

The planets return

A look at the observing prospects for each of the planets, plus the best conjunctions coming up, in autumn and winter 2024

MERCURY

Date	Elongation	Circumstances
5 September 2024	Greatest western elongation	Morning sky, favourable
16 November 2024	Greatest eastern elongation	Evening sky, unfavourable
25 December 2024	Greatest western elongation	Morning sky, reasonable
8 March 2025	Greatest eastern elongation	Evening sky, favourable

VENUS

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	06:45	20:18	Evening, poor
1 September 2024	07:40	19:40	Evening, low
15 September 2024	08:26	19:12	Evening, low
1 October 2024	09:20	18:40	Evening, low
15 October 2024	10:07	18:18	Evening, low
1 November 2024	10:58	18:09	Evening, low
15 November 2024	11:24	18:20	Evening, low
1 December 2024	11:30	18:54	Evening, good
15 December 2024	11:15	19:33	Evening, good
1 January 2025	10:40	18:20	Evening, very good

MARS (next opposition 16 January 2025)

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	23:15	15:57	Morning, good
1 September 2024	22:48	15:44	Morning, very good
15 September 2024	22:28	15:26	Morning, very good
1 October 2024	22:06	14:58	Morning, very good
15 October 2024	21:46	14:28	Morning, very good
1 November 2024	21:15	13:45	Morning, excellent
15 November 2024	20:41	13:05	Morning, excellent
1 December 2024	19:50	12:14	Morning, excellent
15 December 2024	18:48	11:23	Morning, excellent
1 January 2025	17:13	10:14	Morning, excellent

JUPITER (next opposition 7 December 2024)

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	23:16	15:52	Morning, good
1 September 2024	22:17	14:57	Morning, good
15 September 2024	21:27	14:08	Morning, very good
1 October 2024	20:27	13:09	Morning, very good
15 October 2024	19:32	12:14	Morning, excellent
1 November 2024	18:22	11:03	Morning, excellent
15 November 2024	17:22	10:02	Morning, excellent
1 December 2024	16:12	08:49	Morning, excellent
15 December 2024	15:10	07:45	Evening, excellent
1 January 2025	13:56	06:28	Evening, excellent

SATURN (next opposition 7 September 2024)

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	20:22	07:18	Morning, excellent
1 September 2024	19:14	06:04	Morning, excellent
15 September 2024	18:17	05:03	Evening, excellent
1 October 2024	17:12	03:53	Evening, excellent
15 October 2024	16:16	02:53	Evening, excellent
1 November 2024	15:08	01:43	Evening, excellent
15 November 2024	14:12	00:47	Evening, excellent
1 December 2024	13:09	23:41	Evening, excellent
15 December 2024	12:15	22:50	Evening, very good
1 January 2025	11:10	21:50	Evening, good

URANUS (next opposition 17 November 2024)

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	22:13	14:08	Morning, good
1 September 2024	21:06	13:02	Morning, good
15 September 2024	20:11	12:07	Morning, very good
1 October 2024	19:08	11:02	Evening, excellent
15 October 2024	18:11	10:05	Evening, excellent
1 November 2024	17:03	08:55	Evening, excellent
15 November 2024	16:07	07:56	Evening, excellent
1 December 2024	15:02	06:50	Evening, excellent
15 December 2024	14:06	05:52	Evening, excellent
1 January 2025	12:58	04:42	Evening, excellent

NEPTUNE (next opposition 21 September 2024)

Date	Rise (UT)	Set (UT)	Circumstances
15 August 2024	20:35	08:29	Morning, excellent
1 September 2024	19:27	07:20	Morning, excellent
15 September 2024	18:32	06:22	Morning, excellent
1 October 2024	17:28	05:17	Evening, excellent
15 October 2024	16:32	04:20	Evening, excellent
1 November 2024	15:25	03:11	Evening, excellent
15 November 2024	14:30	02:14	Evening, excellent
1 December 2024	13:26	01:11	Evening, excellent
15 December 2024	12:31	00:16	Evening, very good
1 January 2025	11:25	23:06	Evening, good

CONJUNCTIONS			
Date	Objects	Morning or evening	Circumstances
15 August 2024	Mars & Jupiter	Morning	Favourable
21 August 2024	Moon & Saturn	Morning	Favourable; occultation
21 August 2024	Moon & Neptune	Evening	Favourable
25 August 2024	Moon & Uranus	Evening	Favourable
27 August 2024	Moon & Jupiter	Morning	Favourable
28 August 2024	Moon & Mars	Morning	Favourable
1 September 2024	Moon & Mercury	Morning	Low altitude
5 September 2024	Moon & Venus	Evening	Tricky, low altitude
17 September 2024	Moon & Saturn	Morning	Favourable
18 September 2024	Moon & Neptune	Morning	Favourable
22 September 2024	Moon & Uranus	Morning	Favourable
23 September 2024	Moon & Jupiter	Evening	Favourable
25 September 2024	Moon & Mars	Morning	Favourable
5 October 2024	Moon & Venus	Evening	Unfavourable
14 October 2024	Moon & Saturn	Evening	Favourable
15 October 2024	Moon & Neptune	Evening	Favourable
19 October 2024	Moon & Uranus	Evening	Favourable; Moon very near Pleiades
21 October 2024	Moon & Jupiter	Morning	Favourable
23 October 2024	Moon & Mars	Evening	Favourable
3 November 2024	Moon & Mercury	Evening	Unfavourable
5 November 2024	Moon & Venus	Evening	Tricky, low altitude
10 November 2024	Moon & Saturn	Evening	Favourable
12 November 2024	Moon & Neptune	Morning	Favourable
15 November 2024	Moon & Uranus	Evening	Favourable
17 November 2024	Moon & Jupiter	Evening	Favourable
20 November 2024	Moon & Mars	Evening	Favourable
2 December 2024	Moon & Mercury	Evening	Unfavourable
4 December 2024	Moon & Venus	Evening	Fair
7 December 2024	Moon & Saturn	Evening	Favourable
8 December 2024	Moon & Neptune	Evening	Favourable
13 December 2024	Moon & Uranus	Morning	Favourable
14 December 2024	Moon & Jupiter	Evening	Favourable
18 December 2024	Moon & Mars	Morning	Favourable; daylight occultation
28 December 2024	Moon & Mercury	Morning	Low altitude
3 January 2025	Moon & Venus	Evening	Favourable