

Astronomical Events of May 2018

- May 6, 7** - **Eta Aquarids.**
The Eta Aquarids is an above average shower, capable of producing up to 60 meteors per hour at its peak. Most of the activity is seen in the Southern Hemisphere. In the Northern Hemisphere, the rate can reach about 30 meteors per hour. It is produced by dust particles left behind by comet Halley, which has known and observed since ancient times. The shower runs annually from April 19 to May 28. It peaks this year on the night of May 6 and the morning of the May 7. The waning gibbous moon will block most of the fainter meteors this year, but you should be able to catch quite A few good ones if you are patient. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Aquarius, but can appear anywhere in the sky.
- May 9** - **Jupiter at Opposition.**
The giant 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 Jupiter and its moons. A medium-sized telescope should be able to show you some of the details in Jupiter's cloud bands. A good pair of binoculars should allow you to see Jupiter's four largest moons, appearing as bright dots on either side of the planet.
- May 15** - **New Moon.**
The Moon will located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.
- May 29** - **Full Moon.**
The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be will be fully illuminated. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Flower Moon because this was the time of year when spring flowers appeared in abundance. This moon has also been known as the Full Corn Planting Moon and the Milk Moon.