

Stars of October

CELESTIAL TIME TABLE			
Oct. 1	6:00 a.m. EDT	Mercury farthest east of sun	
	6:38 a.m.	Full Moon	
8	3:46 p.m.	Moon in last quarter	
	10:00 p.m.	Moon passes south of Saturn	
11	11:30 p.m.	Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum brightness	
12	noon	Moon nearest, distance 227,030 miles	
14	9:00 a.m.	Mars passes behind sun	
	8:20 p.m.	Algol at minimum brightness	
15	8:25 a.m.	New Moon	
22	9:53 p.m.	Moon at first quarter	
24	7:00 a.m.	Moon farthest, distance 251,320 miles	
25	9:00 a.m.	Mercury passes between sun and earth	
26	9:00 a.m.	Moon passes north of Jupiter	
30	9:19 p.m.	Full Moon	

By James Stokley

During October Jupiter continues to dominate the evening sky. Standing high in the south, surrounded by the much fainter stars of Aquarius, it's the first celestial object you'll see, unless the moon happens to be visible. The largest planet, Jupiter is 88,700 miles in diameter.

Now receding after its closest approach to earth on Sept. 5, Jupiter will be about 390 million miles from us in the middle of October. That's about 20 million miles farther than when it was nearest. It has faded slightly since then, but the difference will not be noticeable.

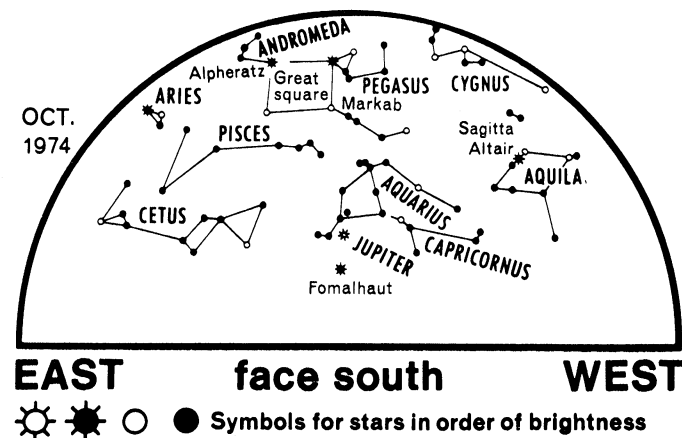
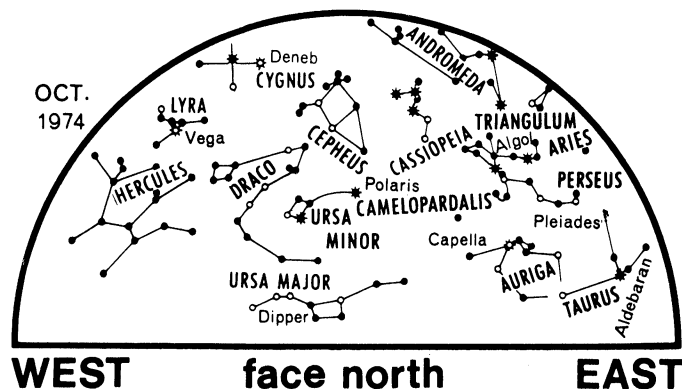
Viewed through a telescope of moderate size (that is, one with a lens two or three inches in diameter and a magnifying power of a hundred or so, which requires a firm support) Jupiter is a most interesting object. It is noticeably elliptical because its rapid (ten-hour) rotation causes a considerable bulge at the equator. One also can see the light and dark bands, parallel to the equator, which cross it, and the four largest of its eleven moons. From night to night these change position as they revolve around the planet, in periods ranging from less than two to more than sixteen days. Sometimes they disappear, when eclipsed behind Jupiter, or as one

passes in front. If it were not for the glare of the brilliant planet these moons would barely be visible to the naked eye on a dark, clear night.

Not only the largest of the planets, Jupiter is also the most powerful radio source among them.

The brightest star of October evenings is Vega, high in the west in Lyra. It's only about an eighth as bright as Jupiter. To the left and somewhat fainter is Altair, in Aquila.

The maps show the sky as it appears about 11:00 p.m., local DST, at the beginning of October and 9:00 p.m. at the end. □



☀ ☿ ☽ ● Symbols for stars in order of brightness

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