

constellations

<https://www.agoramores.com/sky/constellations>

Tags: sky · constellations · astronomy

Constellations

There is a sky behind every page of this site, and it is the real one. The stars in it sit at their catalogued right ascensions and declinations, and the whole wheel is turned to the sidereal time on your own clock when the page loads — so what is overhead on screen is close to what is overhead outside. It goes on turning while you read, at one revolution per sidereal day, which is slow enough that nobody has ever caught it moving.

At rest it is only stars. No lines. Nobody has ever looked up and found the figures already drawn.

Bring the cursor near one and it draws itself. Stay with it and a device fades up behind the lines — the bear, the lyre, the sword, whatever the figure is a picture of. Stay a moment longer and that device turns gold, and once it is gold it is a door: click it and you are on the page below. Twenty-eight figures, twenty-eight doors.

This page is the other way in, for anyone who would rather read than hunt.

The figures

Ordered as they cross the meridian through the year. The month is roughly when each stands highest at nine in the evening from central Ohio; the brightest star is the brightest one the site's own chart draws, with its visual magnitude. **Circumpolar** means it never sets from 40°N — *partly* means the figure straddles the line, with some stars circumpolar and some not.

Figure	Brightest star	Highest at 9pm	Circumpolar from 40°N
Andromeda	Mirach (2.05)	November	no
Cassiopeia	Gamma (2.15)	November	yes
Aries	Hamal (2.01)	December	no
Perseus	Mirfak (1.79)	December	partly
Taurus	Aldebaran (0.85)	January	no
Auriga	Capella (0.08)	January	no
Orion	Rigel (0.13)	January	no
Canis Major	Sirius (-1.46)	February	no
Gemini	Pollux (1.16)	February	no
Canis Minor	Procyon (0.34)	February	no
Cancer	Altarf (3.53)	March	no
Leo	Regulus (1.36)	April	no
Corvus	Gienah (2.59)	May	no

Ursa Major	Alioth (1.77)	May	partly
Virgo	Spica (0.98)	May	no
Bootes	Arcturus (-0.05)	June	no
Corona Borealis	Alphecca (2.22)	June	no
Ursa Minor	Polaris (1.98)	July	yes
Draco	Eltanin (2.23)	July	yes
Scorpius	Antares (1.06)	July	no
Hercules	Kornephoros (2.77)	July	no
Sagittarius	Kausastralis (1.85)	August	no
Lyra	Vega (0.03)	August	no
Aquila	Altair (0.76)	August	no
Cygnus	Deneb (1.25)	September	no
Delphinus	Rotanev (3.63)	September	no
Cepheus	Alderamin (2.45)	October	yes
Pegasus	Alpheratz (2.06)	October	no

What the pages carry

Every page is built the same way, so the figures can be read against each other:

- **Finding it** — the star-hop that actually works, the pointer stars, and the season. Written for 40°N, because that is where this site is.
- **The stars** — a table sharing its spine with the chart above, so a coordinate on the page and a star in the sky can never drift apart. Spectral type, distance and etymology sit alongside.
- **Myth and history** — the Greek story, and at least one other tradition given the same seriousness rather than a footnote. Where a claim is late, folkloric or disputed, the page says so instead of picking the better story.
- **Deep sky** — what is in it worth binoculars or a telescope.
- **Key dates** — first attestation, the text that fixed the figure, the observation that changed what it meant.

What is not here

These twenty-eight are the figures a reader at this latitude is likely to recognise, not the eighty-eight the IAU recognises. The far southern constellations are absent because they never clear the horizon from Ohio, and a Southern Cross nobody in the audience can see is decoration rather than a sky. Libra is absent for a duller reason: it is a faint quadrilateral that nobody finds by eye, and its two brightest stars are still named for the claws of [Scorpius](#), which is where they came from.

Individual stars do not have pages yet. That work is queued.

Related

- [World Zodiacs](#) — the twelve signs are not the twelve constellations, and the twenty-odd degrees of precession between them is the whole reason both sets exist. Each zodiac figure here links to its sign,

and back.

- [Lunar Calendar](#) — the moon's own round, which the breadcrumb strip reads out on every page.