

'Ring of fire' eclipse brings cheers and shouts of joy as it moves across the Americas

October 14 2023, by MARÍA VERZA and IVÁN VALENCIA



The moon passes between earth and the sun during a rare "ring of fire" eclipse of the sun Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, in Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah. Credit: AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

First came the darkening skies, then the crescent-shaped shadows on the ground, and finally an eruption of cheers by crowds that gathered Saturday along the narrow path of a rare ["ring of fire" eclipse](#) of the sun.

It was a spectacular show for millions of people across the Americas as the moon moved into place and blocked out all but a brilliant circle of the sun's outer edge.

Hundreds of people filed into the planetarium in the Caribbean resort city of Cancún to watch the eclipse. Some peered through box projectors, while others looked through telescopes and special glasses.

Excited children whistled, as some adults raised their arms toward the sky as if to welcome the eclipse.

Vendors selling plants outside observed the dance between the moon and the sun in a more natural way—with the help of trees as the shifting sunlight filtered through the leaves, casting unique shadows on the sidewalk.

"There was silence and like a mist, as if it was dusk, but only a few minutes later the birds were singing again," said Carmen Jardines, 56, one of the vendors.

Artemia Carreto, was telling passersby about her experience as a child in southern Mexico, when they were told to look instead at the river where it reflected beautifully on the sand beneath the water.



Viewers use special glasses to watch from San Antonio, as the moon moves in front of the sun during an annular solar eclipse, or ring of fire, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Eric Gay

While she wasn't near a river this time, Carreto said she was carried away by the sensations induced by changing temperatures and a feeling of heaviness that she pegged to the rotation of the Earth.

For Pilar Cáceres, there was a sense of energy.

"It is something that nature brings us and that we must watch," said the 77-year-old retired elementary school teacher who watched the eclipse by following its shadow through a piece of cardboard.

Ancient Maya astronomers who tracked the movements of the sun and moon with precision referred to eclipses as "broken sun." They may have used dark volcanic glass to protect their eyes, said archeologist Arturo Montero of Tepeyac University in Mexico City.

Unlike a total solar eclipse, the moon doesn't completely cover the sun during a ring of fire eclipse. When the moon lines up between Earth and the sun, it leaves a bright, blazing border.



The annular solar eclipse appears from behind clouds above Skinner Butte in Eugene, Ore. Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard via AP

The entire eclipse—from the moment the moon starts to obscure the sun until it's back to normal—lasted 2 1/2 to three hours at any given spot. The ring of fire portion was from three to five minutes, depending on the location.

Saturday's U.S. path: Oregon, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico and Texas in the U.S., with a sliver of California, Arizona and Colorado. Then: Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, Belize, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia and Brazil. Much of the rest of the Western Hemisphere got a partial eclipse.

NASA and other groups [livestreamed](#) the event.

In the U.S., some eclipse watchers traveled to remote corners of the country to try to get the best view possible while those in Albuquerque got a double treat as the eclipse coincided with an international balloon fiesta that typically draws tens of thousands of spectators and hundreds of hot air balloon pilots from around the world.



A festival attendee looks up at the annular solar eclipse during Austin City Limits weekend two, on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Mikala Compton/Austin American-Statesman via AP

There were hoots, hollers and yelps from the balloon launch field as the moon began to cover the sun. Some pilots used their propane burners to shoot flames upward in unison as the spectacle unfolded.

"It's very exciting to be here and have the convergence of our love of flying with something very natural like an eclipse," said Allan Hahn, a balloon pilot from Aurora, Colorado.

At Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, enthusiasts hit the trails before sunrise to stake out their preferred spots among the red rock hoodoos.

With the ring of fire in full form, cheers echoed through the canyons of the park.

"I just think it's one of those things that unites us all," said John Edwards, a cancer drug developer who traveled alone across the country to watch the eclipse from Bryce Canyon.

Kirby James and Caroline McGuire from Toronto didn't realize they would be in a prime spot when they planned their trip to southern Utah.



Samia Harboe, her son Logan and her friend's son wear eclipse glasses during totality of the annular solar eclipse in Eugene, Ore., on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Her family came with glasses they'd made for the 2017 total eclipse and said they were excited to see another one. Credit: AP Photo/Claire Rush

"Nothing that you can read could prepare you for how it feels," said Kirby James, 63, a co-founder of a software company. "It's the moment, especially when the ring of fire came on, you realized you were having a lifetime experience."

