (astronomical) beginning of summer on the southern hemisphere.

### Fun facts

The ancient Egyptians came up with the idea to divide the night and the day into 12 "hours" each. But as the length of day and night varies throughout the year, these hours were not constant but depended on the season! It took centuries before the idea of a fixed hour length took hold - in Europe it had to await the introduction of mechanical clocks in the 14th century.

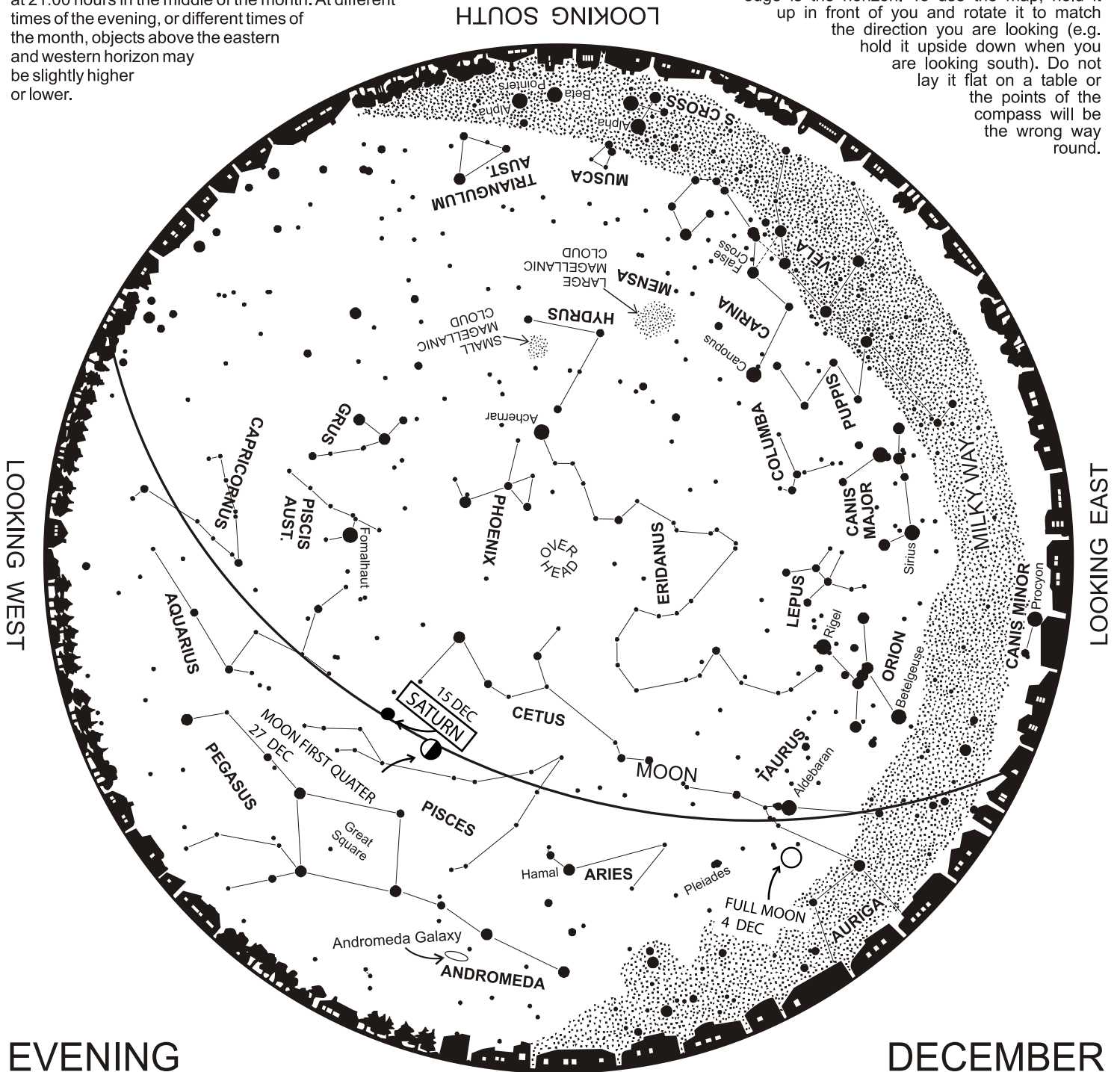
The idea of time zones is even more recent. Towns used to have their own time, based on their geographical location. This only changed in the 19th century when railway timetables made a standardised time necessary. A uniform time across South Africa was introduced on 8 February 1892, which until 1903 was half an hour different from what it is today.



# 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

## DECEMBER 2025

December marks the height of summer, with the summer solstice around the 21st, bringing the longest day of the year. The familiar constellation Orion dominates the night sky with the bright stars Rigel and Betelgeuse. Nearby, Sirius in Canis Major, called iQhawe ("the champion") in Xhosa, moves from east to west through the month.

Rising in the northeast is Taurus, home to the Pleiades star cluster. Known across southern Africa as isiLimela (Xhosa and Sotho), or "the digging stars," the Pleiades signal the time to prepare the soil for planting. To the south, Canopus in Carina, the second-brightest star in the night sky, shines low on the horizon. Canopus is linked with the start of summer rains and renewal.

The stars Vega, Deneb, and Altair of the Summer Triangle set below the horizon

and Sagittarius finally disappears in the west. By late December, Gemini rises in the east, heralding the Geminid meteor shower on 13–14 December, best viewed after midnight when meteors appear to radiate from Gemini. Jupiter shines brilliantly in the evening sky, while Saturn sits lower between Cetus, Pisces, and Aquarius. The International Space Station can often be seen as a bright, fast-moving light, notably on 5 December around 21:00, near the Andromeda constellation.

The Full Moon on 5 December is sometimes called the Springbok Moon, celebrating vitality and movement, while the New Moon falls on 20 December, offering darker skies for stargazing.

25 Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town  
Postal: PO Box 61, CAPE TOWN, 8000  
Tel: 021 481 3900, Fax: 021 481 3900

© Iziko.

