

Do Lenticular Clouds look like UFOs?

Here are some glorious photos of rare lenticular clouds, sometimes called UFO clouds, plus a word about how they form.

These lens-shaped clouds typically form where stable moist air flows over a mountain or a range of mountains. When this happens, a series of large-scale standing waves may form on the mountain's downwind side. If the temperature at the crest of the wave drops to the dew point, moisture in the air may condense to form lenticular clouds.

As the moist air moves back down into the trough of the wave, the cloud may evaporate back into vapour. So lenticular clouds can appear and disappear relatively quickly. Plus they're not familiar to people who live in low-lying or flat terrain.

But, just to confound things, lenticular clouds have also been known to form in non-mountainous places, as the result of shear winds created by a front. For all of these reasons, lenticular clouds are often mistaken for UFOs (or "visual cover" for UFOs).



Beautiful shot of lenticular cloud at sunset in Dayton, Nevada



Lenticular cloud near the Haute-Provence Observatory, situated in southeastern France.



Lenticular Cloud at Qualicum Beach Canada



This photo was captured at Lord Howe Island, the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand.



Lenticular cloud in Dublin, Ireland,



Lenticular clouds over Sangre de Cristo mountains, New Mexico.