

Our Night Sky for February 19th 2024

While we are still staying indoors and not braving the cold winter nights, there is still a reasonable amount of darkness each evening. As the spring equinox on March 19th approaches, and beyond that date we move from equal length day and night to slowly decreasing night skies.

Also, this spring we will lose views of most of the planets, even Jupiter leaves our night skies. Of course, the planets aren't leaving but there are two ways planets can hide from the night sky. One would be it moves around it's orbit and is behind the sun, the other way planets hide is just there position and our position on our orbit, puts some planets in our daytime sky. So right now, is a good time to take a good look at Jupiter.

If you can use a pair of binoculars, Jupiter can offer some very interesting sights. First do a quick search on pages 99 to 121 of the RASC Observer's Handbook 2024 for the positions of Jupiter's moons. Information from the [Sky and Telescope](#) magazine will give you precise details of the time Jupiter's four largest moon as they cross the surface "transit" as they come out from behind or set and slip behind Jupiter. These moons and their movements are well documented and usually referenced to universal time. UTC is available online and should make it very easy to be looking at Jupiter at the right time. Its pretty neat to watch something happen millions of miles away in our solar system in Our Night Sky.