

Our Night Sky for August 17th, 2026

On the evening of August 17, look up after twilight and let your eyes settle into the dark. From Prince George, the Moon is a waxing crescent, about one-third illuminated, and it sets in the west-southwest around 9:42 p.m., so the later evening should become much better for seeing stars. The most obvious pattern overhead is the Summer Triangle, a huge three-star landmark made by Vega, Deneb, and Altair. Vega, in Lyra, is the brightest and usually the first to appear, shining high and slightly west of overhead. Deneb, in Cygnus the Swan, marks the tail of the Northern Cross and lies toward the east or northeast. Altair, in Aquila the Eagle, sits lower toward the southeast, flanked by two dimmer stars that make it easy to identify. Together, these stars frame some of the richest summer sky.

If you are away from bright lights, scan the region between Deneb and Altair for the pale band of the Milky Way. Binoculars will reveal crowded star fields, especially around Cygnus. Near Vega, try for the small Ring Nebula in Lyra with a telescope, while Albireo, at the foot of the Northern Cross, is a beautiful gold-and-blue double star. Earlier in the evening, Arcturus sinks in the west, while Sagittarius and Scorpius ride low in the south. The Perseid meteor shower has passed its peak, but a few late meteors may still streak from the northeast. Dress warmly, give yourself twenty minutes of dark adaptation, and use the Summer Triangle as your map for exploring the August sky. The Summer Triangle dominates August skies, guiding observers through the Milky Way while Vega, Deneb, and Altair shine brilliantly in Our Night Sky.