Astronomy News

Night Sky 2018 – May

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sunrise | Sunset | Moon Phases | Venus Sets  |
| 1st – 5:44am10th – 5:29am20th – 5:14am30th – 5:04am | 1st – 8:33pm10th – 8:47pm20th – 9:02pm30th – 9:14pm | Last Quarter – 8thNew Moon – 15thFirst Quarter – 22ndFull Moon – 29th | 1st – 11:02pm10th – 11:25pm20th – 11:44pm30th – 11:54pm |
| Moon Rise | Moon Set | Moon Rise | Moon Set |
| - - - - - - -1st – 10:05pm2nd – 11:08pm4th – 12:06am5th – 12:57am6th - 1:42am7th – 2:00am8th – 2:53am (LQ)9th – 3:21am10th – 3:46am11th – 4:10am12th – 4:32am13th – 4:56am14th – 5:22am15th – 5:51am (New) | 1st – 6:56am2nd – 7:27am3rd – 8:03am4th – 8:44am5th – 9:32am6th - 10:26am7th – 11:24am8th – 12:26pm (LQ)9th – 1:31pm10th – 2:38pm11th – 3:47pm12th – 4:59pm13th – 6:14pm14th – 7:30pm15th – 8:49pm (New) | 16th – 6:26am17th – 7:09am18th – 8:02am19th – 9:05pm20th – 10:15am21st – 11:30am22nd – 12:46pm (FQ)23rd – 2:01pm24th – 3:14pm25th – 4:26pm26th – 5:36pm27th – 6:45pm28th – 7:52pm29th – 8:57pm (Full)30th - 9:57pm | 16th – 10:06pm17th – 11:18pm19th – 12:21am20th – 1:13am21st – 1:55am22nd – 2:29am (FQ)23rd – 2:58am24th – 3:23am25th – 3:46am26th – 4:09am27th – 4:32am28th – 4:58am29th – 5:27am (Full)30th - 6:00am- - - - - - - |
| A useful site: [www.heavens-above.com](http://www.heavens-above.com/) | A S Zielonka |  |  |

At 10:30pm on the 1st, Jupiter will be 15 degrees to the upper right of the rising Moon in the south eastern sky. At the same time in the WNW, Venus will be just 4 degrees above the horizon.

Comet C/2016 N6 Panstarrs this month lies in the northern constellation of Lynx. Its last observable magnitude was 12 (April 3rd) On the 1st it will be 2.945AU from the Earth. It’s at perihelion in mid-July.  For further information please see 'Comets' and 'Constellations' in the website above.

On the 4th at 5:00am looking southwards, Saturn will be 8 degrees to the left of the Moon. Jupiter will also be low in the south west, with Mars in the SSE.

In the early hours around an hour before dawn during this month the asteroid Vesta will be 6 – 7 degrees to the upper right of Saturn. On the morning of the 4th Vesta will also be 5 degrees to the upper left of the Moon. For further information please see 'Asteroids' and 'Sky Chart' in the website above.

At 5:00am on the 5th, Saturn will be just 4 degrees to the right of the Moon with Mars 13 degrees to the left of it.

There is a scheduled launch on the 5th\* at 11:10am\* of an Atlas V rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) is the first mission (to last at least 2 years) is to explore Mar's deep interior. Its targeting a landing in Elysium Planitia area of Mars. This NASA Discovery Program mission will be the first interplanetary launch from the West Coast.

On the 6th at 5:00am the planet Mars will be just 2 degrees to the lower left of the Moon.

The Eta Aquarids meteor shower reaches its peak on the 6th.

In the SSE at 4:45am on the 7th, Mars will be 10 degrees to the right of the Moon.

Jupiter and its moons are at its best to view this month. It will be at opposition on the 9th. At 1:05am it will be due south.

There is a planned launch on the 9th\* from Wallops Island, Virginia of an Orbital ATK Antares rocket to the International Space Station (ISS). Its mission is to deliver over three metric tons of cargo to the ISS as the first of two planned Orbital-ATK resupply missions in 2018 under an extension to the original Commercial Resupply Services contract to bridge a gap until CRS-2 enters operations.

On the 10th at 4:30am in the ESE, Neptune will be 4 degrees to the upper left of the crescent Moon and just 1 degree to the above right of the 4th magnitude star Phi Aquarii in the constellation of Aquarius. For further information please see 'Constellations' in the website above.

The Eta Lyrids meteor shower reaches its peak on the 10th.

At 4:45am on the 11th Neptune will be 10 degrees to the upper right of the crescent Moon.

