

# What to see in the Night Sky

July 2026

JULY

| SUNDAY                 | MONDAY              | TUESDAY                                            | WEDNESDAY                 | THURSDAY             | FRIDAY               | SATURDAY                                |
|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                        |                     |                                                    | 1                         | 2                    | 3                    | 4 Mars very near Uranus (am)            |
| 5                      | 6 Earth at aphelion | 7 8:29 pm Last Quarter Moon; Moon near Saturn (am) | 8 Moon near Saturn (am)   | 9 Venus near Regulus | 10                   | 11 Moon near the Pleiades and Mars (am) |
| 12 Moon near Mars (am) | 13                  | 14 10:43 am New Moon                               | 15                        | 16 Moon near Regulus | 17 Moon near Venus   | 18                                      |
| 19                     | 20 Moon near Spica  | 21 12:05 pm First Quarter Moon                     | 22 Moon near Jupiter (am) | 23                   | 24 Moon near Antares | 25                                      |
| 26                     | 27                  | 28                                                 | 29 3:36 pm Full Moon      | 30                   | 31                   |                                         |

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- **4 July, am:** Mars passes very close to Uranus (see Planet Watch and Chart 7a).
- **6 July, 6:30 pm:** the Earth is furthest from the Sun (aphelion), at 152 million km.
- **7 July, am:** Saturn lies to the lower left of the Moon.
- **8 July, am:** the Moon is to the upper left of Saturn.

- **9 July:** Venus passes less than a degree from Regulus.
- **11 July, am:** as you watch the Moon rising, around 1 am, you'll notice that it's right beside the Pleiades, with Mars to the lower left.
- **12 July, am:** the crescent Moon lies to the left of Mars.
- **17 July:** the crescent Moon forms a lovely duo with Venus

low in the west after sunset, with Regulus to the right (Chart 7b).

- **24 July:** enjoy a lovely summer evening's sight, as the Moon glides under Antares low in the southern sky.



7a 4 July, 3 am. Mars passes close to Uranus (binocular view).



7b 17 July, 10 pm. The Moon near to Venus and Regulus.

- **Venus** is the 'star' of the evening sky, blazing at magnitude  $-4.2$  over in the west and setting about 11 pm. On 9 June, the Evening Star passes right above Regulus. The Moon lies to the left of Venus on 17 June (Chart 7b).
- At the start of July, you'll find **Jupiter** well down to the lower right of Venus in the twilight haze. Lying in Cancer, it shines at magnitude  $-1.8$  and sets at 10:30 pm. But after a few days the giant planet

- sinks out of sight into the Sun's glow.
- The rest of the planetary action takes place in the wee small hours. The first planet you'll notice is **Saturn**, shining at magnitude  $+0.8$  in Pisces and rising just after midnight. The Moon is nearby on 7 and 8 July.
- **Neptune** lies about 10 degrees to the right of Saturn, also in Pisces and rising about half an hour earlier. At magnitude  $+7.7$ , you'll need

- binoculars or a telescope to spot the eighth planet.
- **Mars** (magnitude  $+1.3$ ) rises around 2 am in Taurus. During July it tracks from a position near the Pleiades, past Aldebaran on 13 July to reach the tip of the Bull's 'horns' - to the extreme left of the constellation - by the end of the month.
- Also in Taurus, near the Pleiades, lies **Uranus**. The seventh planet rises about 1:30 am; shining at a dim

- magnitude  $+5.8$ , it's best seen in binoculars. But you have an excellent chance to spot Uranus on the morning of 4 July, when Mars - 60 times brighter - sails by at a distance of only 9 arcminutes. It's your opportunity to view the reddest and the greenest planets of the Solar System in the same binocular or telescope field of view (Chart 7a)!
- **Mercury** is too close to the Sun to be visible in July.

(source: Philip's Stargazing 2026)

Keep an eye out for Noctilucent clouds or NLCs which have been seen as far south as London.



(source: Martin Whillock, Image: BBC Sky at Night)

The July full moon is called the Buck Moon as it is the time that male deer begin to regrow their antlers. It may also be known as the Thunder Moon. It peaks on the 29<sup>th</sup> July.

(Source: BBC weather)

The Perseid meteors will be visible, especially as there will be a new moon around their peak – 17<sup>th</sup> July to 14<sup>th</sup> August with a maximum around 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> August. The Perseids are the debris left by the tail of comet Swift-Tuttle (109P).

