

Stargazing Targets, April, 2026

Des Moines Astronomical Society / Ashton Observatoy



Targets – west to east	Angular size	Distance	Dia (Sep)	Mag
Venus, planet 2	11.1 sec	1.5 AU	0.95xEarth	-3.9
Uranus, planet 7	3.5 sec	20.3 AU	4.0 xEarth	5.8
M45 open cluster (Pleiades)	120 min	430 ly	15 ly	1.5
M42 nebula (Orion)	85 min	1400 ly	35 ly	4.0
Jupiter, planet 5	37.1 sec	5.3 AU	11.21 xEarth	-2.1
M38 open cluster (Starfish) (+1907)	20 min	4600 ly	27 ly	6.4
M36 open cluster (Pinwheel)	10 min	4300 ly	13 ly	6.0
M37 open cluster	14 min	4500 ly	18 ly	5.6
M35 open cluster	40 min	3000 ly	35 ly	5.1
NGC 2392 Eskimo Nebula	0.8 min	4200 ly	1.0 ly	9.2
Castor A/B double stars	-	51 ly	(81 AU)	1.6;3.0
M46 open cluster + planetary nebula	20 min	4.9 kly	29 ly	6.1
M44 open cluster (Beehive)	70 min	610 ly	12 ly	3.1
γ (gamma) Leonis (Algieba) double s.	-	130 ly	(235 AU)	2.2;3.5
M66 & Leo Triplet	10 min ea	33 Mly	86 kly	9.0
M100 face-on spiral + Virgo Gp	7.5 min	52 Mly	113 kly	9.4
Mel 111 open cluster	120 min	313 ly	11 ly	1.8
M53 globular cluster	13 min	58 kly	221 ly	7.7
M3 globular cluster	18 min	33 kly	174 ly	6.3
M5 globular cluster	23 min	24 kly	164 ly	5.7
M104 spiral galaxy (Sombrero)	8.6 min	34 Mly	85 kly	8.0
M51 spiral galaxy (Whirlpool)	11 min	28 Mly	91 kly	8.4
M101 spiral gal (Pinwheel)	29 min	23 Mly	189 kly	7.9
Alcor & Mizar double-double stars	-	82 ly	(25 AU)	4.0 & 2.2;3.9
M13 globular cluster	20 min	23 kly	135 ly	5.8
M92 globular cluster	14 min	27 kly	110 ly	6.5
M81 spiral galaxy (Bodes)	25 min	12 Mly	87 kly	6.9
M82 spiral galaxy (Cigar)	11 min	12 Mly	40 ly	8.4
NGC884/869 Double Cluster	18;18 min	9.6;6.8 kly	51;36 ly	6.1;5.3
NGC457 open cl (owl/ET/dragonfly)	20 min	7.9 kly	46 ly	6.4
Moon: new=Ap.17; full=Ap.01; My01	32 min max	240,000 mi mean	2160 mi	-12.2 max

Notes: Most data from SkySafari7 Pro smartphone application, 2024.

Angular size=as viewed from Earth; Distance=distance from Earth; Dia=overall true size; (Sep)=distance separating double stars; Mag=apparent visual magnitude from Earth.

min=arcminute; sec=arcsecond; ly=light year (~5.9 trillion miles); kly=ly x1000; Mly=ly x1,000,000.

AU=astronomical unit, 1AU=the average distance from Earth to Sun (≈93,000,000 mi).

Constellations/stars rise approx. 4 minutes earlier/day. Planets move differently per orbit. Moon rises at least 30 minutes later/night.

Milky Way size≈120x1 kly; total stars=400 billion. MW rotates our Solar System≈483,000 mph. The MW thru space≈1,300,000 mph.

