TONIGHT'S SKY

April 2017

1
00:00:07,900 --> 00:00:11,460
Your guide to constellations, deep-sky objects

2
00:00:11,460 --> 00:00:14,960
planets, and events,

3
00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:17,220
Tonight's Sky,

4
00:00:17,220 --> 00:00:24,780
Highlights of the April Sky

5
00:00:41,560 --> 00:00:45,740
With a keen eye and unobstructed view to the west,

6
00:00:45,740 --> 00:00:48,400
you might be able to find Mercury

7
00:00:48,400 --> 00:00:52,260
soon after sunset in early April.

8
00:00:52,260 --> 00:00:54,820
Act fast, though, because Mercury

9
00:00:54,820 --> 00:00:59,840
won’t remain above the horizon for long.

10
00:01:15,740 --> 00:01:19,300
Mars appears a little higher in the western sky

11
00:01:19,300 --> 00:01:24,800
during the early evenings.

12
00:01:24,800 --> 00:01:26,100
With a telescope,

13
00:01:26,100 --> 00:01:29,940

you could spy some of the planet’s dark features

14
00:01:29,940 --> 00:01:35,260
or its bright polar cap.

15
00:01:43,500 --> 00:01:47,180
Jupiter is shining in the eastern sky by nightfall

16
00:01:47,180 --> 00:01:52,640
and remains up all night long.

17
00:01:52,640 --> 00:01:56,980
The solar system’s largest planet sports cloud bands

18
00:01:56,980 --> 00:02:05,140
that are easily revealed by a small telescope.

19
00:02:20,840 --> 00:02:24,100
Late in the evening, high in the northern sky

20
00:02:24,100 --> 00:02:30,580
lies the Great Bear, Ursa Major.

21
00:02:30,580 --> 00:02:33,860
The constellation of Ursa Major contains the

22
00:02:33,860 --> 00:02:38,400
well-known star pattern called the Big Dipper.

23
00:02:38,400 --> 00:02:42,720
It resembles a large drinking cup with a handle.

24
00:02:42,720 --> 00:02:45,780
The two stars that make up the front side of the cup

25
00:02:45,780 --> 00:02:48,060
are called “pointer stars”

26
00:02:48,060 --> 00:02:55,360
because they point toward the star Polaris, ...

27
00:02:55,360 --> 00:03:02,280
... also known as the North Star.

28
00:03:05,340 --> 00:03:07,740
The Big Dipper overflows with

29
00:03:07,740 --> 00:03:15,240
interesting stars and deep-sky objects.

30
00:03:19,660 --> 00:03:24,660
The stars Mizar & Alcor make up a double-star system

31
00:03:24,660 --> 00:03:28,180
that can be seen without a telescope.

32
00:03:28,180 --> 00:03:33,280
In ancient times, when Mizar & Alcor were even closer

33
00:03:33,280 --> 00:03:39,020
they were used as a test of keen eyesight.

34
00:03:39,020 --> 00:03:44,820
M81 and M82 are a magnificent pair of galaxies,

35
00:03:44,820 --> 00:03:48,840
showpieces of the northern night sky.

36
00:03:48,840 --> 00:03:52,100
M82 has an irregular shape,

37
00:03:52,100 --> 00:04:00,120
bestowed by a collision with its larger neighbor, M81.

38
00:04:14,340 --> 00:04:18,140

Turning to the south, we see Leo, the Lion,

39
00:04:18,140 --> 00:04:20,580
heralding the coming of spring.

40
00:04:20,580 --> 00:04:23,780
In Greek mythology, Leo is the great

41
00:04:23,780 --> 00:04:26,660
beast slain by Hercules.

42
00:04:26,660 --> 00:04:30,860
The star Denebola, which in Arabic means “tail,”

43
00:04:30,860 --> 00:04:33,720
represents exactly that.

44
00:04:33,720 --> 00:04:39,220
The bright star Regulus is the heart of the Lion.

45
00:04:39,220 --> 00:04:43,440
Leo has several galaxies in his belly.

46
00:04:43,440 --> 00:04:51,940
M65, M66, and NGC 3628 make up the “Leo Triplet,”

47
00:04:51,940 --> 00:04:54,520
a lovely grouping of galaxies

48
00:04:54,520 --> 00:04:57,020
easily seen with a telescope.

49
00:04:57,020 --> 00:04:59,740
Close by is another group.

50
00:04:59,740 --> 00:05:08,000
M95 and M96 are large spiral galaxies.

51
00:05:13,420 --> 00:05:16,860
Between the Big Dipper and the head of Leo

52
00:05:16,860 --> 00:05:19,460
are three pairs of bright stars

53
00:05:19,460 --> 00:05:22,020
known to ancient Arab astronomers as

54
00:05:22,020 --> 00:05:28,880
“The Three Leaps of the Gazelle.”

55
00:05:56,020 --> 00:06:04,560
Saturn rises into the southeastern sky after midnight.

56
00:06:04,560 --> 00:06:11,600
Use a telescope to admire the planet’s majestic rings.

57
00:06:20,820 --> 00:06:28,460
Venus makes a brief appearance just before sunrise.

58
00:06:31,300 --> 00:06:34,660
You’ll need a clear view toward the eastern horizon

59
00:06:34,660 --> 00:06:41,760
to spot the planet before the sky brightens.

60
00:07:01,440 --> 00:07:03,500
The Lyrid meteor shower will peak

61
00:07:03,500 --> 00:07:12,720
in the early morning hours of April 22nd.

62
00:07:12,720 --> 00:07:16,920
Expect to see up to 20 bright meteors per hour

63
00:07:16,920 --> 00:07:20,440

after midnight.