For the small towns and cities along the path, there was a mix of excitement, worries about the weather and concerns they'd be overwhelmed by visitors flocking to see the annular solar eclipse.

In Eugene, Oregon, oohs and ahs combined with groans of disappointment as the eclipse was intermittently visible, the sun's light poking through the cloud cover only at times.

In southern Colombia, the Tatacoa desert played host to astronomers helping a group of visually impaired people experience the perfect golden ring created by the moon and sun through raised maps and temperature changes.



Ryan Leacock, from Dallas, looks at the eclipse through a pair of eclipse glasses on the second day of the second weekend of Austin City Limits Music Festival, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Sara Diggins/Austin American-Statesman via AP

Colombia Science Minister Yesenia Olaya said moments like this should inspire people to promote science among children, so they see it as "a life project."

Juan Pablo Esguerra, 13, waited months to make the trip to the desert with his father to witness the eclipse.

"I like the astronomy because it's a spectacular experience," he said. "This is the best that I've seen in my life."

In Mexico City, some children came dressed as astronauts as thousands of people gathered at the main esplanade of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the country's main public college. People shared special glasses, and the university set up telescopes.

Saturday's eclipse marked the first for Brazil since 1994. The country's national observatory broadcast the event online while thousands flocked to parks and beaches in the north and northeastern regions to soak in the phenomenon.



Crystal Marsh shows she took on her phone of the ring of fire eclipse in Eugene, Ore., on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Totality of the annular eclipse was at times visible with the naked eye because of the cloud cover. Marsh drove five miles

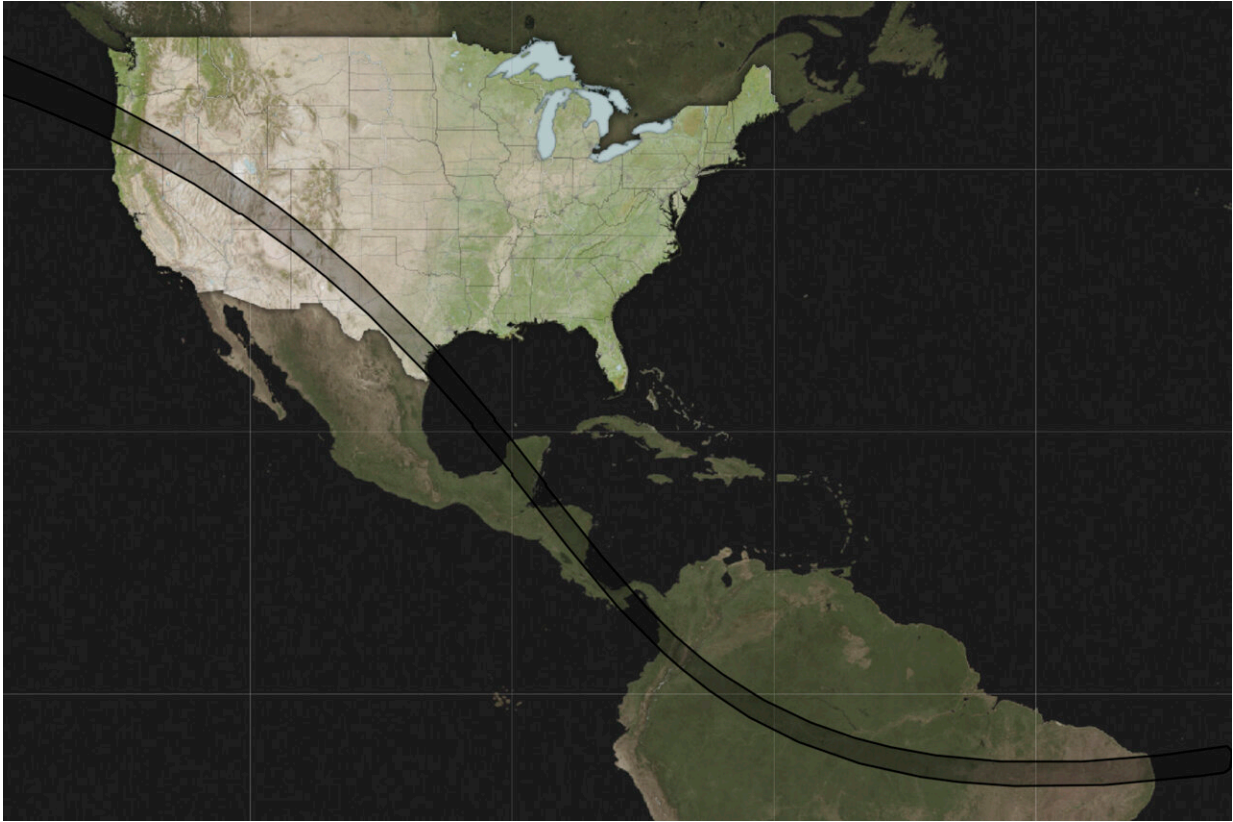
from Seattle with her family in order to be in the eclipse path. Credit: AP Photo/Claire Rush



