



Island Planetarium

Monthly Sky Guide - January 2024

Reaching for the Stars

Website - www.islandastronomy.co.uk

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Greetings Stargazers, and a very happy new year to you all!

January skies are dominated by the constellation of Orion the Hunter, and we can use it as a pointer to other well-known objects close by.

Look at Orion in the South and you will easily see the 3 stars in a tilted line which form the belt of Orion.

Located top left is the red giant star Betelgeuse, some call it Beetlejuice! In contrast to the lower right is the brilliant white star Rigel.

Using the belt, move to lower left to identify the brightest star in the whole sky which is Sirius the Dog Star, so called as it is located in Canis Major or Big Dog.

Sirius is very close to us astronomically speaking at only 8.6 light years. With binoculars, Sirius will flash all the colours of the rainbow when it's low down in the sky and always worth a look.

Use the belt of Orion to continue upward and right to locate the orange star Aldebaran, which is surrounded by many other stars forming the open cluster of the Hyades.

Continue further right and you will see a beautiful tight cluster of hot blue/white stars known as the Pleiades or Seven Sisters. These are a good binocular object, and it's a delightful contrast to the Hyades.

Hanging below the belt of Orion is his sword, where you will find the Orion Nebula which is a stellar nursery, where new stars are being born.

MOON New on the 11th and Full on the 25th.

JUPITER still visible in the South most of the night.

SATURN visible early to mid evening, and a last chance to see the ring system for this year.

The QUADRANTID meteor Shower is already underway and continues until the 12th and will peak on the night/morning of 3rd/4th.

So there we are folks, much to see in the night sky to kick off the New Year. **If you are not sure where to look, we have a Stargazing evening on Tuesday 9th January, 2024.**

In the meantime, don't forget to wrap up warm, and until next month, I wish you all clear skies.

John Ward
Amateur Astronomer
Island Planetarium

We have only eight spaces left, book up now if you want to come to the stargazing evening next Tuesday.

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