

NOVEMBER 2026

8:00 pm CST on November 1
7:00 pm CST on November 15
6:00 pm CST on December 1

To use this chart: hold the chart in front of you and turn it so the direction you are facing is at the bottom of the chart.

- **Bright Stars**
- **Medium Bright Stars**
- **Faint Stars**

Scan dark skies with binoculars:

M-31: The Andromeda Galaxy

M-15: Globular star cluster

M-45: Pleiades open star cluster

The Hyades star cluster in Taurus

As autumn continues, sunrises occur later and sunsets occur earlier. The days are getting shorter!

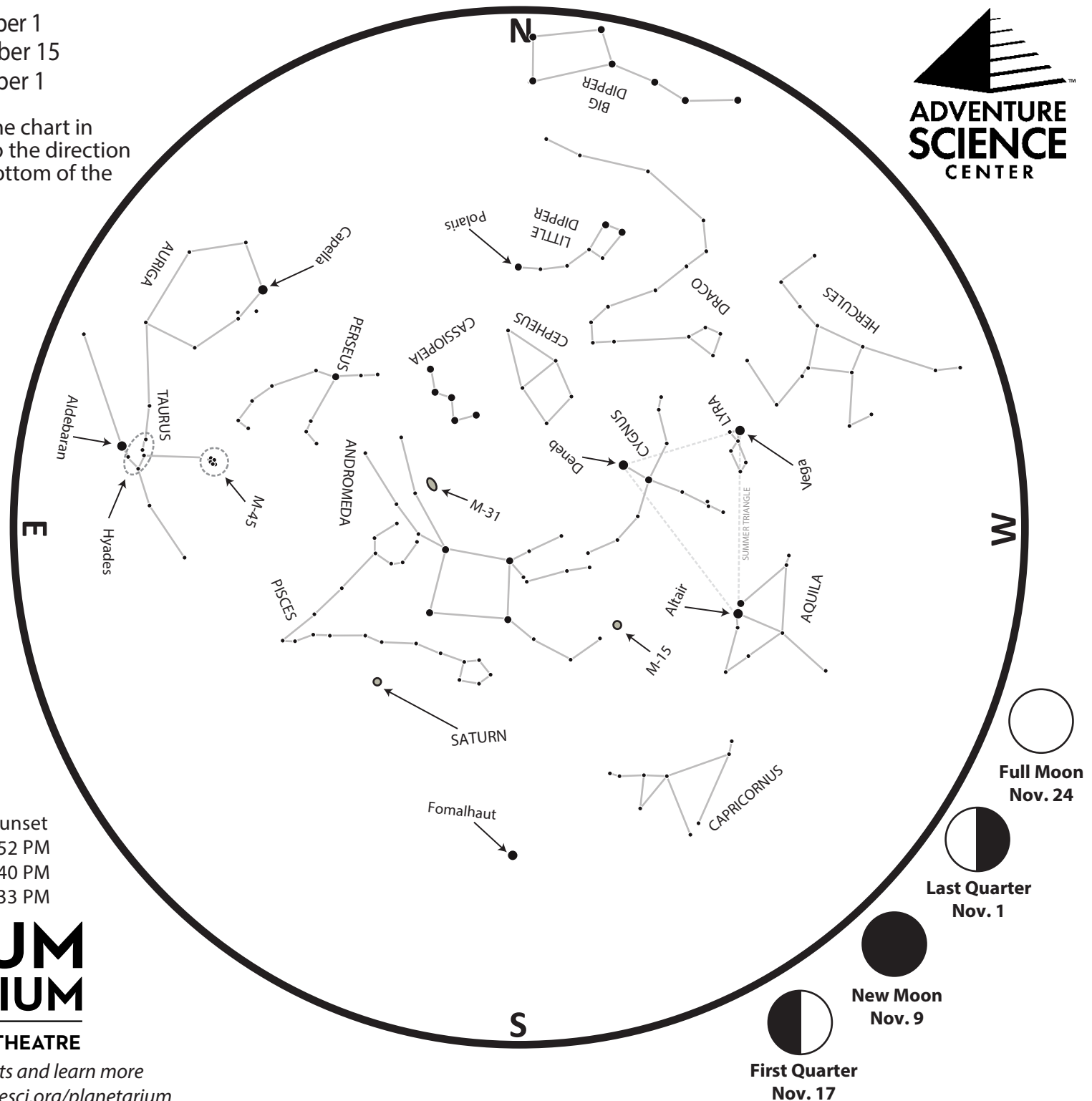
From Nashville:

	Sunrise	Sunset
Nov 1	6:10 AM	4:52 PM
Nov 15	6:24 AM	4:40 PM
Dec 1	6:39 AM	4:33 PM

SUDEKUM PLANETARIUM

JUDITH PAYNE TURNER THEATRE

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After Sunset

For much of the year, we use the stars of the **Big Dipper** to help us find **Polaris**, the **North Star**. However, the Big Dipper is harder to find in the autumn. It appears very low to the northern horizon in the early evening. Some of its stars even hide below the horizon from our latitude.

Another group of stars can help us find our way. Look for a group of five stars known as **Cassiopeia the Queen**. Whenever the Big Dipper is low to the horizon, Cassiopeia will be high enough to find. The central peak of this constellation's W-shape also points you in the direction of Polaris.

Polaris is not a particularly bright star, but it does remain fixed in the sky throughout the night and throughout the year. When you face the North Star, you're facing due north. Polaris is at the end of the handle of the **Little Dipper**. This group of stars is officially known as **Ursa Minor the Little Bear**.

