

June guide to the bright planets

Jupiter – at opposition – is bright in the sky from dusk to dawn. Saturn is out from mid-evening until dawn. Bright Venus appears fleetingly in the dawn. Around mid-month, Mercury and Mars have the year's closest conjunction of 2 planets.

Jupiter – the second-brightest planet after Venus – reigns supreme in the June 2019 nighttime sky. Venus is pretty much lost in the glare of sunrise throughout June, while Jupiter shines at its brightest best for the year, beaming away from dusk until dawn. There's no mistaking Venus for Jupiter in June 2019!

Jupiter's yearly opposition comes on June 10, 2019, marking the middle of the best time of year to see this brilliant planet. On this day, our planet Earth swings between Jupiter and the Sun. Opposition for the outer planets is a yearly event, and Jupiter's opposition is a

much-awaited happening each year. On or around the day of opposition, look for Jupiter to rise at sunset, soar highest up for the night at midnight, and to set at sunrise. Beautiful!

That bright ruddy star rather close to Jupiter on our sky's dome this year is Antares, the Heart of the Scorpion in the constellation Scorpius. Throughout 2019, Jupiter can be seen to "wander" relative to this zodiac star. In other words, in the first three months of 2019, Jupiter was traveling eastward, away from Antares. But starting on April 10, Jupiter appeared to reverse course, moving toward Antares. For four months (April 10 to August 11), Jupiter will be travelling in retrograde (or westward), closing the gap between itself and the star Antares. It's midway through this retrograde – on June 10 – that Jupiter will reach opposition.

By June 10, Jupiter rises as the Sun sets. Afterward June 10, Jupiter rises before sunset, and you'll find it already in the east as the sky darkens.

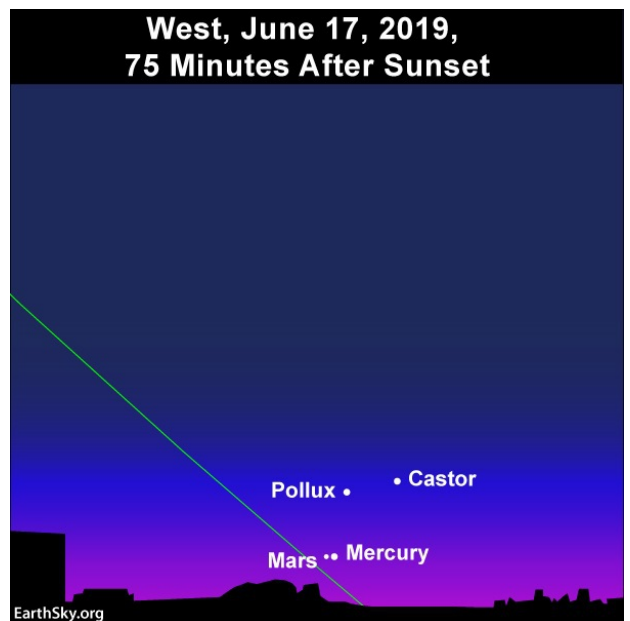
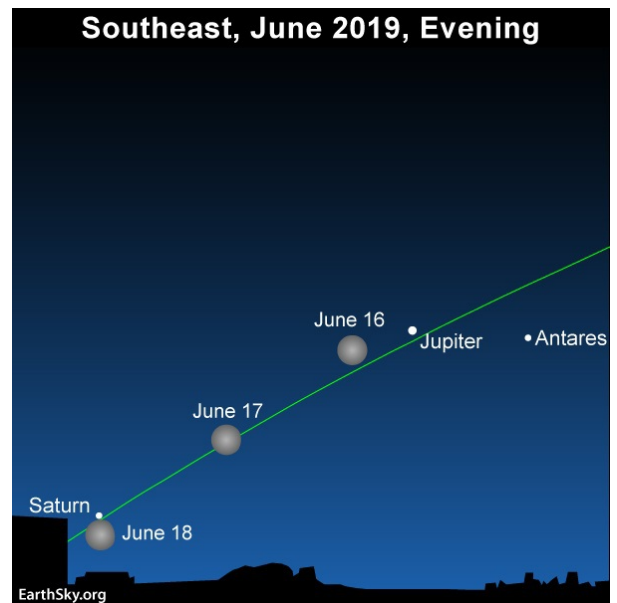
Jupiter comes up first in a nightly procession of three bright planets. Saturn follows Jupiter into the sky about two hours after Jupiter first appears, and then Venus struggles to make a brief appearance in the eastern morning twilight.

From temperate latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere, Saturn rises at or around 8 p.m. in early June. By the month's end, Saturn will rise by nightfall.

Mercury, the innermost planet of the solar system, is expected to become a fine evening object from both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres in June 2019. Even though this world won't reach its greatest elongation from the Sun until June 23, you still might catch this planet in early June. Be sure to look for the young crescent moon near Mercury, starting around June 4. Mercury starts off the month below Mars. Day by day, Mercury will climb upward while Mars is descending downward, with the two meeting up for a close encounter on the sky's dome on June 17 and 18. Watch for the young crescent moon to shine in the vicinity of Mars for several evenings, centered on or near June 6. The Moon's proximity might provide you with your best opportunity to catch Mars in the evening sky for the rest of 2019. Day by day, this planet is slowly but surely fading, and sinking closer to the afterglow of sunset.

At temperate latitudes in the Southern Hemisphere, Venus rises about 1 1/2 hours before sunup in early June. By the month's end that'll decrease to about 50 minutes. In August, Venus will transition from the morning to evening sky.

AK, with EarthSky and Wikipedia Notes



At their closest, these two worlds will be a scant 0.2 degrees apart, to stage the closest conjunction of two planets in 2019 on June 17-18.