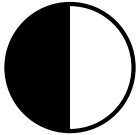
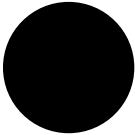
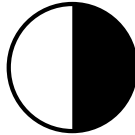
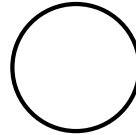


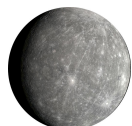
What's Up - August 2026

Moon

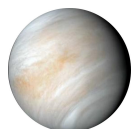
 Last Quarter 6 August 2026 04:21	 New Moon 12 August 2026 19:37	 First Quarter 20 August 2026 04:46	 Full Moon 28 August 2026 06:19
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The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 10/08 at 13:18, at a distance of 363 288 km.
It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 22/08 at 10:20, at a distance of 404 644 km.

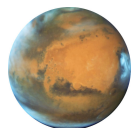
Planets



Mercury (in Cancer)
↑ 06:51 ↓ 17:13



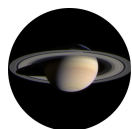
Venus (in Virgo)
↑ 09:25 ↓ 21:56
Near the Moon on 15/08 and 16/08



Mars (in Gemini)
↑ 04:29 ↓ 14:17
Near the Moon on 09/08



Jupiter (in Cancer)
↑ 06:51 ↓ 17:13
Near the Moon on 12/08



Saturn (in Pisces)
↑ 22:13 ↓ 09:58
Near the Moon on 04/08 and 31/08

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
Regulus: blue-white star in Leo
Spica: bluish-white star in Virgo
The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

Meteor showers

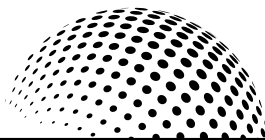
The alpha-Capricornids are active from 03/07 until 15/08, peaking on 31/07 with 5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 20:00 and 04:00. The Southern delta-Aquariids are active from 12/07 until 23/08, peaking on 31/07 with 25 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 22:00 and 05:00. The 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

While many know William Herschel, who discovered the planet Uranus in 1781, his sister Caroline Herschel often goes unnoticed, despite her role in astronomy. In addition to performing housekeeping chores for William, she helped with grinding telescope mirrors, taking notes during observations and performing astronomical calculations.

She made her own observations as well, and in 1786 she found a comet, making her one of the first females known to have discovered a comet. (The first woman in South Africa was Mary Fallows, the wife of Fearon Fallows, the first Royal Astronomer in Cape Town.)

