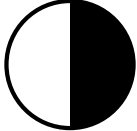
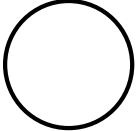
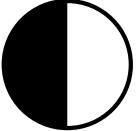
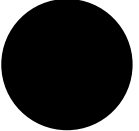


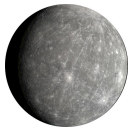
What's Up - April 2025

Moon

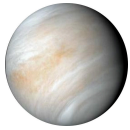
 First Quarter 5 April 2025 04:15	 Full Moon 13 April 2025 02:22	 Last Quarter 21 April 2025 03:36	 New Moon 27 April 2025 21:31
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The moon is at perigee (closest to Earth) on 27/04 at 18:15, at a distance of 357 119 km. It is at apogee (furthest from Earth) on 14/04 at 00:48, at a distance of 406 295 km.

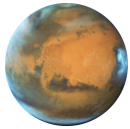
Planets



Mercury (in Pisces)
 ↑ 05:05 ↓ 17:19
 Near the Moon on 25/04 and 26/04



Venus (in Pisces)
 ↑ 04:48 ↓ 16:43
 Near the Moon on 25/04



Mars (in Cancer)
 ↑ 14:19 ↓ 00:14
 Near the Moon on 05/04



Jupiter (in Taurus)
 ↑ 11:23 ↓ 21:17
 Near the Moon on 02/04 and 30/04



Saturn (in Aquarius)
 ↑ 04:49 ↓ 17:11
 Near the Moon on 25/04

All the details (apart from the proximity to the Moon) are for mid-month in Cape Town.

More information



Scan the QR code for more information about the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) and for details about visiting the SAAO in Cape Town or Sutherland.

Some bright stars in the evening sky

Antares: red supergiant in Scorpius
 Arcturus: red giant in Boötes
 Betelgeuse: red supergiant in Orion
 Canopus: yellowish-white star in Carina
 Procyon: yellowish-white star in Canis Minor
 Regulus: blue-white star in Leo
 Rigel: blue supergiant in Orion
 Sirius: brightest star in the night sky, in Canis Major
 Spica: bluish-white star in Virgo
 The Pointers: Alpha and Beta Centauri

Meteor showers

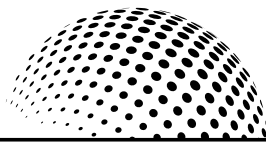
The April Lyrids are active from 14/04 until 30/04, peaking on 22/04 with 18 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 02:00 and 05:00. The pi-Puppids are active from 15/04 until 28/04, peaking on 23/04 with less than 5 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 19:00 and 23:00. The eta-Aquariids are active from 19/04 until 28/05, peaking on 06/05 with 50 meteors per hour. They are best viewed between 03:30 and 05:30.

Fun facts

The stars rise about four minutes earlier every day. The reason for this is that the rotation period of the Earth relative to the stars is shorter than its rotation period relative to the Sun. This means that we get to enjoy different constellations throughout the seasons.

One constellation we can still see in April (but not much longer) is Orion, the Hunter. If you look carefully, you will notice that one of its stars, Betelgeuse, looks more reddish than the others. Betelgeuse is a red supergiant. In /Xam star lore it was regarded as a tortoise, whereas in other star lore it was regarded as a lion watching three zebras (Orion's belt).

