



Evening sky in January 2019

From Auriga (Charioteer) in the north to the Southern Cross low in the south, the Milky Way unfurls itself across our eastern night skies. This month challenge yourself to identify the trail of stars in Eridanus (river), starting close to blue supergiant Rigel in Orion (hunter), passing directly overhead and ending with bright star Achernar.

Two open star clusters, the Pleiades and Hyades, are situated in the north. The latter v-shaped stellar cluster, with bright star Aldebaran forms part of Taurus (bull). Further east, look out for the three distinctive belt stars and red supergiant star Betelgeuse in Orion. In African star lore, Aldebaran's hungry wives (the Pleiades) sent him to hunt down three zebras (Orion's belt). Using his bow and single arrow, he foolishly missed but was unable to retrieve it due to the close presence of a fearsome lion (Betelgeuse). He now sits in Taurus, caught between the lion and his angry wives back home.

Mars sets a few hours after sunset, and Venus and Jupiter are bright morning objects, rising about 3 hours before sunrise. The moon will be in the evening sky from the 7 to 25 January, with full moon, supermoon and a partial total lunar eclipse on 21 January (mid eclipse at 07:12am).