

Sydney Observatory night sky map

March 2012

A map for each month of the year, to help you learn about the night sky

www.sydneysydneyobservatory.com.au

This star chart shows the stars and constellations visible in the night sky for Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Hobart and Adelaide for March 2012 at about 9 pm (summer time) and at about 8 pm (local standard time) for Perth and Brisbane. For Darwin and similar locations the chart will still apply, but some stars will be lost off the southern edge while extra stars will be visible to the north. Stars down to a brightness or magnitude limit of 4.5 are shown. To use this star chart, rotate it so that the direction you are facing (north, south, east or west) is shown at the bottom. The centre of the chart represents the point directly above your head, called the zenith point, and the outer circular edge represents the horizon.

Star brightness

- Zero or brighter
- 1st magnitude
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th

Moon phase

- First quarter: 1st
- Full Moon: 8th
- Last quarter: 15th
- New Moon: 23rd
- First quarter: 31st

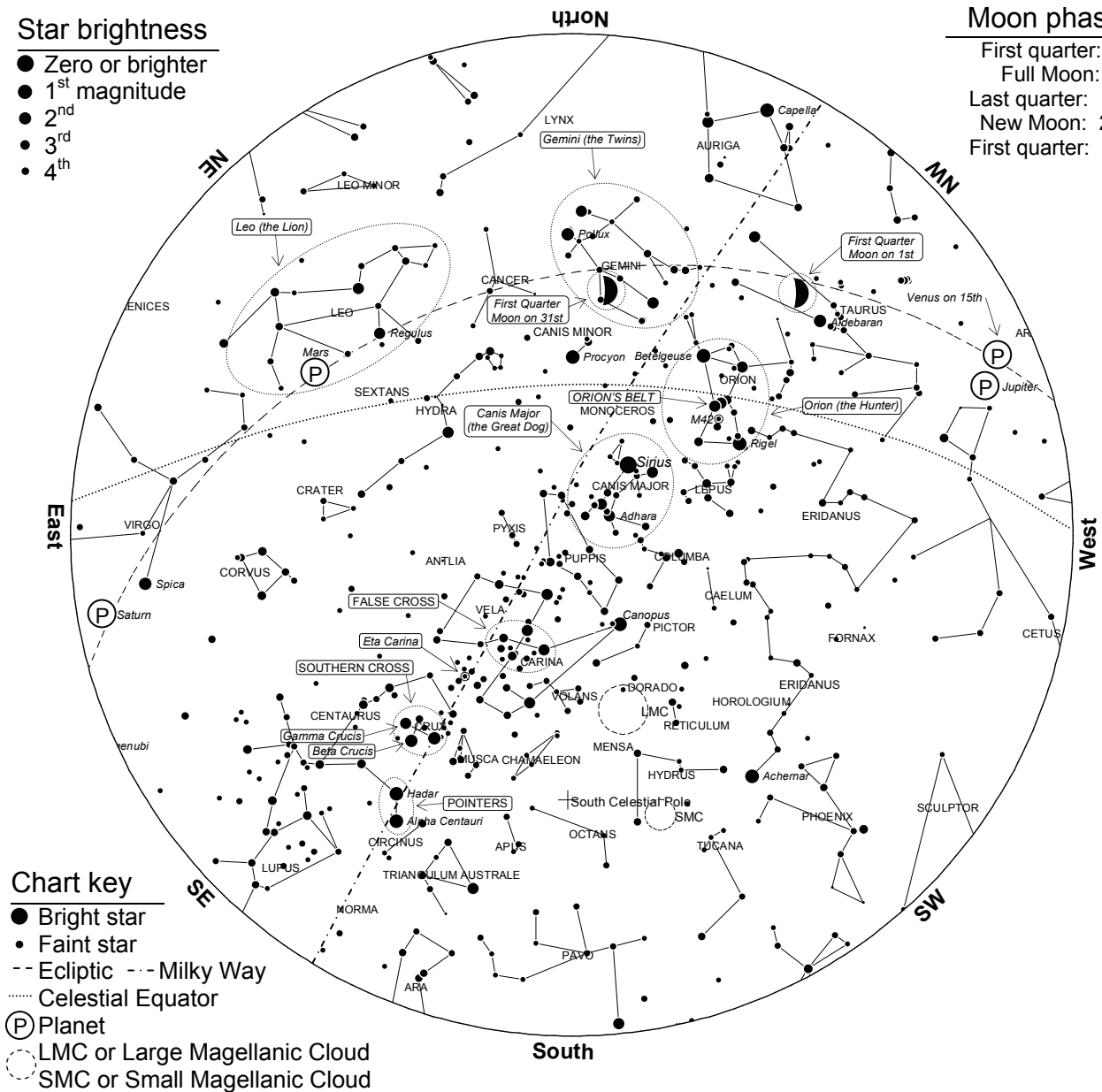


Chart key

- Bright star
- Faint star
- Ecliptic --- Milky Way
- Celestial Equator
- (P) Planet
- LMC or Large Magellanic Cloud
- SMC or Small Magellanic Cloud

The best time to view the Moon with a small telescope or binoculars is a few days either side of the first quarter Moon on the 1st or 31st. Low in the east is Saturn, visible as a faint star-like object in Virgo. Mars is located in Leo towards the north-east. Jupiter and Venus are low in the west during the early evening and are close to each other on the 15th. On the 26th at 8 pm Jupiter, the crescent Moon and Venus are located next to each other low in the western sky. The Autumn Equinox occurs on the 20th. The word equinox is Latin meaning equal night, and is one of two days (usually 21st March and 21st September) when the Sun spends an equal amount of time above and below the horizon for every place on Earth. Constellations visible this month include Canis Major (the Great Dog), Orion (the Hunter), Gemini (the Twins) and Leo (the Lion). Crux (the Southern Cross) is low in the south-east and is located just above the two bright Pointer stars.



2012 Australasian sky guide book

The 2012 Australasian sky guide has details on the sky for the whole year, including rise and set times for the Sun, Moon and planets, and tidal information for Sydney. Available from Sydney Observatory, the Powerhouse Museum and good bookshops (RRP \$16.95); also via mail order (postal charges apply) at www.powerhousemuseum.com/publications/

Daily activities

Sydney Observatory is open for night and day visits every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Good Friday. Bookings are essential for night programs. View the stars through our telescopes at night and see the 3D space theatre. Watson Road, Observatory Hill, The Rocks www.sydneysydneyobservatory.com.au Ph (02) 9921 3485