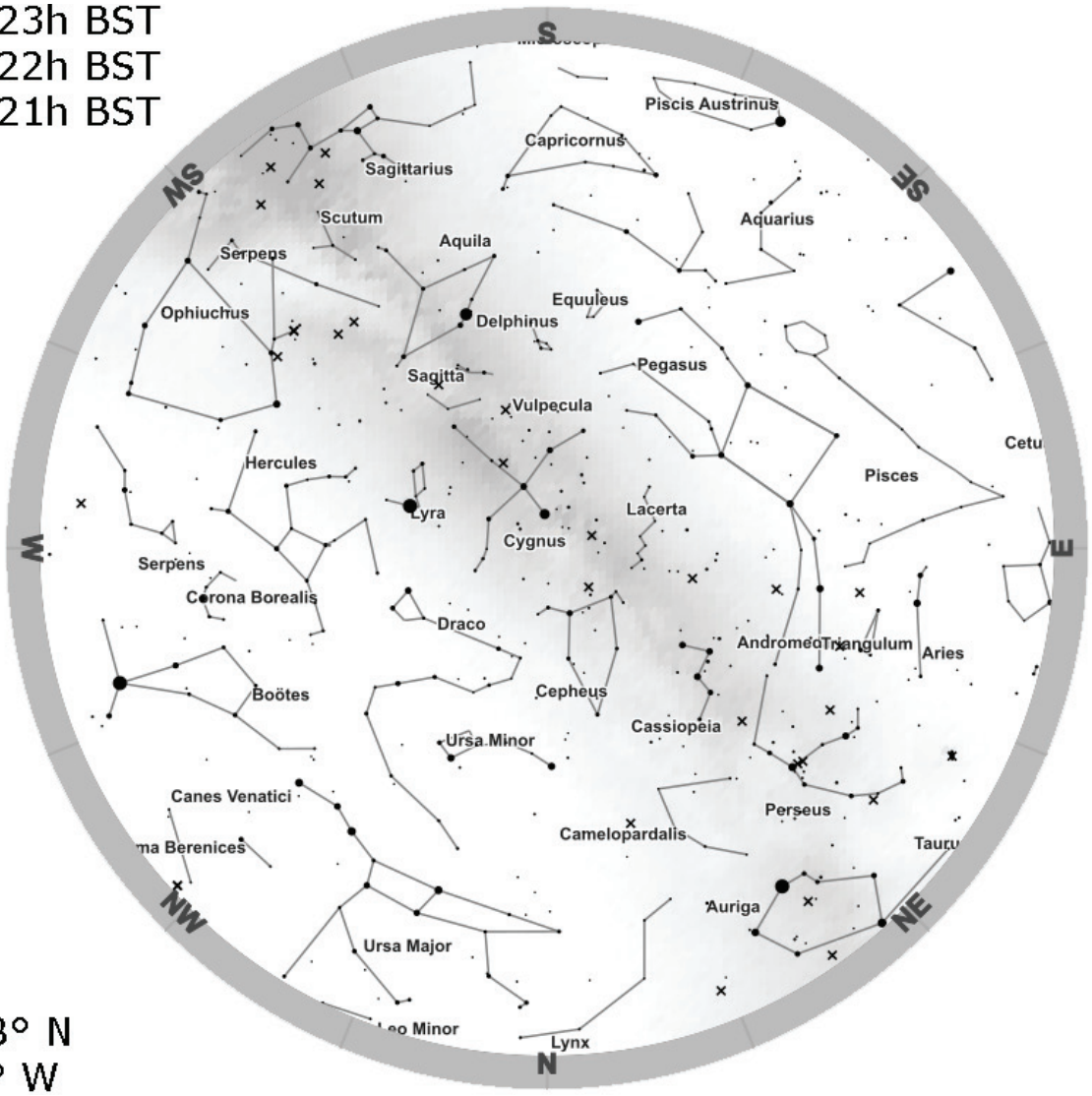
September Sky Notes 2020

01 Sep 23h BST
15 Sep 22h BST
30 Sep 21h BST



Woking
51.3168° N
0.5600° W

Constellations

These constellations are well placed in the evening this month, but many more can be seen. Check the star map for more.