Houston Astros outfielder Corey Julks uses protective glasses to look at the solar eclipse during baseball practice in Houston, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. The Astros are scheduled to play the Texas Rangers in Game 1 of MLB's American League Championship Series on Sunday. Credit: AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez



Buck Lovett looks at the annular solar eclipse during Austin City Limits weekend two, day two on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Mikala Compton/Austin American-Statesman via AP



This map provided by NASA shows where the Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023 annular solar eclipse will cross North, Central, and South America. As the moon lines up precisely between Earth and the sun, it will blot out all but the sun's outer rim. A bright, blazing border will appear around the moon for as much as five minutes along a narrow path stretching from Oregon to Brazil. Proper eye protection is needed throughout the eclipse, from the initial partial phase to the ring of fire to the final partial phase. Credit: NASA via AP



A spectator views a solar eclipse with his cell phone during the first half of an NCAA college football game between Florida State and Syracuse, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, in Tallahassee, Fla. Credit: AP Photo/Phelan M. Ebenhack



People watch the sun rise over Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, before a rare "ring of fire" eclipse of the sun Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Rick Bowmer



Tens of thousands of spectators view the 'ring of fire' while at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, N.M., on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. As part of a special "glow" performance, hot air balloon pilots also used their propane burners to shoot up flames as the solar eclipse reached its peak. Credit: AP Photo/Katie Oyan

Path of 'ring of fire' eclipse

An annular eclipse, when the moon doesn't completely blot out the sun but leaves a blazing border, will cross the Americas Saturday, following a narrow path from Oregon to Texas and then to parts of Central and South America.



