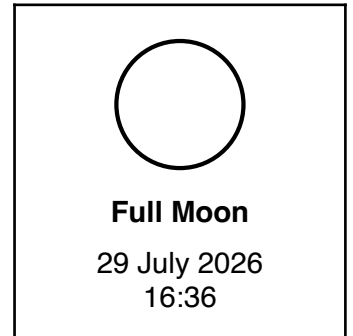
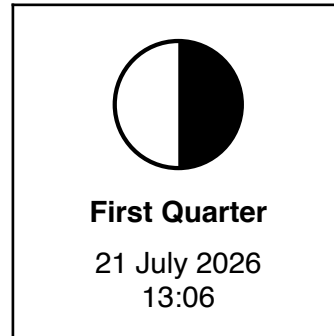
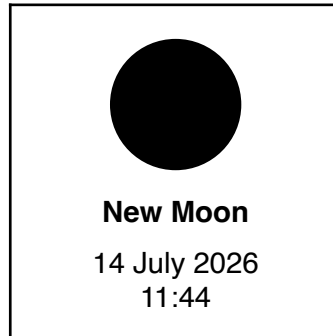
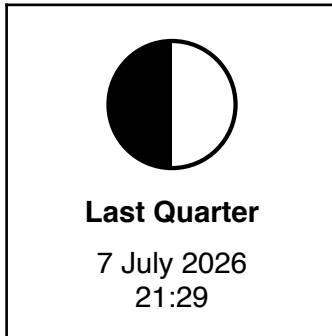


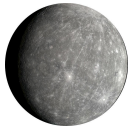
## What's Up - July 2026

### Moon



The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 13/07 at 09:50, at a distance of 359 111 km. It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 25/07 at 18:45, at a distance of 405 549 km.

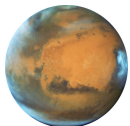
### Planets



**Mercury** (in Gemini)  
↑ 07:20 ↓ 17:47



**Venus** (in Leo)  
↑ 10:13 ↓ 21:23



**Mars** (in Taurus)  
↑ 04:54 ↓ 14:54



**Jupiter** (in Cancer)  
↑ 08:30 ↓ 18:42



**Saturn** (in Pisces)  
↑ 00:20 ↓ 12:04

*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  
Canopus: yellowish-white star in Carina  
Procyon: yellowish-white star in Canis Minor  
Regulus: blue-white star in Leo  
Sirius: brightest star in the night sky, in Canis Major  
Spica: bluish-white star in Virgo  
The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

### Meteor showers

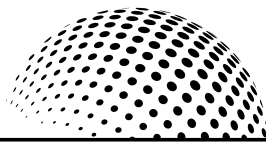
The alpha-Capricornids are active from 03/07 until 15/08, peaking on 31/07 with 5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 20:00 and 04:00. The Southern delta-Aquariids are active from 12/07 until 23/08, peaking on 31/07 with 25 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 22:00 and 05:00. The Piscis Austrinids are active from 15/07 until 10/08, peaking on 28/07 with 5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 21:30 and 05:00. The eta-Eridanids are active from 31/07 until 19/08, peaking on 07/08 with 3 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 01:00 and 05:30.

### Fun facts

Astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) technically are in space, but they are still close: The ISS is only about 400 km away from the Earth. The astronauts only appear weightless because the ISS is moving at a speed of about 28 000 km/h - that's more than 7 kilometers every second.

While this may sound fast, the Earth is faster; it orbits the Sun with a speed of about 30 km/s. You just have to imagine a rock hitting you at such speed to realise why large asteroids hitting the Earth can have dramatic consequences, such as wiping out the dinosaurs.