Perseus appears at dusk in the south east, moving across the sky towards the zenith throughout the night and across the course of the month. Look for it beneath and to the left of the bright constellation Cassiopeia.

Cygnus begins the night close to the zenith, before moving slowly towards the western horizon through the night. As the month goes on, it gets closer to the horizon by sunrise.

Orion, a winter constellation, is just becoming visible in the morning sky, a couple of hours before dawn. It rises due east and climbs higher in the sky before being drowned out by the light of the Sun. As the month goes on, it rises earlier each night and moves across the sky.

Planets

Mercury is too close to the Sun to be visible this month. Its highest point of 4° occurs on the 19th, the same night that it reaches aphelion, its furthest point from the Sun. However, the light from the Sun will drown it out.

Venus appears in the eastern morning sky, beginning in the constellation of Gemini and moving through Cancer into Leo. Its highest point occurs on the 8th, when it will be 36° above the horizon. After this, it can be seen at gradually lower altitudes through the month. Venus is in conjunction with the Moon on the morning of the 14th.

Mars can be seen in the late evening and morning sky, in the constellation of Pisces. It rises earlier as the month goes on, rising shortly after sunset by the end of the month. Mars has 2 conjunctions with the dwarf planet Eris on the 1st and the 19th. You will need at least a 4-inch telescope to see this. It is also in conjunction with the Moon on the morning of the 6th.

Jupiter is visible in the constellation of Sagittarius in the southern sky from sunset onwards, setting in the early hours of the morning. As the month continues, it sets earlier, and by the end of the month sets before midnight. Jupiter is in conjunction with the Moon on the 25th.

Saturn stays close to Jupiter, appearing in the constellation of Sagittarius in the southern sky. It can be seen from sunset onwards, setting in the early hours of the morning. By the end of the month, it sets before midnight, having set earlier each night. Saturn is in conjunction with the Moon on the 25th.

Uranus is too faint to be seen with the naked eye. It appears in the southern sky, between the constellations of Aries and Cetus, moving from east to west over the course of the night.

Neptune is too faint to be seen with the naked eye. It appears in the southern sky, lower than Uranus. Near the constellation of Aquarius, it moves from east to west over the course of the night. Neptune reaches opposition on the 11th, with its highest point occurring around midnight.

Meteor Showers

The **September ε-Perseids** reach their peak on the 9th. The radiant (origin point) in the constellation of Perseus is circumpolar, so meteors will be visible all night. Best views will be shortly before dawn, as the radiant reaches its highest point around 05:00. There will be 4-5 meteors per hour.

The **Sextantids** reach their peak around the 27th. It will not be visible before 04:41, when the radiant (origin point) in the constellation of Sextans rises in the east. Meteors will be visible through to sunrise. Best displays are likely to be shortly before dawn. The normal rate of meteors is 5 per hour, but as the radiant will be low on the horizon you are more likely to see about 1 per hour.

Moon

Full Moon: 2nd

Last Quarter: 10th

New Moon: 17th

First Quarter: 24th

The Moon reaches **perigee**, its closest point to the Earth, on the 18th and **apogee**, is furthest point on the 6th. This effect is not visually apparent.

The Moon will be at **perihelion**, its closest point to the Sun, on the 19th and **aphelion**, its furthest point, on the 29th. This effect is not visually apparent.

Points of Interest

Asteroid 19 Fortuna reaches opposition on the 11th. It can be seen between 21:37 and 04:14 in the southern sky, moving across from east to west. Around midnight, it will reach its highest point in the sky. You will need at least a 4-inch telescope to see it.

The **September Equinox** takes place on the 22nd. On this day, everywhere on the planet has almost exactly 12 hours of day and night, as the tilt of the Earth's axis is perpendicular to the direction of the Sun. This marks the first day of autumn.

Asteroid 68 Leto can be seen in the constellation of Cetus between 22:03 and 04:05 on the 30th when it reaches opposition. Appearing in the southern sky, it will reach its highest point in the sky around midnight. You will need at least a 4-inch telescope to see it.

Visit https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/sightings/ to find out when the **ISS** will be visible from your location.

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