

What's In the Sky August 2022

Perseid Meteor Shower: Early August

Peak expected around August 11-13 but builds gradually starting in early August and can last for weeks. The Perseid Meteor Shower is one of the most anticipated meteor showers in the Northern Hemisphere with reports of 90 or more meteors per hour during peak. Unfortunately, this year the August full moon will occur on the same nights as the Perseid's peak. The bright moonlight will outshine the meteors on peak nights even in the darkest skies in 2022. We recommend you take advantage of the moon-free mornings in early August. Watch on multiple mornings. You won't see as many meteors as you would in a dark, moon-free sky at the peak. The Perseids strengthen in number as late night deepens into the wee hours of the morning. The shower is often highest in the sky and best before dawn. The Perseid Meteor Shower radiates in the northeast to high in the north between midnight and dawn.

Full Moon: August 11

This is our last Supermoon of the year. It will rise at 8:36pm CDT and set at 6:01am CDT August 12. This full moon has many folk names, the most common is the Sturgeon Moon. August's full moon is traditionally called the Sturgeon Moon because the giant sturgeon of the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain were most readily caught during this part of summer. Did you know the full moon phase is the worst time to observe the moon with a telescope? This is because it is too bright to clearly see the details and its true beauty. Using a moon filter just diminishes the brightness and makes it less harsh on your eyes without bringing out the details.

The Major Planets: Early in August Saturn will rise around 9:00pm and set around 7:48am. Jupiter will follow rising around 11:00pm and setting around 6am. Saturn and Jupiter will continue to rise earlier and earlier each night and by the end of August Saturn will rise at 7:00pm and Jupiter will rise at 9pm providing more observing opportunities prior to midnight. The other planets continue their pre-dawn performance.

Saturn at Opposition: August 14

In astronomy terms, "opposition" is when Earth comes directly between the Sun and a planet. When this happens, the planet will be its closest to Earth. On August 14 Saturn will be its closest to Earth and its brightest and largest for the year. This is a great observing opportunity to see Saturn at its best. Saturn will be rising at 8:16pm CDT and will be visible all night. For the rest of 2022, Saturn will be shifting west, remaining visible in the evening sky through January 2023.

Last Quarter Moon Phase: August 18/19

The Last Quarter Moon phase is when our natural satellite rises **after midnight**, clearing the way for 10 nights of dark, mostly moonless skies that will be ideal for both stargazing and astrophotography. As a bonus, the nights are now getting longer, and the Milky Way and its bright galactic center are visible just after dark in the southern sky. However, the Milky Way can only be seen in very dark skies. What a great time to visit Copper Breaks State Park (near Quanah, Texas) where the Milky Way can be seen in all its glory.

New Moon: August 27

Fun fact: The moon can't emit its own light. It can only reflect the light from the Sun's rays. Since there is no sunlight during the New Moon phase there is nothing to reflect, so the moon becomes completely dark and unable to be seen in the sky.