

It's summer solstice time. What does that mean?

June 19 2024, by Adithi Ramakrishnan



Revelers gather at the ancient stone circle Stonehenge to celebrate the summer solstice, the longest day of the year, near Salisbury, England, June 21, 2023. Summer kicks off in the Northern Hemisphere once again with the summer solstice on Thursday, June 20, 2024. Credit: AP Photo/Kin Cheung, File

It's time for the start of summer—with a full moon to boot.

Here's what to know about the summer solstice in the Northern Hemisphere on Thursday.

What is the summer solstice?

The Earth [spins on a tilt](#) as it revolves around the sun. The summer solstice occurs for Earth's upper half when the Northern Hemisphere is tilted most closely toward the sun. This also marks the longest day and shortest night of the year.

Around the same time, the Southern Hemisphere is at its most extreme tilt away from the sun, entering [winter solstice](#) and its shortest day of the year.

Six months later, the halves will switch it up: The Northern Hemisphere will experience a winter solstice, and the Southern Hemisphere will have a summer solstice.

What is an equinox?

Equinoxes mark the start of [spring](#) and autumn, and happen when Earth's axis and orbit line up such that both hemispheres get an equal amount of sunlight.

The vernal [equinox](#) on March 19 kicked off spring, and the autumnal equinox on Sept. 22 will usher in fall.

What is the strawberry moon?

This year's [summer solstice](#) comes with a treat: the first full moon of the summer, coined the strawberry moon. The moon won't be pink or red in color: Its name comes from several Indigenous tribes who noticed that its

timing coincided with the strawberry harvest.

On Friday evening, cast your eyes to the southeast to glimpse the [full moon](#) peeking above the horizon.

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