

The Sky This Month

14 December 2020 – 11 January 2021

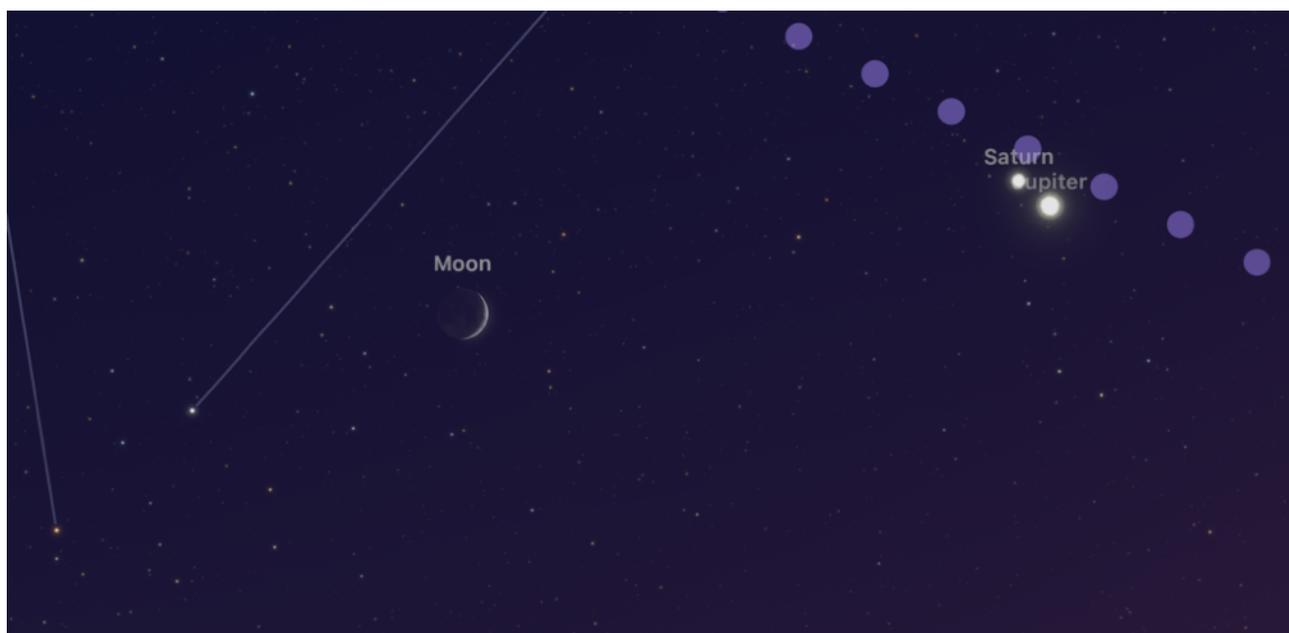


What's On

Thursday, 17 December 2020

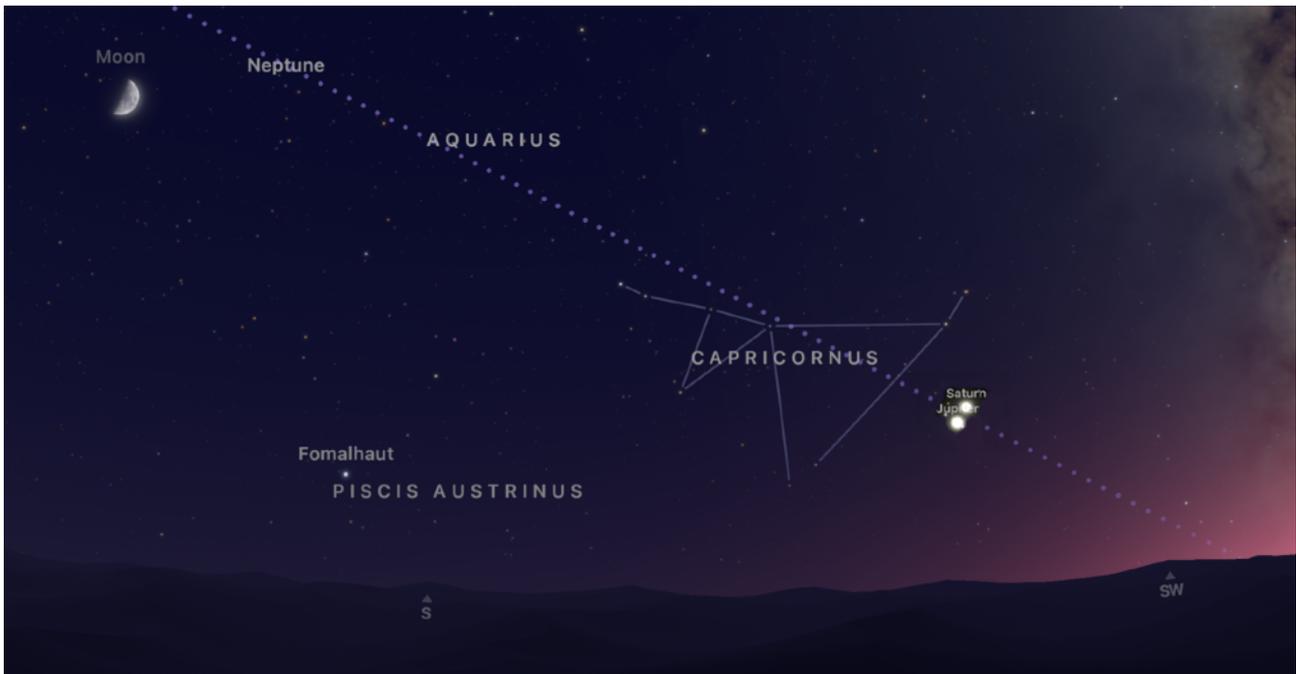
Jupiter, Saturn and a thin crescent moon

After sunset on the 17th of December, Saturn and Jupiter will be seen in the southwest, if clear, to the right of a very thin crescent Moon. Look out for the 'dark' part of the Moon illuminated with light reflected from the Earth – 'Earthshine'.



Countdown to the Great Conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn

By mid-December the gap between Jupiter and Saturn will close to about $1\frac{1}{2}$ Moon diameters. Then, on **21 December 2020**, the two planets will be 6 arc minutes apart – nearly hugging one another in the southwestern sky shortly after sunset – just four days before Christmas. Not since 1623 will the two planets have been so close – but that conjunction was likely not seen by anyone because it happened too close to the sun. You would need to go all the way back to 4 March 1226 to have seen Jupiter and Saturn as close together as we are about to now.



Hopefully, there will be clear skies on the 21st. Using a moderately powerful telescope you should be able to see both planets (together with their brightest satellites) within the same field of view. You'll need a clear view of the southwest horizon immediately after sunset to see them. The screen shot above shows the night sky at **16:39 on Monday, 21 December 2020**.

Tuesday, 22 December 2020

Ursids meteor shower

The Ursids meteor shower reaches its peak activity on the night of 21–22 December. From our location, the number of visible meteors will be highest at 06:00 – expect to see about 4 meteors per hour. At that time the shower's radiant (the point in the sky the meteors appear to originate from) will be 64° above the northern horizon.

Sunday, 27 December 2020

Double transit on Jupiter

On 27 December both Europa and Io are crossing Jupiter at very similar times. This is a rare opportunity to see both moons and both shadows as a series of four alternating black and white dots on the disk of Jupiter from sunset onwards.

03–04 January 2021

Quadrantid meteor shower

Maximum of the Quadrantid meteor shower. The apparent radiant will be 18° above the northwestern horizon. The number of visible meteors will be greatest around 18:00. Expect to see approx 13 meteors per hour.