

'Super blood moon' shines bright across the world

September 28 2015



A 'super blood moon' is seen in the sky in Essen, western Germany, on September 28, 2015

Skygazers were treated to a rare astronomical event Monday when a swollen "supermoon" and lunar eclipse combined for the first time in decades, showing Earth's satellite bathed in blood-red light.

The celestial show, visible from the Americas, Europe, Africa, west Asia

and the east Pacific, was the result of the sun, Earth and a larger-than-life, extra-bright [moon](#) lining up for just over an hour.

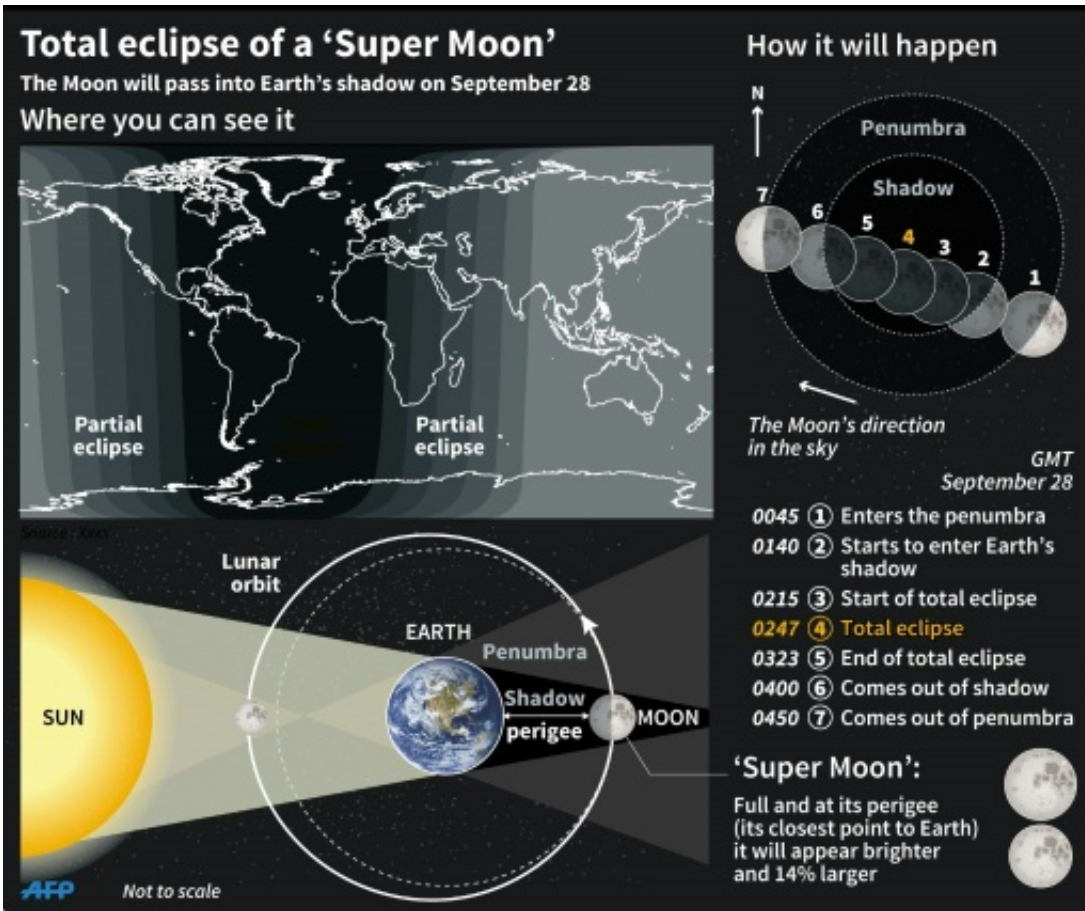
Images from France, Argentina and the United States, among others, capture the progression of the lunar eclipse to a striking red finale.

In Brooklyn, New York, crowds of people gathered on plazas and sidewalks, gazing up at the sky and trying to take photos with their smartphones—though in other cities, including Washington, cloud cover hid much of the spectacle.

While the phenomenon was not visible in any major Indian cities, stargazers equipped with telescopes were able to catch a glimpse of the eclipse in the country's remote northeast.

The event also led to speculation about an impending apocalypse among certain followers of the Mormon Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The fears are believed to have been stoked by a statement from Mormon author Julie Rowe, who regularly speaks to audiences about upcoming worldwide calamities.



Explanation of the total lunar eclipse on September 28

Church officials were forced to issue a statement warning against panic, saying that while members should be "spiritually and physically prepared for life's ups and downs" they should avoid "being caught up in extreme efforts to anticipate catastrophic events".

The "blood moon"—which so far has had no apocalyptic consequences—appeared in stages across the planet as the satellite reached its closest orbital point to Earth, called perigee, while in its brightest phase.

The resulting "supermoon" appeared 30 percent brighter and 14 percent

larger than when at apogee, the farthest point—which is about 31,000 miles (49,900 kilometers) from perigee.

Unusually, the Earth took position in a straight line between the moon and the sun, blotting out the direct sunlight that normally makes our satellite glow whitish-yellow.

But some light still crept around the planet's edges and was filtered through its atmosphere, casting an eerie red light that creates the blood moon.

For people younger than 33, this was their first-ever chance to see a "super blood moon".



The moon starts to eclipse as it rises above the iconic Liver Bird on the Liver Building in Liverpool, north west England, early on September 28, 2015

The last, only the fifth recorded since 1900, was in 1982, according to the NASA space agency, and the next will not be until 2033.

On top of the wow factor, the event was also of great interest for researchers.

Over a 24-day cycle, the temperature on the surface of our satellite normally varies between highs of about 121 degrees Celsius (250 degrees Fahrenheit) in direct sunlight, and lows around minus 115 C in the dark.



The moon in various stages of a total lunar eclipse as seen from Bogota, Colombia, on September 27, 2015

These changes help researchers study the composition of the crust, as rocks warm and cool slower than sand-like dust.

But on Monday, the eclipse saw that temperature shift happens much faster, allowing scientists to make detailed observations of the moon's uppermost surface.

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