

Total solar eclipse in North America in August

2017 is the year North Americans finally get a cross-country total solar eclipse after a 45-year wait.

Given 1972 was the last main one, it's no surprise many haven't seen one.

Mark Monday, Aug. 21 at about 10:25 a.m. on your calendar. There will about two minutes of darkness in the morning depending on your location. The night sky is so dark, you can actually see many of the stars, given there will be no light pollution.

Unfortunately, Canada will not get the total effect, and you'll have to travel to the United States for the maximum benefit.

Check out www.eclipse2017.org for a list of places to spot it.

I am planning a group trip to a small location an hour north of Boise, Idaho, leaving Saturday, Aug. 19, and returning after the



Neel Roberts
The Sky's the Limit

eclipse. Accommodations are expected to be sold out soon.

The next total solar eclipse is April 8, 2024 (a seven-year wait), followed by ones in 2033, 2044 (in Alberta!) and 2045. More to come as the date approaches!

Sky watch

Look northeast-east on Friday, Feb. 10 as the moon will rise in an eclipsed state until about 8 p.m.

That glaring object in the early Western evening sky on Friday, Feb. 17 will not

be a plane but Venus at its peak brilliance, until it sets at about 9:30 p.m.

Betelgeuse, the Valentine's star, is visible on Valentine's Day, starting in the south sky from dusk until it sets in the west after 2 a.m. Impress your date by showing them the easy-to-find red pulsating star, found at Orion's shoulder.

The zodiacal light is a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky that extends up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic or zodiac. It's difficult to find, and the best time is from Monday, Feb. 13 for two weeks in the west after evening.

Public events

Join us Friday, Feb. 10, starting at 7:30 p.m., and learn about Betelgeuse and more courtesy of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of

Canada.

A brief indoor presentation will be followed by stargazing outside — weather permitting — through a telescope and binoculars.

All are welcome to this free event. Refreshments are provided.

Experts are on hand the second Friday of each month to explain the heavens, teach telescoping skills and help people develop their knowledge of our sky.

For more information, contact the Trek Station at 403-485-2994 or visit the website www.vulcantourism.com.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683 and Neel_Roberts@