

# Beyond the Stars

## Be A Stargazer - Beyond the Stars

### Stargazing

#### Get Where It's Dark

Go outside on a clear, dark night when there is no moon. The glow of city lights brightens the sky and obscures our view. So, the best stargazing spots are far from a crowd.

#### Just Look Up

Spread a blanket on the ground. Lie on your back, and look up. When you gaze straight up, you are looking through about five miles of Earth's atmosphere. Toward the horizon, you look through many tens of miles of atmosphere—through turbulent gases that filter light and cause stars to twinkle.

#### Sensitize Your Eyes

When you step from a bright room to the dark outdoors, your pupils widen immediately. But cells in the retina may take 15 minutes to a half an hour to become dark adapted. Be patient, and try not to look at any bright white lights.

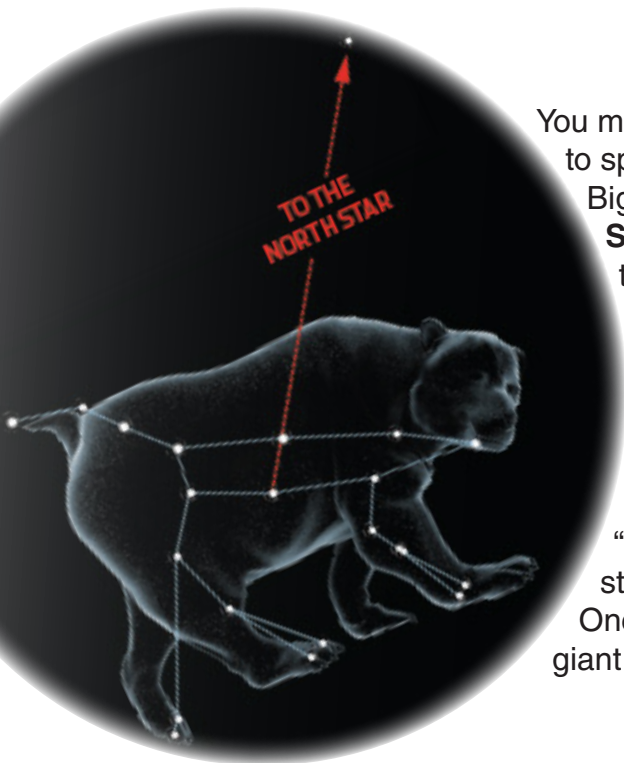
#### Know What to Find

Remember that the night sky is constantly changing! What you see depends on your location on earth, the time of day or night, and the time of year. Star maps and other guides can tell you what to expect and what way up they might appear from your stargazing spot.

### Look for Constellations!

You might want to start with one of the easiest groups to spot -- the **Great Bear** (otherwise known as the Big Dipper). From there you can find the **North Star**. The North Star is almost exactly above the north pole of the earth. If you can find the North Star, you will always be able to tell which way is north!

Another easy constellation to find is **Orion the Hunter**. The best way to find Orion is to look for the three stars in his "belt". There isn't another group of three stars in the sky that are spaced so evenly. Once you have found his belt, the rest of the giant constellation should fall in to place.



### Look for Planets!

In addition to finding stars in the sky, you can also find other planets. If you go out just after sunset, you may be able to find **Venus**, which is a very bright light in the sky. To find **Mars**, look for a steady, reddish light. The planet **Jupiter** is much whiter than stars and does not twinkle, and **Saturn** has a yellow light. Look for "stars" that move. Don't be surprised to find out that the star you see moving across the sky is really a plane or a satellite!

**Happy Stargazing! Encounter unusual aliens & more at Beyond The Stars on Saturday 24 March...**