They can appear in any part of the sky so find somewhere with minimal light pollution and as much of the sky as visible as possible. You can find more information here:

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/space-astronomy/perseid-meteor-shower-guide-uk-when-where-to-see>

(source: BBC Sky at Night/Royal Museums Greenwich)



## August 2026

| AUGUST | SUNDAY                                                                                                      | MONDAY                                                                                                  | TUESDAY                                                                                                        | WEDNESDAY                                                                                                                               | THURSDAY                                                                                                                        | FRIDAY                                                                                                                             | SATURDAY                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|        | 30 Moon near Saturn<br>    | 31<br>                 |                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                    | 1<br>                                                                         |
|        | 2 Mercury W elongation<br> | 3 Moon near Saturn<br> | 4<br>                         | 5<br>                                                  | 6 3:21 am Last Quarter Moon<br>                | 7 Moon near the Pleiades (am)<br>               | 8<br>                                                                         |
|        | 9 Moon near Mars (am)<br>  | 10<br>                 | 11 Moon near Mercury (am)<br> | 12 6:37 pm New Moon; total solar eclipse; Perseids<br> | 13 Perseids (am)<br>                           | 14 Mercury near Praesepe (am)<br>               | 15 Mercury near Jupiter (am); Mars near M35; Venus E elongation near Moon<br> |
|        | 16 Moon near Venus<br>     | 17<br>                 | 18<br>                        | 19<br>                                                 | 20 3:46 am First Quarter Moon near Antares<br> | 21<br>                                          | 22<br>                                                                        |
|        | 23<br>                     | 24<br>                 | 25<br>                        | 26<br>                                                 | 27<br>                                         | 28 5:18 am Full Moon; partial lunar eclipse<br> | 29<br>                                                                        |

### SPECIAL EVENTS

- **2 August:** Mercury reaches its greatest morning separation from the Sun.
- **12 August:** a total eclipse of the Sun is visible from western Iceland and northern Spain (see Topic). Ireland and the UK will witness a partial eclipse (Chart 8a): the Sun is 91 per cent eclipsed as seen

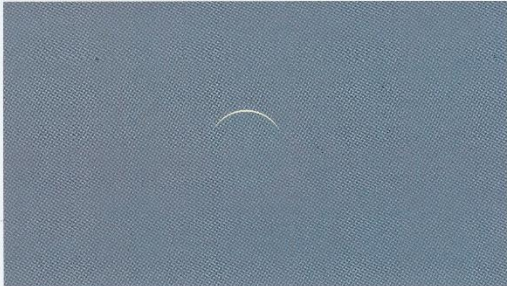
from London (7.13 pm) and Edinburgh (7.06 pm), rising to 98 per cent for the south-west of Ireland (7.13 pm).

- **Night of 12/13 August:** with the Moon well out of the way eclipsing the Sun, it's a fantastic year for watching the maximum of the **Perseid meteor shower**, high-speed pellets of dust from Comet

Swift-Tuttle burning up high above our heads.

- **15 August, am:** Mercury passes close to Jupiter; Mars is near M35 (see Planet Watch).
- **15 August:** Venus reaches its greatest evening separation from the Sun and forms a lovely sight next to the crescent Moon.

- **16 August:** the crescent Moon lies near Venus.
- **28 August, 3.34–6.52 am:** a large partial eclipse of the Moon is visible from the Americas, Africa and Europe, including the UK and Ireland. At maximum (5.14 am) 93 per cent of the Moon is in the Earth's shadow (Chart 8b).



**8a** 12 August, 7:12 pm (view from Portmagee, Ireland). Partial solar eclipse.

- Though its brightness is increasing day by day – rising to –4.6 at the end of August – **Venus** is looking less prominent as it sinks down into the twilight glow, setting as early as 9.30 pm. The crescent Moon makes a lovely pairing with Venus on 15 August – when the planet reaches its greatest separation from the Sun – and also on 16 August.
- Soon after the Evening Star sets, **Saturn** rises on

the opposite horizon at 10 pm. The ringworld shines at magnitude +0.6 in Pisces. The Moon is nearby on 3 August.

- Also in Pisces, **Neptune** (magnitude +7.7) rises about 9.30 pm, but isn't visible unless you have optical aid.
- Its slightly nearer twin, **Uranus**, shines at magnitude +5.8 in Taurus, and rises around 11.30 pm.
- **Mars** is rising about 1.30 am. Shining at magnitude +1.2, the Red Planet moves

from Taurus into Gemini during August. The Moon is nearby on the morning of 9 August. The morning of 15 August sees Mars pass just south of the lovely star cluster M35 (see March's Constellation): a ruby offsetting a gently glowing diadem.

- After its greatest separation from the Sun on 2 August, **Mercury** remains visible low on the horizon for a couple of weeks, rising around 4 am and

brightening to magnitude –1.2. On the morning of 14 August, Mercury flies through Praesepe; and in the pre-dawn skies of 15 August, it's only 40 arcminutes from Jupiter – for both events you'll need a clear horizon to the north-east and good binoculars to fight the twilight glow.

- **Jupiter**, in Cancer, reappears in our morning sky mid-month, shining at magnitude –1.8 and rising about 4.30 am.

(source: Philip's Stargazing 2026)