SOUTH AFRICAN ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY

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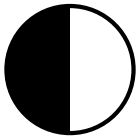
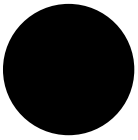
What's Up - November 2026

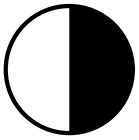
Moon



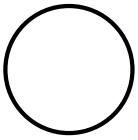
Last Quarter
1 November 2026
22:28



New Moon
9 November 2026
09:02



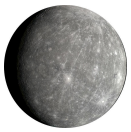
First Quarter
17 November 2026
13:48



Full Moon
24 November 2026
16:54

The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 25/11 at 22:58, at a distance of 359 348 km.
It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 13/11 at 19:50, at a distance of 405 619 km.

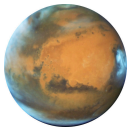
Planets



Mercury (in Virgo)
↑ 04:51 ↓ 17:56
Near the Moon on 08/11



Venus (in Virgo)
↑ 04:02 ↓ 17:01
Near the Moon on 07/11



Mars (in Leo)
↑ 01:41 ↓ 12:24
Near the Moon on 02/11 and 30/11



Jupiter (in Leo)
↑ 01:38 ↓ 12:27
Near the Moon on 03/11 and 30/11



Saturn (in Cetus)
↑ 15:43 ↓ 03:41
Near the Moon on 20/11

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
Betelgeuse: red supergiant in Orion
Canopus: yellowish-white star in Carina
Procyon: yellowish-white star in Canis Minor
Rigel: blue supergiant in Orion
Sirius: brightest star in the night sky, in Canis Major
The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

Meteor showers

The Southern Taurids are active from 20/09 until 20/11, peaking on 05/11 with 7 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 21:30 and 03:30. The Orionids are active from 02/10 until 07/11, peaking on 21/10 with 20 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 00:00 and 04:00. 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 Leonids are active from 06/11 until 30/11, peaking on 17/11 with 10 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 03:00 and 04:00. The alpha-Monocerotids are active from 15/11 until 25/11, peaking on 22/11 with <5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 23:00 and 04:00.

Fun facts

It was an intern at NASA who realised that in the late 1970s there would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for a space probe to visit Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Voyager 2, launched on 20 August 1977, accomplished this task.

