

# Night Sky Viewing at Widener University

## December 2025

### Sunrise & Sunset Times

	Sunrise	Sunset
Begin Month (EDT)	7:04 am	4:37 pm
End Month (EST)	7:23 am	4:47 pm

### Naked-Eye Planets in the Evening & Morning Sky this Month

**Saturn** (in *Aquarius*): Saturn, currently residing within the dim constellation Aquarius, reaches eastern quadrature with the Sun on the 16<sup>th</sup>, which means that it lies 90 degrees east of the Sun. A planet at eastern quadrature stands due south at sunset, and it sets around midnight. Though noticeably fainter than it was at opposition back in September, Saturn's brightness is comparable to first-magnitude Fomalhaut, which lies directly below it. Saturn sets at 1 am EST in early December and around 11 pm at month's end.

**Jupiter** (in *Gemini*): Brilliant, golden Jupiter, which currently gleams from within the sparkling winter constellation Gemini, ascends above the northeastern horizon around 7:45 pm EST on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and by 5:30 pm on the 31<sup>st</sup>. Jupiter stands at its highest altitude above the southern horizon at around 2 am in mid-December. Jupiter will be at its best when it reaches opposition with the Sun on January 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Mars** (in *Ophiuchus-Sagittarius*): Mars reaches the end of its evening apparition this December; it is now lost in the glow of twilight. Mars passes behind the Sun (conjunction) on January 9<sup>th</sup>; it will slowly begin to reappear low in the east at dawn in early spring 2026.

**Mercury** (in *Scorpius-Ophiuchus-Sagittarius*): Mercury has its best showing of the year in the dawn sky this December, rising by 5:30 am, or 1½ hours before sunrise, on the 1<sup>st</sup>. Look for what appears to be a bright star hovering low above the southeastern horizon about ½ hour before sunrise. Mercury rises slightly earlier on the 7<sup>th</sup>, when it reaches greatest western (morning) elongation with the Sun. Thereafter, Mercury begins a slow descent toward the Sun, and by month's end, Mercury is rising by 6:45 am, or only about 45 minutes before the Sun.

**Venus** (in *Ophiuchus-Sagittarius*): Venus rises only about 45 minutes before sunrise in the southeast on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Despite its brilliance, Venus is too low to spot without an unobstructed eastern horizon. Venus continues to sink into the dawn glow over the next few weeks; it passes behind the Sun (superior conjunction) on January 6<sup>th</sup>, after which it will gradually begin to reappear in the west at dusk.

**Earth**: reaches the *winter solstice* on December 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:03 am EST. Autumn ends and winter begins in the Northern Hemisphere.

**Geminid Meteor Shower**: Meteors appear to emanate from the constellation Gemini. Peaks on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup> and morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>. Best time to view is after midnight. The waning crescent Moon that night should not interfere significantly with the viewing.

### Lunar Phases



Full  
4<sup>th</sup>

"Cold Moon"



Last Quarter  
11<sup>th</sup>



New  
19<sup>th</sup>



First Quarter  
27<sup>th</sup>

### Constellations & Bright Stars Visible Around 8 pm Local Time in December

**Summer Triangle** – low in W, setting  
Consists of three bright stars: *Vega*, *Altair*, and *Deneb*

**Pisces Austrinus** – low in SW, setting  
Bright white star *Fomalhaut*

**Cetus** – halfway up above horizon in S  
Bright orange stars *Diphda*, *Menkar*

**Pegasus (Great Square)** – high in SSW, above *Fomalhaut*  
Bright stars *Scheat*, *Markab*, *Algenib*

**Andromeda** – nearly overhead, connected to Pegasus  
Bright stars *Alpheratz* (NE corner of Great Square), *Mirach*, *Almach*

**Aquarius** – low in SW, below Pegasus  
Planet *Saturn*

**Pisces** – high in S, below the Great Square of Pegasus

**Aries** – high up in S, above Cetus & below Andromeda  
Bright stars *Hamal*, *Sheratan*

**Cassiopeia** – "W" high in N, looking like an "M"  
Bright stars *Shedar*, *Caph*, *Ruchbah*

**Perseus** – just E of overhead, follows Andromeda  
Bright stars *Mirfak* (or *Agenib*) and *Algol*

**Auriga** – getting higher in NE, follows Perseus  
Bright star *Capella*

**Taurus** – well up in ENE, getting higher  
Bright star *Aldebaran*, Star Clusters *Pleiades* & *Hyades*

**Orion** – rising in E  
Bright stars *Betelgeuse*, *Rigel*

**Gemini** – rising in NE, following Taurus  
Bright stars *Pollux*, *Castor*  
Planet *Jupiter*

**Canis Major** – soon to rise in SE, to lower right of *Rigel*  
Bright star *Sirius*

For more information on the night sky, visit the Widener Observatory Stargazing website at [www.widener.edu/stargazing/](http://www.widener.edu/stargazing/).  
A set of free sky maps can be obtained at [www.skymaps.com/](http://www.skymaps.com/).