Sky Calendar – November 2023

3 Jupiter at opposition at 5h UT. This is the best time to use a telescope to observe the largest planet in the solar system. Mag. –2.9.
5 Moon near Beehive cluster M44 at 0h UT (morning sky).
5 Southern Taurid meteor shower peaks. Active from Sept 23 to Dec 8. Associated with Comet 2P/Elenke.
5 Last Quarter Moon at 8:38 UT.
6 Moon near Regulus at 21h UT (morning sky).
6 Moon at apogee (farthest from Earth) at 22h UT (distance 404,569 km; angular size 29.5°).
9 Moon near Venus at 11h UT (46° from Sun, morning sky). Mag. –4.3. Daytime occultation visible from Europe.
9 Northern Taurid meteor shower peaks. Active from Oct 13 to Dec 2. Occasional bright fireball.
11 Moon near Spica at 9h UT (morning sky).
11 Moon near Antares within circle 4.2° diameter at 21h UT (evening sky). Mags. –0.0 & 1.0.
14 Moon at perigee (closest to Earth) at 21:16 UT (distance 369,818 km; angular size 32.3°).
14 Mercury at opposition at 8h UT (evening sky). Mag. –2.8.
14 Moon near Mercury at 15h UT (15° from Sun, evening sky). Mag. –0.4.
14, 15 Moon, Mercury and Antares within circle 4.2° diameter at 21h UT (evening sky). Mags. –0.0 & 1.0.
14 Moon near Antares at 21h UT (18° from Sun, evening sky). Occultation visible from Canada, USA, Mexico.
20 First Quarter Moon at 10:50 UT.
20 Moon near Saturn at 17h UT (evening sky). Mag. 0.9.
20 Moon at perigee (closest to Earth) at 21:16 UT (distance 369,818 km; angular size 32.3°).
20 Moon near Jupiter at 8h UT (evening sky). Mag. –2.8.
25 Venus 4.2° NNE of Spica at 18h UT (morning sky). Mags. –4.2 and 1.0.
25 Moon near the Pleiades at 2h UT (midnight sky).
27 Full Moon at 9:15 UT.
29 Venus 4.2° NNE of Spica at 18h UT (morning sky). Mags. –4.2 and 1.0.

More sky events and links at http://skymaps.com/skycalendar/
All times in Universal Time (UT). (Singapore Standard Time = UT + 8 hours.)
Tips for Observing the Night Sky

When observing the night sky, and in particular deep-sky objects such as star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies, it’s always best to observe from a dark location. Avoid direct light from street lights and other sources. If possible observe from a dark location away from the light pollution that surrounds many of today’s large cities.

You will see more stars after your eyes adapt to the darkness—usually about 10 to 20 minutes after you go outside. Also, if you need to use a torch to view the sky map, cover the light bulb with red cellophane. This will preserve your dark vision.

Finally, even though the Moon is one of the most stunning objects to view through a telescope, its light is so bright that it brightens the sky and makes many of the fainter objects very difficult to see. So try to observe the evening sky on moonless nights around either New Moon or Last Quarter.

Astronomical Glossary

Conjunction – An alignment of two celestial bodies such that they present the least angular separation as viewed from Earth.

Constellation – A defined area of the sky containing a star pattern.

Diffuse Nebula – A cloud of gas illuminated by nearby stars.

Double Star – Two stars that appear close to each other in the sky; either linked by gravity so that they orbit each other (binary star) or lying at different distances from Earth (optical double). Apparent separation of stars is given in seconds of arc (‘).

Ecliptic – The path of the Sun’s center on the celestial sphere as seen from Earth.

Elongation – The angular separation of two celestial bodies. For Mercury and Venus the greatest elongation occurs when they are at their most angular distance from the Sun as viewed from Earth.

Galaxy – A mass of up to several billion stars held together by gravity.

 Globular Star Cluster – A ball-shaped group of several thousand old stars.

Light Year (ly) – The distance a beam of light travels at 300,000 km/sec in one year.

Magnitude – The brightness of a celestial object as it appears in the sky.

Open Star Cluster – A group of tens of thousands of relatively young stars.

Opposition – When a celestial body is opposite the Sun in the sky.

Planetary Nebula – The remnants of a shell of gas blown off by a star.

Universal Time (UT) – A time system used by astronomers. Also known as Greenwich Mean Time. Singapore Standard Time is UT plus 8 hours.

Variable Star – A star that changes brightness over a period of time.

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