



February to March 2021



The Cygnus spacecraft departs the International Space Station after being released from the robotic arm on 7 January 2021. It had completed a 93-day cargo mission, delivering 8,000 pounds of scientific experiments and supplies to the Station.

Image Credit: NASA

What to look out for in the night sky

19 February - Mars is located below and to the left of the Moon, in the evening sky

27 February - Full Moon ('Snow Moon')

Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn appear together just before sunrise at the end of February.

5 March - The asteroid Vesta (the brightest asteroid in the solar system) is at opposition and a small telescope will show it as starlike in appearance, with a tinge of red.

5 March - Mercury and Jupiter will be close in the morning twilight sky and Saturn will be located above them.

6 March - Mercury will be at its Greatest Western Elongation, low in the eastern sky, just before sunrise.

7 March - Mercury reaches its maximum elongation from the Sun, visible in the morning, predawn sky.

10 - 11 March - Saturn, Jupiter and Mercury will be in an almost vertical line above the Eastern horizon, in the early morning sky.

11 March - A waning Crescent Moon, Mercury and Jupiter will make a temporary triangle in the early morning sky, above the Eastern horizon.

19 and 20 March - The Moon will pass above Mars, the planet appearing as a pale red coloured star.

20 March - Venus will be at its Greatest Western Elongation, visible in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

20 March - The March Equinox is the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere and the start of autumn in the Southern Hemisphere.

28 March - Full Moon (also known as the Worm, Crow, Crust, Sap or Lenten Moon). This will be a Supermoon because it is at its perigee (the closest point in its orbit to Earth) and so should appear slightly brighter and larger than a regular full moon.



Vice (now Ex-) President Mike Pence introduces NASA astronauts during a meeting of the National Space Council, on 9 December 2020. These astronauts are from an initial team of 18 astronauts eligible for Artemis missions on and around the Moon. NASA plans to land the first woman and the next man on the Moon in 2024.

Image Credit: NASA/Kim Shiflett

Useful websites

Spot the International Space Station:

https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/sightings/view.cfm?country=United_Kingdom®ion=England&city=Kettering#.Xxl13ihKhPY

<https://www.space.com>

<https://www.nasa.gov/>

<https://astronomynow.com/uk-sky-chart/>

<https://www.skyatnightmagazine.com/advice/skills/astronomy-guide-viewing-planets-night-sky/>

<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/sights-to-see.html>

<https://nightskyonline.info/2021-astronomy-events/2021-predictable-astronomy-events/>

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