

# THE DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE MOON



The phases of the Moon refer to the different appearances of the Moon as it orbits around the Earth. These phases are a result of the changing positions of the Moon, Earth, and the Sun relative to each other. There are eight primary phases of the Moon.



# PHASES OF THE MOON



NEW MOON



WAXING CRESCENT



FIRST QUARTER



WAXING GIBBOUS



FULL MOON



WANING GIBBOUS



THIRD QUARTER



WANING CRESCENT



# NEW MOON

This is the first phase of the Moon's cycle. The Moon is located between the Earth and the Sun, and the side of the Moon facing Earth is in shadow. It appears as a dark circle in the sky and is not visible from Earth. The New Moon is not visible from Earth because the illuminated side of the Moon is facing away from us.

During this phase, the Moon's gravitational pull is at its strongest and can cause changes in ocean tides. These tidal variations are essential for activities such as fishing, navigation, and understanding coastal ecosystems.

# WAXING CRESCENT

In this phase, a small, illuminated crescent of the Moon becomes visible on the right side (in the Northern Hemisphere) or the left side (in the Southern Hemisphere) of the Moon. This phase occurs just after the New Moon.

This lunar phase is called the Waxing Crescent. As the Moon moves away from its position between the Earth and the Sun, the illuminated area gradually increases. During this phase, stargazers can observe the Moon's surface features, such as craters and mountains, becoming more visible as the sunlight reflects off them. It's a great time to start exploring the night sky and observing the Moon's changing phases.



# FIRST QUARTER



In this phase, half of the Moon's visible surface is illuminated, and it looks like a half-circle. The right half is illuminated in the Northern Hemisphere, while the left half is illuminated in the Southern Hemisphere.

This lunar phase is known as the First Quarter Moon, and it occurs approximately one week after the New Moon. During this phase, the Moon appears to be increasing in size and brightness, and it is a great time to observe its features through a telescope or binoculars. The First Quarter Moon is also a good time for outdoor activities, as the Moon rises at midday and sets at midnight, providing ample light for evening adventures.



# WAXING GIBBOUS

The Moon continues to grow in illumination during this phase. More than half of the Moon's surface is lit, but it's not yet full.

Waxing Gibbous Moons are visible in the sky during the afternoon and evening hours. The illuminated portion of the Moon is on the right side (in the Northern Hemisphere) or the left side (in the Southern Hemisphere) of the Moon's disk. The Moon continues to grow in brightness and size as it moves toward the Full Moon phase. The gravitational pull of the Moon during the Waxing Gibbous phase, along with the Sun's influence, contributes to the spring tides, where you may observe higher high tides and lower low tides.

The entire face of the Moon that is visible from Earth is illuminated during this phase. It appears as a complete circle in the sky and is usually quite bright.

During a full moon, the moon is at its brightest and illuminates the night sky with its gorgeous glow. Full Moons are typically visible throughout the night, rising in the east around sunset and setting in the west around sunrise. The Full Moon occurs when the Moon is on the opposite side of the Earth from the Sun.

Full Moons have held cultural and mythological significance in various societies throughout history. They are often associated with folklore, rituals, and celebrations. Some people believe that Full Moons can influence human behavior or have supernatural effects, although scientific evidence for such claims is lacking.

FULL MOON



After the Full Moon, the illuminated portion of the Moon begins to decrease. The left side (in the Northern Hemisphere) or the right side (in the Southern Hemisphere) starts to darken.

This phase of the Moon is known as the Waning Gibbous. As the days go by, the illuminated portion of the Moon becomes smaller and smaller until it reaches the Last Quarter phase. At this point, half of the Moon is illuminated and half is in shadow. This is a great time to observe the Moon's craters and other features with a telescope. After the Last Quarter, the Moon continues to wane until it reaches the New Moon phase, which marks the beginning of the lunar cycle all over again.

# WANING GIBBOUS





# THIRD QUARTER

This phase is similar to the First Quarter, with half of the Moon's visible surface illuminated. However, the left half is illuminated in the Northern Hemisphere, while the right half is illuminated in the Southern Hemisphere.

During the Third Quarter phase of the Moon, the illumination of its visible surface is gradually decreasing until it reaches the New Moon phase. This phase is a good time for stargazing and observing the night sky, as the Moon rises later in the evening and sets in the morning. In the Northern Hemisphere, the Third Quarter phase is a good time to observe the Moon in the early morning sky, while in the Southern Hemisphere, it is best observed in the late evening sky.

# WANING CRESCENT



The Waning Crescent Moon is characterized by a thin crescent of light on the left side (in the Northern Hemisphere) or the right side (in the Southern Hemisphere) of the Moon's disk. This crescent is the last visible part of the Moon's surface before it becomes too close to the Sun to see. It is visible in the eastern sky just before sunrise. It is often a delicate and subtle sight due to its thin crescent shape and proximity to the horizon.

This phase occurs as the Moon continues to move in its orbit around the Earth, and the illuminated side of the Moon is gradually shrinking as it approaches the New Moon position. **Tides:** The gravitational pull of the Moon during the Waning Crescent phase, along with the Sun's gravitational influence, contributes to neap tides, which are characterized by lower high tides and higher low tides.

**THE MOON GOES THROUGH A CYCLE OF EIGHT DISTINCT PHASES AS IT ORBITS EARTH EVERY 29.5 DAYS. THESE PHASES AREN'T CAUSED BY EARTH'S SHADOW, BUT BY THE CHANGING ANGLE BETWEEN THE SUN, THE MOON, AND YOUR EYES ON EARTH.**

**CURRENT LUNAR PHASE  
AS OF FEBRUARY 10, 2026, THE MOON IS IN THE WANING CRESCENT PHASE.**

**ILLUMINATION: APPROXIMATELY 39%.  
NEXT MILESTONE: THE NEW MOON WILL OCCUR ON FEBRUARY 17, 2026,  
AT 7:01 AM EST.**

Phase Illumination	Typical Visibility	Phase Illumination	Typical Visibility	Phase Illumination	Typical Visibility
New Moon Invisible (up during day)	0%	New Moon Invisible (up during day)	0%	New Moon Invisible (up during day)	0%
First Quarter	Noon to Midnight 50%	First Quarter	Noon to Midnight 50%	First Quarter	Noon to Midnight 50%
Full Moon	Sunset to Sunrise 100%	Full Moon	Sunset to Sunrise 100%	Full Moon	Sunset to Sunrise 100%
Third Quarter	Midnight to Noon 50%	Third Quarter	Midnight to Noon 50%	Third Quarter	Midnight to Noon 50%

**HAPPY COSMIC VALENTINES DAY**