Look high in the west for the three stars that make up the **Summer Triangle**. Despite the name, the Summer Triangle stars are a great sight for autumn skies and may be the first stars you'll see as the sky begins to darken. The three stars are part of three separate constellations: **Cygnus the Swan**, **Aquila the Eagle**, and **Lyra the Harp**. The Summer Triangle is so named because it's up all night during the summer, from sunset to sunrise. In the autumn, it's already high overhead by sunset, and will be lower in the west by midnight.

Look high in the south for **Saturn**. Its beautiful rings can easily be seen through a small backyard telescope. Look for the Moon just above Saturn on November 20.

Stay out a little later for beautiful pair of planets. **Mars** and **Jupiter** appear low in the east after 1 am early in the month, and by 11 pm as December begins. Keep an eye on them night by night as they appear closer to each other. Mars will pass Jupiter, making its closest approach on the morning of November 16. They'll be close to the bright star **Regulus**, part of the spring constellation **Leo the Lion**. Mars will pass Regulus near the end of the month.

Look for the Moon above Mars on November 2, below Jupiter on November 3, and very close to Jupiter again on the night of November 29 and morning of November 30.

Whenever Jupiter is visible it's always a great target for backyard telescopes. You'll not only see the four largest moons of Jupiter, but also the giant planet's cloud bands. Jupiter has stripes!

You may be even able to see the four **Galilean moons** of Jupiter with just a good pair of binoculars. If you have trouble pointing your binoculars at Jupiter, try leaning them up against the side of a building or another steady surface.

Whatever you use to get that close-up view, watch the moons over several nights as they orbit around their parent planet. If you see fewer than four moons, it might mean that some of them are behind or in front of Jupiter.

Make a note of how bright Mars is compared to Regulus. At the beginning of November, Mars was over 200 million kilometers from Earth. By mid February next year, it will be about half that distance, looking a lot brighter and noticeably larger in backyard telescopes.

As you wait for Jupiter and Mars to rise, look to the southeast for **Orion the Hunter**. Orion's shoulder is marked with a brilliant red star called **Betelgeuse**. Don't mistake it for Mars! Remember: stars twinkle, and planets usually don't.

From Dark Skies

Bright outdoor lighting can make it hard to see all but the brightest stars. On a clear night, find a dark spot far away from city lights, give your eyes time to adjust to the dark, and look for even more celestial sights. You can begin by looking for the fainter stars of this season's constellations. **Pegasus the Flying Horse**, **Andromeda the Princess**, and the three constellations of the Summer Triangle all become easier to explore.

Look closely for the star that marks the head of Cygnus the Swan, an unremarkable-looking white star called **Albireo**. A small telescope reveals that there are really two stars there, appearing very close to each other. Not only that, but the two stars are different colors, one blue and one yellow!

Early autumn evenings are great for spotting the **Milky Way** coursing from the southwestern horizon through the Summer Triangle and on towards Cassiopeia in the northeast. This hazy band of light is the bulk of our disc-shaped galaxy, as we see it from within.

Near Andromeda, look for **M-31**, the **Andromeda Galaxy**. This massive spiral galaxy is the most distant object visible to the unaided eye, but to find it requires crisp, dark skies and a little patience. Binoculars or a small telescope can improve the view, but don't expect to see more than a slightly brighter, slightly larger faint, fuzzy, oval blob. If you don't feel impressed, just remind yourself you're looking at the collected light of possibly one trillion stars, all at a distance of 2 million light years away. Now that's impressive!

Early Morning

As the Earth orbits the Sun throughout the year, the constellations rise and set just a little bit earlier every day. You won't see much difference from night to night, but you will over the course of weeks or months. What we see in today's pre-dawn sky is a preview of the early evening sky in later months. Go out before dawn this month for a look ahead at the early winter night sky.

Remember how the Big Dipper was too low to easily find in the early evening? Now it's high in the northeast. Can you find Cassiopeia?

In the hours before dawn, Saturn has set, and Jupiter and Mars are high in the southeast. Winter constellations Orion and **Taurus the Bull** are high in the southwest. The Big Dipper is now high in the northeast.

Finally, look for the return of **Venus** to the morning skies, rising just before the Sun. Venus will rise earlier every morning, becoming easier to spot low in the southeast. It will vanish as the Sun lights the morning sky. Venus will appear near the star **Spica** in **Virgo the Maiden**. For a real challenge, look for an extremely thin Moon just below Venus on the morning of November 7.

Before you set your alarm for the wee hours of the morning, consider planning out your observing. Desktop planetarium software like the free, open-source Stellarium (stellarium.org) can show you more precisely where night sky objects will be on any date and time, and help you plan ahead.

Leonid Meteor Shower

The 'shooting stars' of the annual **Leonid Meteor Shower** peak on the morning of November 18. The darker the sky you're under, the more meteors you'll see. While sometimes a bright Moon can make it hard to see all but the brightest meteors, this year it sets around midnight, leaving the morning skies dark.

Find a comfortable spot of open sky far away from city lights. Relax, stargaze and meteor-watch! Bring friends, lawn chairs, and make sure to dress warmly! Most of all, be patient. Even under ideal dark-sky conditions, there may only be 10 or 15 visible meteors per hour. Meteors may appear in any part of the sky, but they will seem to be moving in a direction away from the constellation **Leo the Lion**, which rises in the east around midnight.

Meteors from the Leonid shower consist of debris left behind by **Comet Tempel-Tuttle**. Every year, Earth passes through this trail of tiny particles. These particles burn up as they fall through our atmosphere, resulting in the distinctive swift streaks of light we call meteors.

This month in the Sudekum Planetarium
Judith Payne Turner Theatre

NIGHTWATCH

THE POWERHOUSES OF THE UNIVERSE

STARS

NARRATED BY MARK HAMILL

INCOMING!

THE STELLARS
MISSION: GREEN