

The Sky This Month

13 November – 11 December 2023



What's On

Monday, 13 November 2023 @ 23:52

1. Uranus at opposition

Due to the current position of Uranus in relation to the Earth and our sun, the planet will appear about 24% larger and 0.6 magnitude brighter than usual. An ideal time to view this planet. Timing is not critical if it happens to be cloudy on the 13th as you will still have several weeks of good potential observing time following this alignment.

Night of 17–18 November 2023

2. Leonids meteor shower

The Leonids meteor shower reaches its maximum activity on the night of 17 to 18 November. From our location, the number of visible meteors will be highest at 06:00 hours expect to see about 2 meteors per hour.



Monday, 20 November 2023 @ 16:46

3. Moon & Saturn

Keep watch after sunset on 20 November to see a close encounter between Saturn and the first quarter moon. At 16:46, the pair will be visible 17° above the south-eastern horizon, passing within only 3.17° of each other in the constellation Aquarius.

Monday, 4 December 2023 @ 15:52

4. Best evening to see Mercury

The planet Mercury reaches its greatest eastern elongation of 21° on 4 December. Evenings within about a week of this night will be your best opportunities to view the magnitude -0.5 planet. At sunset on this night, Mercury will be 5° above the western horizon, and begin to appear against the darkening sky. It will set just 58 minutes later at 16:50.

Saturday, 9 December 2023 @ 07:29

5. Moon & Venus

Wake up early before sunrise on 9 December to see a close encounter between Venus and the waning crescent moon. At 07:29, the pair will be visible 20° above the south-eastern horizon, passing within only 4.41° of each other in the constellation Virgo.



Constellation of the month:

6. Taurus

Taurus is easily identified by the V-shaped cluster of stars known as the Hyades, which represents the bull's face, and the bright red star Aldebaran, often considered the bull's eye. To observe Taurus and its celestial objects, look eastward in the evening and identify the V-shaped cluster of the Hyades and the bright star Aldebaran. The Pleiades cluster is nearby, and the Crab Nebula can be found with the help of star charts or astronomy apps.

7. The Pleiades (M45)

Also known as the Seven Sisters, the Pleiades is a beautiful open star cluster located in the shoulder of Taurus. The cluster is easily visible to the naked eye, and binoculars reveal its delicate, blue-white stars. In mythology, the Pleiades were seven sisters pursued by Orion the Hunter.

8. Aldebaran (Alpha Tauri)

This is the brightest star in Taurus and represents the bull's eye. Aldebaran is an orange giant star, and its distinctive colour makes it easily recognisable. It is not part of the Hyades cluster but lies along the same line of sight.

9. Crab Nebula (M1)

Although not in Taurus itself, the Crab Nebula is relatively close by. It is the remnant of a supernova explosion observed in the year 1054 and is a fascinating object to observe with a telescope.

10. Hind's Variable Nebula (NGC 1555)

This is a reflection nebula located to the southwest of the star T Tauri, which is a variable star in Taurus. The nebula varies in brightness, and its appearance can change over time. Observing it with a telescope can reveal its unique structure.