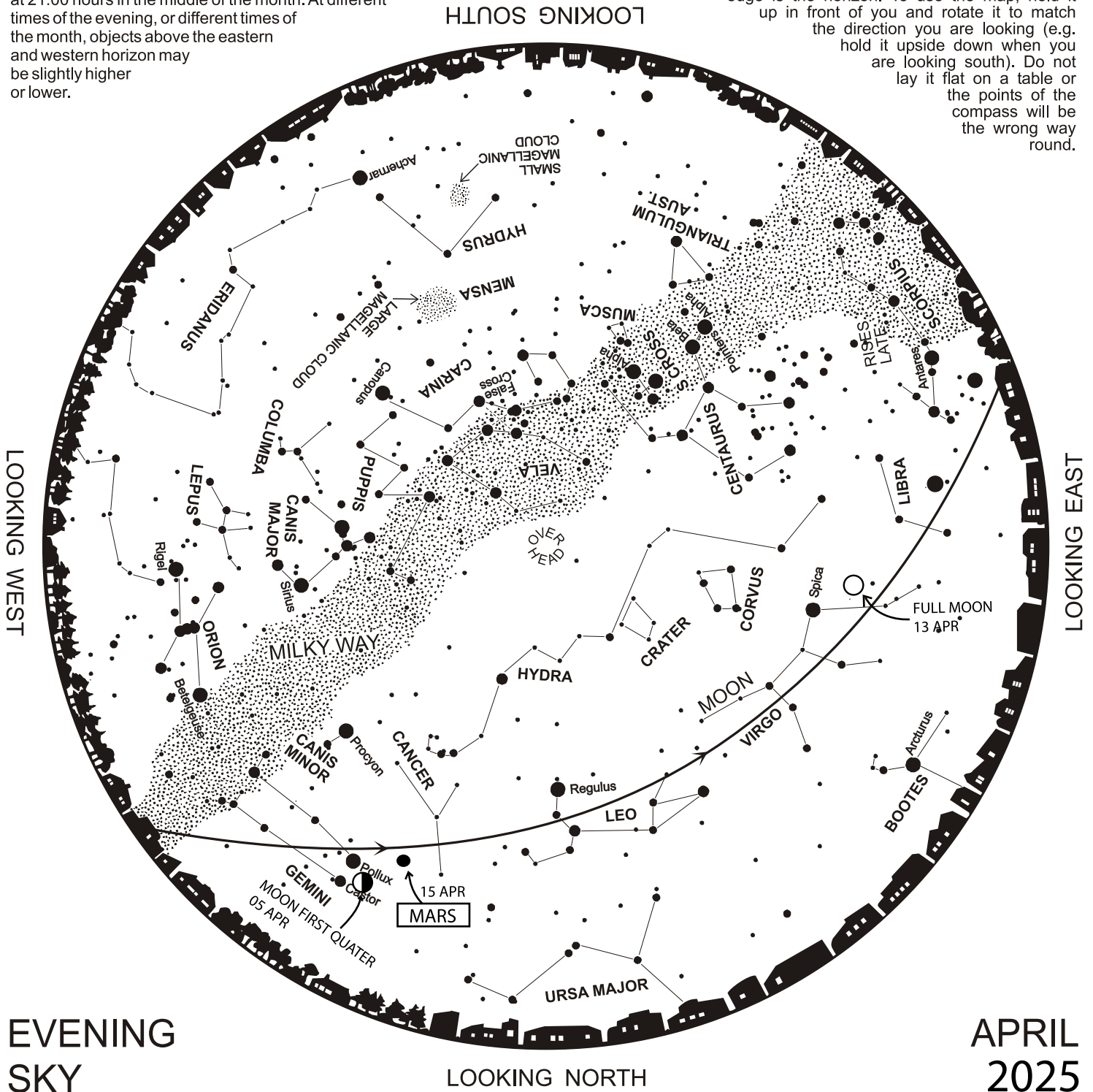
Above Orion's belt you can spot Orion's sword (yes, this hunter is making a handstand on the southern hemisphere). If you get a chance, look at it through a telescope. You will be rewarded with the beautiful sight of the Orion Nebula, a star-forming region.



IZIKO PLANETARIUM AND DIGITAL DOME

The map shows the night sky visible above the Cape at 21:00 hours in the middle of the month. At different times of the evening, or different times of the month, objects above the eastern and western horizon may be slightly higher or lower.

The centre of the map is the overhead point, the edge is the horizon. To use the map, hold it up in front of you and rotate it to match the direction you are looking (e.g. hold it upside down when you are looking south). Do not lay it flat on a table or the points of the compass will be the wrong way round.



EVENING SKY

APRIL 2025

As we head towards cooler nights in South Africa, Orion (hunter) sets earlier in our evening skies, a few hours after sunset. From Orion, follow the path of the Milky Way beyond Sirius, the brightest star in our night sky (in Canis Major, big dog), towards Vela (sail) directly overhead. Between Vela and Carina (keel) lies the False Cross, not to be confused with the Southern Cross further south-east. The Southern Cross also includes the Pointer Stars; Alpha Centauri and Beta Centauri. The former is a triple star system, which includes Proxima Centauri: the closest star to Earth, after the Sun. Low in the south-east, the Winter constellation Scorpius (Scorpion) returns to our early evening skies.

In the south, look out for our neighbouring galaxies, the Small (SMC) and Large Magellanic Clouds (LMC). Using binoculars on the southern edge of the SMC will reveal the spectacular globular cluster 47 Tucanae, which contains about half a million stars tightly bound together by gravity. A waxing crescent moon welcomes us at the start of April, building up to the Full Moon (the 'Diamond Moon') on 13 April. On 16 April just after 23:00 SAST, the Moon will occult (move in front of) Antares, the heart of the scorpion (a bright double star system in Scorpius). Mars (in Gemini) and Jupiter (in Taurus) remain brightly visible throughout the month.