

Rare Sight Coming In 2025 – A Celestial Symphony

In case some of you are not aware, a rare planetary alignment, known as a conjunction and as a “planet parade” will occur in early 2025. Alignments between two planets are relatively common, but full alignments are far more rare. This is because each planet has its own unique orbit within the ecliptic, an imaginary line in the sky that marks the sun’s apparent path in the sky.

This alignment will begin in January and continue into February. It will be visible in the days leading up to January 21, 2025, and for about four weeks afterward, however the week of January 29th will be an optimal week to view all the planets due to a new moon. The shadowed moon will reduce light pollution and make it easier to spot the planets. The best time of day to view the planets will be just after sunset or between 5:30 pm and 8:30 pm depending on your location.

The six planets that will form an arc in the evening sky will be: Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. It will turn into a seven planet parade when Mercury joins the alignment briefly towards the end of February. Viewing this rare sight will be in the USA, Canada and Mexico.

For beginners, Venus and Jupiter will be the easiest to spot because they are very bright. Mars and Saturn will be slightly dimmer but still easy to spot with the naked eye. Neptune and Uranus will be too faint to see with your eye, and require a telescope or high-powered binoculars. Online and Offline tools such as Time and Date’s Night Sky Map or Stellarium respectively are freely available to help assist with choosing viewing dates and finding the planets in the sky.

The main dates to remember:

January 21, 2025 – A full alignment of Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus.

January 29, 2025 – As mentioned before, the best time to view the alignment thanks to the new moon.

February 28, 2025 – A “planet parade” with seven planets visible; including Mercury, Saturn, Neptune, Venus, Uranus, Jupiter and Mars. This will be best viewed right at sunset.

In March, the alignment will be over but Jupiter, Mars and Uranus will still be in the night sky to enjoy. For those interested, it was predicted by Christopher Baird who is an associate professor of physics at West Texas A&M University that an eight planet aligned in the same 180 degree wide patch of sky will happen on May 6, 2492.

In closing, did you know that there are four types of planetary alignments? These are:

Mini – Three planets, Small – Four planets, Large – Five or six planets and

Great (full) – All solar system planets (with Pluto sometimes being included).

(Article copied from Lake Afton Public Observatory, Goddard, KS)