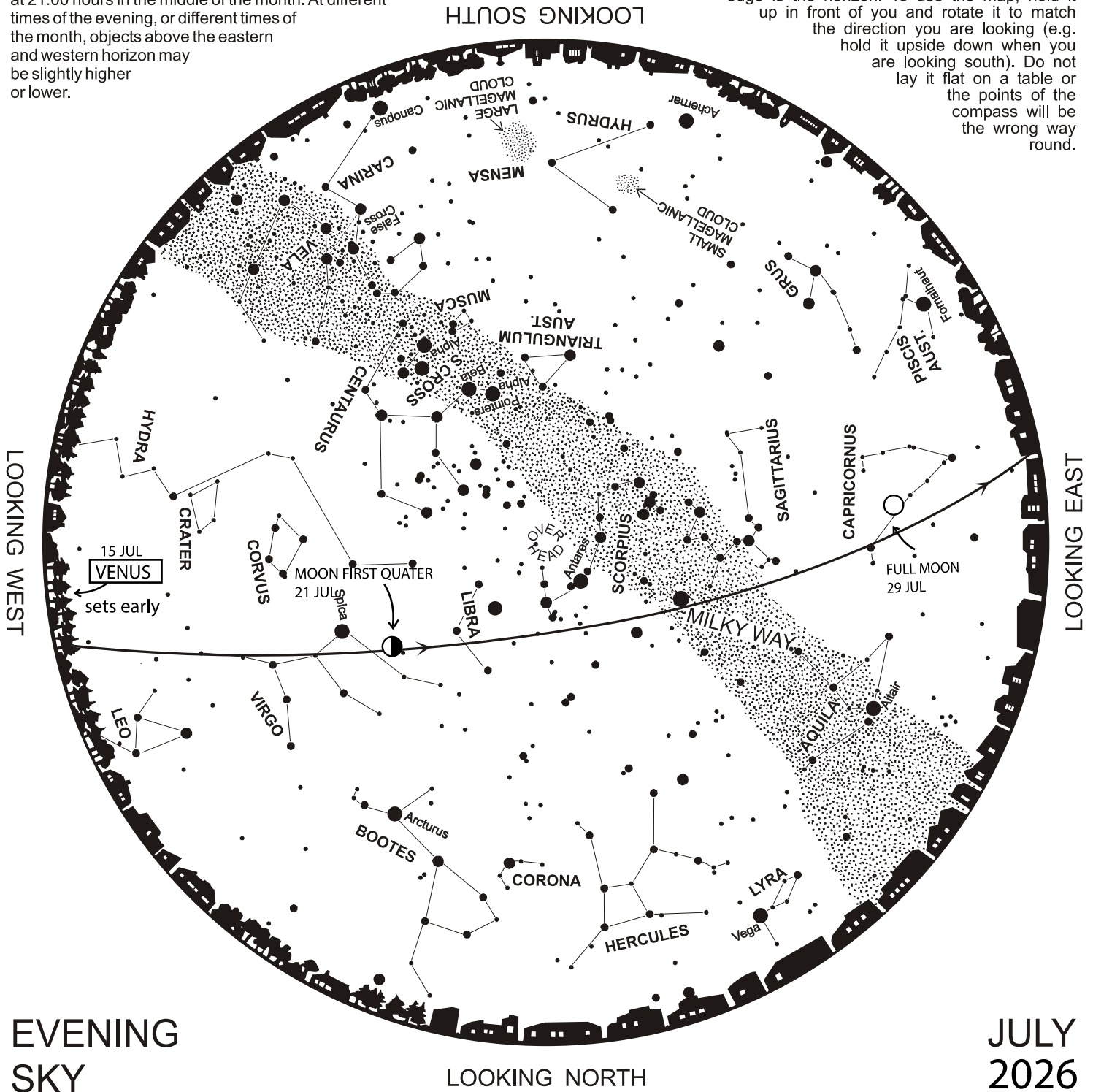
We are moving around the centre of our Milky Way at the even bigger speed of about 220 km/s. Even so, this round trip takes a long while, about 225 million years. Last time we were in our current position, dinosaurs were still roaming the Earth!



# 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.



This month, winter constellations Scorpius and Sagittarius dominates the evening sky overhead. The familiar Teapot asterism of Sagittarius points toward the centre of our Milky Way Galaxy. This region contains some of the richest star fields and nebulae visible with the aid of a telescope or binoculars. Under dark skies, observers can also locate the globular clusters M4, near the bright red star Antares, and M19, situated between Scorpius and Ophiuchus. In the east, Aquarius begins to rise, followed by Piscis Austrinus and its bright star Fomalhaut, often called the “Lonely Star” because it shines in a relatively star-poor region of the sky.

By the end of the month, the stars Vega, Altair, and Deneb become easier to spot in the northern sky, forming the well-known Summer Triangle. Venus continues to shine brightly in the western sky after sunset. In Xhosa tradition, Venus is known as uMadingeni, the Dating Star, as its appearance in the evening sky was associated with courtship and social gatherings. On 17 July, a slender waxing crescent Moon passes close to Venus, creating a beautiful celestial pairing that will be easily visible shortly after sunset. The New Moon occurs on 14 July, providing ideal dark-sky conditions for exploring the winter Milky Way. The Full Moon follows on 29 July, illuminating the long winter nights.