



Mercury becomes visible shortly after sunset low in the West at the start of the month and is visible for up to 90 minutes. It will appear furthest from the Sun on 5th

March and then disappear from the evening skies. Mars is now quite distant from the Earth and the Sun will pass in between this mid-Summer. Until then it'll be visible in the West for several hours after sunset.

As mentioned last month, the approaching Spring is a great time to spot the Zodiacal Light reaching up as a milky cone about an hour or so after sunset along the path of the planets. If the glow builds after sunset and points beyond Mars, then you're seeing the Zodiacal Light; dust from comets and asteroids lit by the Sun.



March is traditionally the month of hunting for deep sky objects and the Messier list of 110 galaxies, nebulae, stars and clusters is especially popular. From the UK in March, it is possible, with the right conditions, to see most of the objects in the list in just one night.

As finding them takes a good star chart or a GOTO mounted telescope, it is often best to join a Messier Marathon evening to help confirm your finds and share with others. Some of the objects in the Messier list are bright or big enough to view in binoculars such as open clusters like the Pleiades in Taurus, the Great Orion Nebula or the Andromeda Galaxy. However, when it comes to planetary nebula and small globular clusters, a telescope will be required. It gets especially busy between the constellation of Leo and Virgo with high numbers of galaxies and you'll find yourself hopping from galaxy to galaxy rather than the normal star hopping method to find the next object.

Going to an organised Messier Marathon makes the preparation easier too as typically you'll be supplied a list of objects in the correct order to maximize your chance of seeing as many fuzzy blobs beyond the Solar System as possible.



Planisphere views are copyright © 2019 Heavens-Above.com. All times are given as Greenwich Mean Time unless stated.

Evening Sky in March 2019

Location: Bath, UK, 51.3758°N, 2.3599°W
Time: 15 March 2019 21:30 (UTC +00:00)