



What's in the Sky

October 2023

October is meteor shower season. There are 7 meteor showers active during this month. Most of them are minor but with so many showers active and each having different peak times, you could see a meteor blaze the sky any clear night of the month. Keep your eyes to the sky!

October 8-10: Draconid Meteor Shower

The Draconids are a minor meteor shower. (<1 - 6 meteors per hour). But they kick off the busy October meteor shower season. In 2003, the shower will peak close to the new moon. A sliver of moonlight will be present. Late evening to early morning is the best time to view meteor showers.

October 10: A Morning Delight

Grab a cup of cup of coffee and go outside this morning around 6:00 AM. Look East for a beautiful conjunction of Venus and the crescent Moon. The not-so-bright star Regulus will be positioned between them. This is one of my favorite conjunctions.

October 14: New Moon and Annular Solar Eclipse

The "Ring of Fire" Solar eclipse will be visible in North America for the first time in 11 years. The path of totality runs through Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. However, the path of totality does not run through our area of Texas. More on this eclipse coming in a separate post.

October 20 - 21: Orionid Meteor Shower

The Orionid meteor shower is a major meteor shower and will peak overnight between the 20th and 21st. This shower is expected to deliver a shooting star every three to five minutes. The Orionids will radiate from the constellation Orion in the eastern sky, generally from Orion's club. We will have a 40% - 50% illuminated moon that night but it should set in the West at 11:17 PM on the 20th and midnight on the 21st. After that the viewing should be good. If the moonset is blocked by trees or structures, you should be able to view once the moon goes behind those objects.

October 23: Saturn hovers to the upper left of the Moon

The ringed planet shines high in the sky to the upper left of the Moon around 8:00 PM, making it a stunning evening view.

October 28: Full Hunter's Moon

October's Full Moon appears on October 28, 2023, at 6:40 PM. Start looking for it on Friday, October 27. Traditionally, the hunter's Moon marked the time to go hunting in preparation for the cold months ahead. **Also on October 28**, the full moon will be below Jupiter in close conjunction. The giant planet will outshine all the stars, rising after sunset around 7:00 PM in the eastern skies, and visible all night.

Planets

At the beginning of the month Saturn will rise around 5:30 PM, 1 hour and 45 minutes prior to sunset. It will be in good position in the southeastern sky by the time it is dark. Saturn will rise earlier each day and by the end of October Saturn will rise at 3:33 in the afternoon and set at 2:30 AM. Jupiter will rise around 9:00 PM at the beginning of the month and 6:50 PM at the end of the month. Jupiter will remain in the sky all night. Mercury will be difficult to see as it will rise and set with the sun. Venus will be an early morning planet, rising near 4:00 AM. Mars will be very difficult to see. It is mostly a daytime planet now. But you might catch it chasing the sun in the West a few minutes after sunset. Uranus and Neptune will be in the sky all night. Neptune will be difficult to see.