

Astronomical Events of July 2018

- July 12** - **Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation.**
The planet Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation of 26.4 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky. Look for the planet low in the western sky just after sunset.
- July 13** - **Partial Solar Eclipse.**
A partial solar eclipse occurs when the Moon covers only a part of the Sun, sometimes resembling a bite taken out of a cookie. A partial solar eclipse can only be safely observed with a special solar filter or by looking at the Sun's reflection. This partial eclipse will only be visible in extreme southern Australia and Antarctica.
- July 27** - **Mars at Opposition.**
The red planet will be at its closest approach to Earth and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun. It will be brighter than any other time of the year and will be visible all night long. This is the best time to view and photograph Mars. A medium-sized telescope will allow you to see some of the dark details on the planet's orange surface.
- July 27, 28** - **Total Lunar Eclipse.**
A total lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes completely through the Earth's dark shadow, or umbra. During this type of eclipse, the Moon will gradually get darker and then take on a rusty or blood red color. The eclipse will be visible throughout most of Europe, Africa, western and central Asia, the Indian Ocean, and Western Australia.
- July 28, 29** - **Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower.**
The Delta Aquarids is an average shower that can produce up to 20 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by debris left behind by comets Marsden and Kracht. The shower runs annually from July 12 to August 23. It peaks this year on the night of July 28 and morning of July 29. The nearly full moon will be a problem this year, blocking out all but the brightest meteors. But if you are patient, you should still be able to catch a few good ones. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Aquarius, but can appear anywhere in the sky.