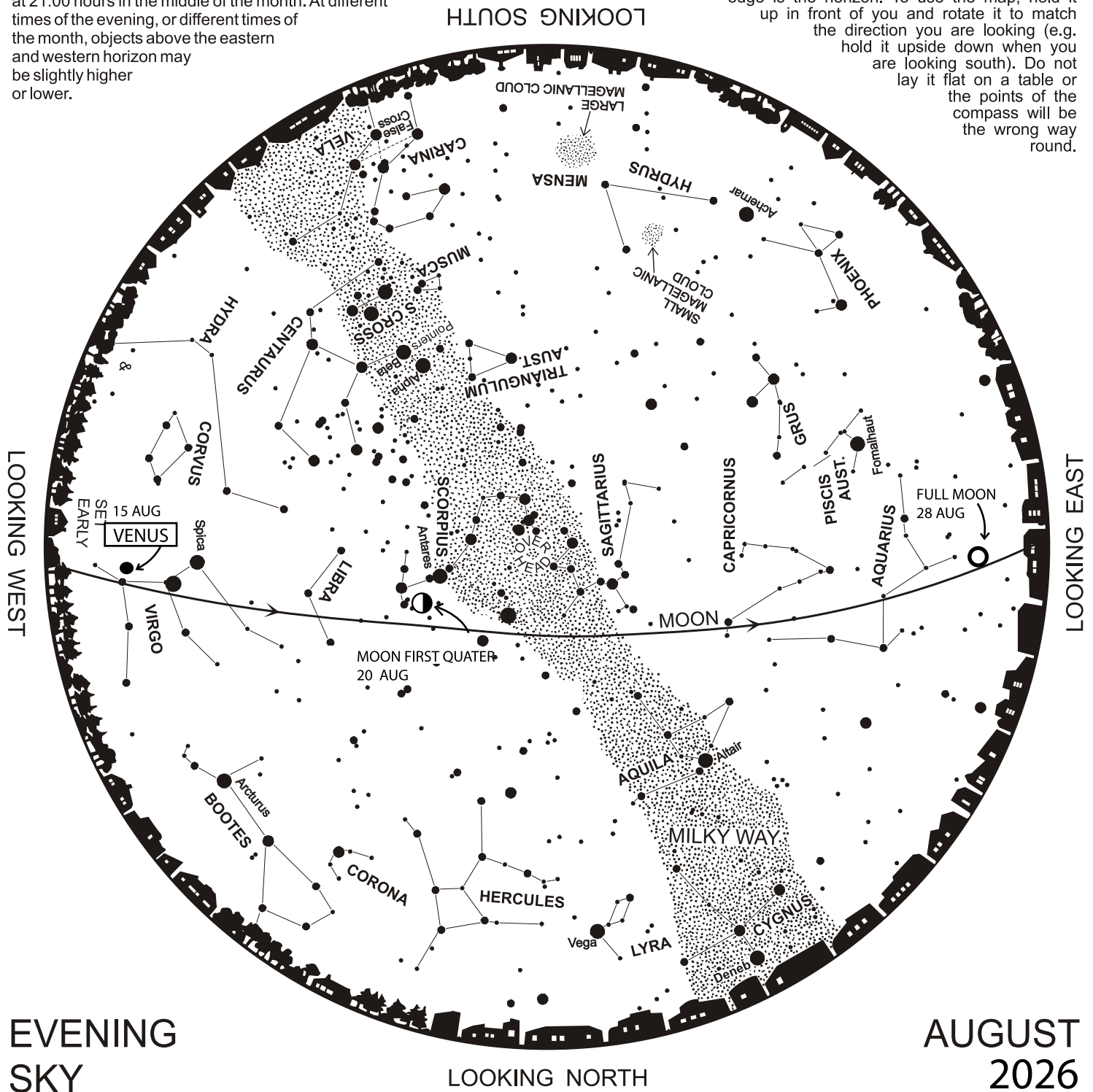
In 1787 Caroline was granted a £ 50 salary by the King, making her the first professional woman astronomer, and in 1835 she was one of the first two women admitted as honorary members to the Royal Astronomical Society.



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.



August marks the final month of winter as the evening sky begins its transition towards spring. As the month progresses, the constellations Bootes and Virgo descends toward the western horizon. As the month progresses Venus will also set later near Spica in the constellation of Virgo. In the southeast, Achernar, the brightest star in Eridanus and the ninth-brightest star in the night sky, rises higher each evening. Although it appears to be a single star, Achernar is part of a binary star system.

In the east, Aquarius becomes more prominent, while the "Summer Triangle" asterism, formed by the stars Vega, Altair, and Deneb, is now fully visible low in the northern sky. Observers with binoculars or a small telescope can also look for Caldwell 20 (NGC 7000), a faint globular cluster low above the northern horizon.

Throughout August, Comet 10P/Tempel may also be visible in Piscis Austrinus, although binoculars or a small telescope will be needed to observe this faint visitor.

The New Moon occurs on 17 August, providing ideal dark-sky conditions for exploring the Milky Way, which stretches across the sky from the northeast to the southwest. The Full Moon follows on 28 August. During the early morning hours of the same day, a partial lunar eclipse will be visible. A lunar eclipse occurs when the Earth passes between the Sun and the Moon, casting its shadow across the lunar surface. In Xhosa tradition, a lunar eclipse is known as ukudliwa kwenyanga, meaning "the eating of the Moon," and was regarded as a sign of important change.