

The next full moon is a supermoon blue moon

August 12 2024, by Gordon Johnston



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The next full moon is a supermoon, a blue moon; the sturgeon moon; the red, corn, green corn, barley, herb, grain, or dog moon; Raksha Bandhan or Rakhi Purnima; and Tu B'Av.

The full moon will be Monday afternoon, August 19, 2024, at 2:26 PM

EDT. This will be Tuesday [morning](#) from Nepal Standard Time eastward across the rest of Asia and Australia to the International Date Line. The moon will appear full for three days, from Sunday morning through early Wednesday morning.

This will be a supermoon. The term "supermoon" was coined by astrologer Richard Nolle in 1979 as either a new or full moon that occurs when the moon is within 90% of its [closest approach](#) to Earth. Since we don't really see new moons, what has caught the public's attention are full supermoons as they are the biggest and brightest full moons of the year. This will be the first of four consecutive supermoons this year (with the full moons in September and October virtually tied for the closest of the year).

Although it will not look blue, as the third full moon in a season with four full moons, this will be a blue moon. The first recorded use of "blue moon" in English dates from 1528. Speculations on the origin of the term include an old English phrase that means "betrayer moon" (because it led to mistakes in setting the dates for Lent and Easter). Or it may be a comparison to rare events such as when dust in the atmosphere makes the moon actually appear blue. Since the 1940's the term "blue moon" has also been used for the second full moon in a month that has two full moons.

The Maine Farmer's Almanac began publishing "Indian" names for full moons in the 1930s, and these names have become widely known and used. According to this almanac, for the full moon in August, the Algonquin tribes in what is now the northeastern U.S. called this the sturgeon moon after the large fish that were more easily caught this time of year in the Great Lakes and other major bodies of water. Other names reported for this moon include the red moon, the corn or green corn moon, the barley moon, the herb moon, the grain moon, and the dog moon.

A quick note for my Southern Hemisphere readers (as I've heard from some recently). Many lunar names and traditions are based on the Northern Hemisphere seasons (I'm interested in learning more about southern traditions). I've noticed some publications shifting names like the sturgeon moon by six months (e.g., using the northern February names for August). Also, for the detailed descriptions below, instead of looking south towards the moon and planets you will be looking north, so what I describe will be upside down. Finally, the seasons are reversed, so morning and [evening](#) twilight times, etc., will be very different.

This full moon corresponds with the Hindu festival Raksha Bandhan, also called Rakhi Purnima, celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters. One of the traditions is for sisters of all ages to tie a rakhi (a cotton bracelet) around their brother's wrist, receiving a gift from the brother in return as a sign of the continuing bond between them. The term "Raksha Bandhan" translates as "the bond of protection, obligation, or care."

In many traditional moon-based calendars, the full moons fall on or near the middle of each month. This full moon is near the middle of the seventh month of the Chinese year of the Dragon, Safar in the Islamic calendar, and Av in the Hebrew calendar. Av corresponds with Tu B'Av, a holiday in modern Israel similar to Valentine's Day.

For science fiction fans, a note on the author Theodore Sturgeon (1918-1985) in honor of the Sturgeon moon. Theodore Sturgeon wrote mostly science fiction but some horror and mystery stories. For Star Trek fans, his scripts introduced important concepts although only "Shore Leave" and "Amok Time" were produced. He introduced "pon far," the Vulcan hand symbol, "live long and prosper," and the "Prime Directive" (in a script that was not produced but that influenced later scripts).

As usual, the wearing of suitably celebratory celestial attire is encouraged in honor of the [full moon](#). In addition, enjoy the super blue moon, keep in touch with your siblings, and consider reading some Theodore Sturgeon.

Provided by NASA

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