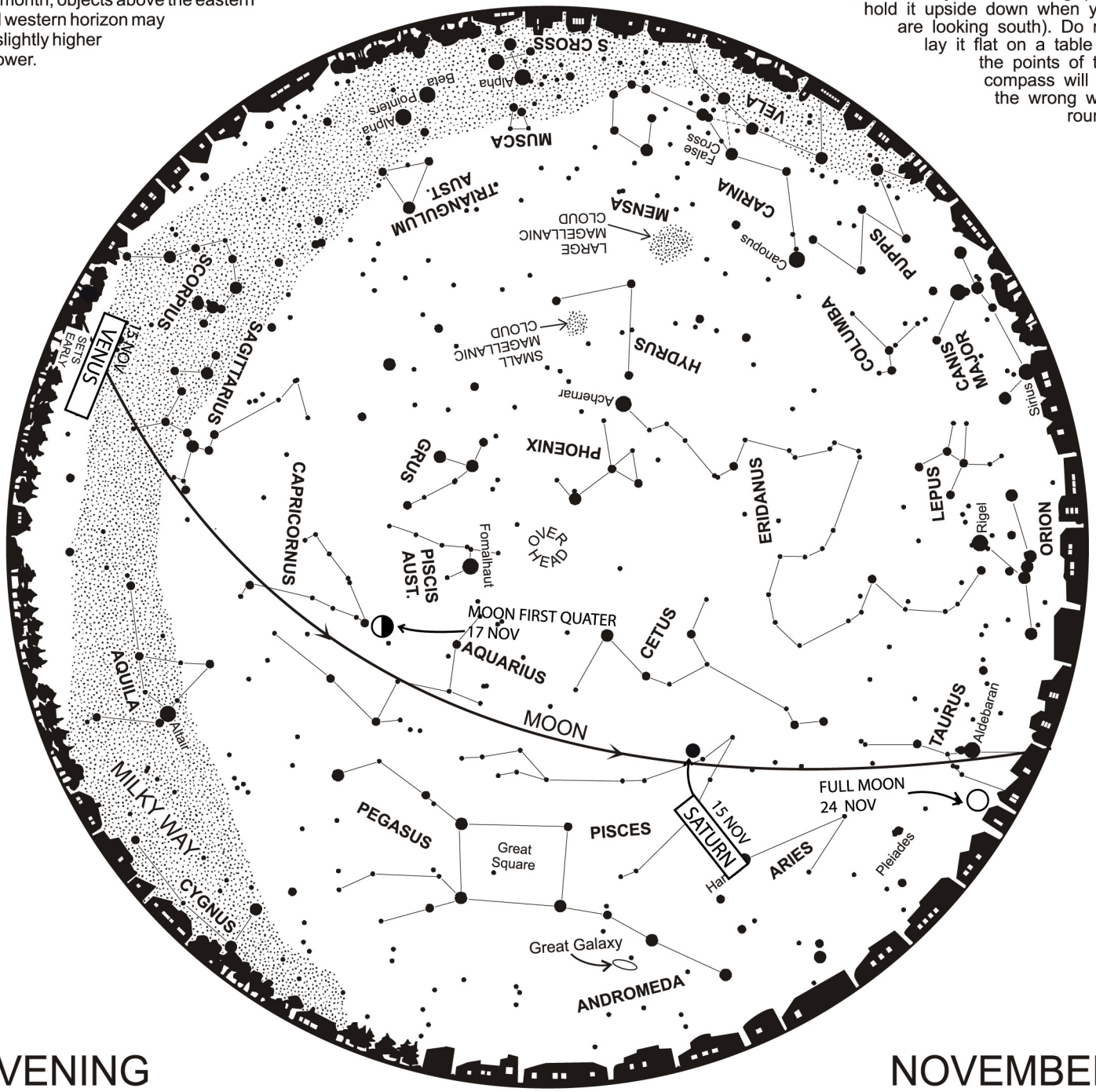
Voyager 1, launched about two weeks later on 5 September 1977, only flew past Jupiter (in 1979) and Saturn (in 1980). On 14 February 1990 it took a picture of a "pale blue dot" - Earth, more than 6 billion kilometres away!

In August 2012 Voyager 1 became the first man-made object to cross the boundary into interstellar space. And the next milestone is near: On 18 November 2026 Voyager 1 will reach a distance of one light-day from Earth. A phone call would need 24 hours to get to the trusty space probe!

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

NOVEMBER 2026

As spring comes to an end, the summer constellations begin to rise in the eastern sky. Taurus becomes increasingly prominent, with the bright orange star Aldebaran making it easy to identify. Orion also becomes more prominent in the evening sky. Look for the three stars of Orion's Belt, together with the bright stars Betelgeuse and Rigel. In Xhosa, Orion's Belt is known as amaKroza, meaning "three stars in a row" or "those in a queue." The three stars are associated with three holy places: the graves where ancestors rest peacefully, the starry heavens where their spirits roam, and the most holy place beyond the starry heavens, where the supreme God, Qamata, dwells.

Beneath Orion's Belt lies the Orion Nebula (M42), a region where new stars form. Under dark skies, it can be seen with the naked eye as a faint, fuzzy patch. Binoculars or a telescope will reveal considerably more detail, although the colours seen in photographs are much more vivid than those visible to the human eye.

Two of the brightest stars in the night sky, Sirius and Canopus, are also prominent during this month. As November progresses, Scorpius sinks lower in the western sky, while Lyra, Cygnus and Aquila also move towards the western horizon.

The New Moon occurs on 9 November, providing darker skies for stargazing, while the Full Moon occurs on 24 November, often locally referred to as Milk Moon due to it being so bright. The Leonid Meteor shower will peak on 17 November and will be best to be seen from late evening to early morning hours.

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