

Astronomical Events of November 2017

- November 4** - **Full Moon.**
The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Beaver Moon because this was the time of year to set the beaver traps before the swamps and rivers froze. It has also been known as the Frosty Moon and the Hunter's Moon.
- November 4, 5** - **Taurids Meteor Shower.**
The Taurids is a long-running minor meteor shower producing only about 5-10 meteors per hour. It is unusual in that it consists of two separate streams. The first is produced by dust grains left behind by Asteroid 2004 TG10. The second stream is produced by debris left behind by Comet 2P Encke. The shower runs annually from September 7 to December 10. It peaks this year on the night of November 4. Unfortunately the glare from the full moon will block out all but the brightest meteors. If you are extremely patient, you may still be able to catch a few good ones. Best viewing will be just after midnight from a dark location far away from city lights. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Taurus, but can appear anywhere in the sky.
- November 13** - **Conjunction of Venus and Jupiter.**
A spectacular conjunction of Venus and Jupiter will be visible in the evening sky. The two bright planets will be extremely close, appearing only 0.3 degrees apart. Look for this impressive pairing in the Eastern sky just before sunrise.
- November 17, 18** - **Leonids Meteor Shower.**
The Leonids is an average shower, producing up to 15 meteors per hour at its peak. This shower is unique in that it has a cyclonic peak about every 33 years where hundreds of meteors per hour can be seen. That last of these occurred in 2001. The Leonids is produced by dust grains left behind by comet Tempel-Tuttle, which was discovered in 1865. The shower runs annually from November 6-30. It peaks this year on the night of the 17th and morning of the 18th. The nearly new moon will not be a problem this year. Skies should be dark enough for what should be good show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Leo, but can appear anywhere in the sky.
- November 18** - **New Moon.**
The Moon will be 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.

November 24

- **Mercury at Greatest Eastern Elongation.**

The planet Mercury reaches greatest eastern elongation of 22.0 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.