Source: NASA; timeanddate.com

AP

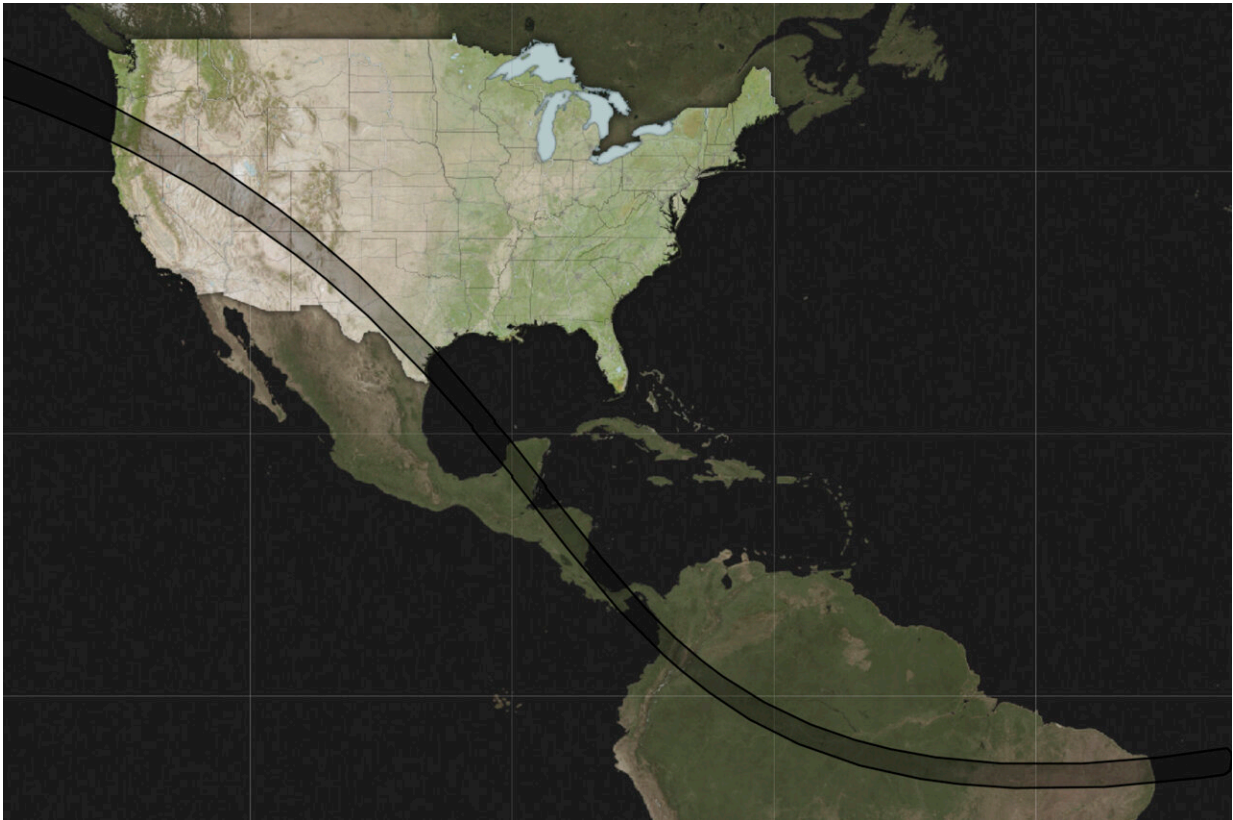
An annular eclipse will be viewable along a narrow swath of the Americas Saturday. Credit: AP Digital Embed



Viewers use special glasses to watch as the moon moves in front of the sun during an annular solar eclipse, or ring of fire, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, from San Antonio. Credit: AP Photo/Eric Gay



Hot air balloon pilot Allan Hahn of Aurora, Colo., right, tries on his viewing glasses before inflating his balloon as part of a special balloon glow during the solar eclipse at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, N.M, on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Tens of thousands of people gathered at the fiesta to view the eclipse after watching hundreds of hot air balloons lift off hours early during a mass ascension. Credit: AP Photo/Katie Oyan



Este mapa, proporcionado por la NASA, muestra la ruta que seguirá el eclipse anular solar del sábado 14 de octubre de 2023 a través de Norteamérica, Centroamérica y Sudamérica. Credit: NASA vía AP



Crescent shaped shadows are cast on signs as the annular eclipse passes on the second day of the second weekend of Austin City Limits Music Festival, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Sara Diggins/Austin American-Statesman via AP



Danica Machrae watches the solar eclipse through a pair of eclipse glasses on the second day of the second weekend of Austin City Limits Music Festival, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: Sara Diggins/Austin American-Statesman via AP



A volunteer hands out solar eclipse viewing glasses to thousands of spectators at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. A record crowd turned out at balloon fiesta park for the eclipse, which followed a mass ascension of hundreds of colorful hot air balloons. Credit: AP Photo/Katie Oyan



Diners along the Riverwalk and people on a river barge in San Antonio, use special glasses to keep watch as the moon moves in front of the sun during an annular solar eclipse, or ring of fire, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Eric Gay



Viewers use special glasses to watch as the moon moves in front of the sun during an annular solar eclipse, or ring of fire, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, from San Antonio. Credit: AP Photo/Eric Gay



People watch a rare "ring of fire" solar eclipse along the Las Vegas Strip, Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, in Las Vegas. Credit: AP Photo/John Locher



People watch the start of the eclipse over Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah, during a rare "ring of fire" eclipse of the sun Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Next April, a total solar eclipse will crisscross the U.S. in the opposite direction. That one will begin in Mexico and go from Texas to New England before ending in Canada.

The next ring of fire eclipse is in October next year at the southernmost tip of South America. Antarctica gets one in 2026. It will be 2039 before another ring of fire is visible in the U.S., and Alaska will be the only state in its direct path.

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