On the 12th at 4:40am the crescent Moon will be just above the eastern horizon. This will probably be the last time you will see it until a few days time when it will be setting in the evenings after the Sun.

Comet C/2016R2 Panstarrs will be at perihelion on the 9th when it will be 2.602AU from the Sun. From the 10th - 14th around 10:00pm, Comet C/2016R2 Panstarrs will lie midway between the two brightest stars Capella and Menkalinan in the constellation of Auriga in the evening sky in the north west. Its last observable magnitude was 12 (April 3rd). It is at perihelion in June. For further information please see 'Comets' and 'Constellations' in the website above.

Mercury and Uranus are just 3 degrees apart on the morning of the 14th and only just above the eastern horizon at 5:00am. Unfortunately with the Sun rising at 5:23am they unlikely to be seen.

Venus is at perihelion (its closest to the Sun in its orbit) on the 15th

On the 16th at 9:30pm a very thin crescent Moon will be 3 degrees above the western horizon and 16 degrees below right of the bright shining Venus. An occultation of the bright star Aldebaran occurs today though it will only visible from a part of north Russia, Greenland and Northern Canada.

At 9:30pm on the 17th a thin crescent Moon will be just 4½ degrees to the lower left of the planet Venus.

There is a planned launch on the 18th\* from Guiana Space Center, French Guiana of an Ariane rocket. It will put the GSAT-11 and Intelsat 38 communications satellites into Geostationary Transfer Orbit. GSAT-11 is India’s largest and most-powerful communications satellite to date, weighing 5,725 Kilograms and utilizing the new I-6K satellite platform designed for satellites in the six-metric-ton class.

On the 18th at 11:30pm the 4th magnitude star Mekbuda in the constellation of Gemini will be just 1 degree above the crescent Moon.

On the night of 19th at 12:50am the bright stars Castor and Pollux point the way to the slowly setting Moon.

At 11:00pm on the 21st the bright star Regulus in the constellation of Leo is just 2½ degrees to the left of the Moon.

On the 24th at midnight the 2.7 magnitude star Porrima in the constellation of Virgo will be just 1½ degrees to the lower left of the Moon.

Just after 1:00am on the night of the 25th the Moon will lie approx halfway between the bright star Spica and the 3rd magnitude star Zeta Virginis in Virgo.

At midnight on the 26th Jupiter will be 11½ degrees to the lower left of the Moon.

From 4:30am between the 27th - 30th Comet C/2016 M1 PANSTARRS will lie midway between Mars and Saturn in the south. It is at its closest to Earth in June and at perihelion on the 10th August.

Its last observable magnitude was 11.5 (April 3rd). For further information please see 'Comets' and 'Constellations' in the website above.

On the 27th at 10:30pm Jupiter will be just 3 degrees to the lower right of the Moon. At the same time the 2.7 magnitude star Zubenelgenubi in the constellation of Libra will be just 1¼ degrees to the right of Jupiter.

During the late evenings around 11:00pm from the 28th May - 8th June the asteroid Ceres will be in the western sky. On the 3rd June it will be very close to the 3rd magnitude star Epsilon Leonis in the constellation of Leo which is at the opposite end of the reversed “?” to where the brighter star Regulus is.

On the 29th the Moon will be due south east at 10:15pm.

At midnight on the 30th Saturn will be just 5½ degrees above the south east horizon with the Moon 12½ degrees to above right of it.

On the 31st at midnight, Saturn will be just 1 degree below the Moon which is 7 degrees above the south east horizon.

Fact: John Watts Young (b.1930) enjoyed the longest career of any astronaut. He became the first person to make six space flights over the course of 42 years and is the only person to have piloted, and been commander of four different classes of spacecraft: Gemini, the Apollo Command/Service Module, the Apollo Lunar Module and the Space Shuttle.

News: On April 5th it was announced that a “Luxury Space Hotel” will be launched into space. Space tourists will have a new orbital destination four years from now, if one company's plans come to fruition. Orion Span aims to launch its “Aurora Station” in late 2021 and begin accommodating guests in 2022. It will be the first affordable luxury space hotel – How much I hear you ask? - Well a 12 day stay aboard the Aurora Station will start from $9.5 million. Anyone interested? Well I am, its just a matter about the cost? Though if (that's a big if) I win the Euromillions I wouldn't think twice – I would just go. I've been 7 miles up in Concorde. At least another 43 miles to go to get into outer space then beyond. (My 12 day mission will be …..to seek out new civilizations and to boldly go where no man as gone before. Well!!! Anybody got some spare cash???) From 2001 – 2009 seven private citizens took a total of eight trips to the International Space Station (ISS) paying an estimated $20 million to $40 million each time.