



### Evening sky in January 2018

The Southern Cross (Crux) and Pointers are very low above the south-eastern horizon. Higher up is the False Cross which can easily be mistaken for the Southern Cross. To the northeast is the well-known constellation of Orion, the Hunter, which appears upside down to viewers in the Southern Hemisphere. Below the three stars known as Orion's Belt, lies Betelgeuse (popularly known as Beetlejuice), an orangey-red supergiant star representing the shoulder of the Hunter.

No planets are visible to the naked eye in the evening sky. The positions of Uranus (in Pisces) and Neptune (in Aquarius) are indicated on the map, but note that binoculars or telescopes are needed to see these planets. During the first half of January four planets are visible before sunrise. Mars and Jupiter (both in Libra) are easiest to see while Mercury and Saturn (in Sagittarius) lie closer to the horizon and are more difficult to see.

The Moon is in the evening sky until 2 January and again after 17 January. The largest Full Moon during 2018 is on 2 January. On 31 January a second Full Moon (known as a Blue Moon) occurs. The total lunar eclipse of 31 January is not visible from Cape Town.

International Outer Space Day is celebrated on 27 January.