



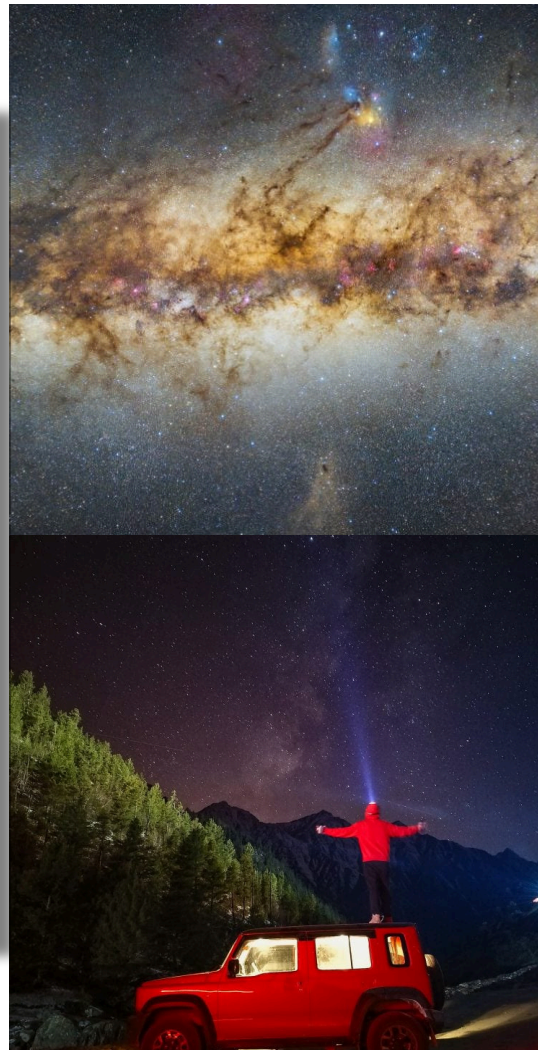
SKIES & SCOPES

2026 Milky Way Calendar

**The Best Nights to Photograph the Milky
Way With Your Phone — July to
December**



Milky Way on phones: Lucas Gonçalves, Sachin Chauhan & [Mikhail Minkov](#)





July 2026 — the peak of the season

- **New moon: 14 July. Best nights: 9–19 July. The core rises in the south-east at dusk and is highest, looking south, around midnight.**
- **A phone under dark skies away from light pollution** will outperform a \$5000 pro-level camera in a city.
- You can use free tools like lightpollutionmap.info or darksitefinder.com to find locations where you can get great results.
- Aim for Bortle 4 or lower on those maps for the brightest core.



August 2026 — the moonless Perseids

- **New moon: 12 August. Best nights: 7–17 August. The core is high in the south as soon as darkness falls. Check the cloud forecast before heading out with apps like [Clear Outside](#), [Nightshift](#), [Astrospheric](#) or your country's met office.**
- Bonus: the Perseid meteor shower peaks 12–13 August under a moonless sky this year. Double-check moonrise times for your location on timeanddate.com or almanac.com.
- Want to see exactly where the core will sit from your spot, hour by hour? Apps like [PhotoPills](#) or [Stellarium](#) can help you find and time this.



September 2026 — early-evening core

- New moon: 10–11 September. Best nights: 6–16 September. The core now sets by mid-evening, so shoot the first two or three hours after dark. Darker evenings arrive earlier — the friendliest month for a work-night session.
- Give the core a foreground — a tree, a building, a person — and place it using the rule of thirds. Turn on your camera's 3x3 grid overlay to help. September's long evenings leave time to try several compositions in one session.

October 2026 — last call

- **New moon: 10 October. Best nights: 5–15 October.** The core hangs low in the south-west right after dark and sets fast — be set up before full darkness and shoot the first hour.
- After mid-October the core is gone until spring — make these nights count.

November & December — the off-season

- The galactic core sits too close to the sun to see from November through January.
- Use the moonless windows — new moons on 9 November and 8–9 December — for star trails, constellations, and practising your settings.
- The 2027 core season opens with pre-dawn windows from late February — watch your inbox for next year's calendar.

How to use this calendar

- Pick a night inside a best-nights window, check the cloud forecast that afternoon, and go.
- **Baseline settings:** Pro or Night mode, 20–30s exposure, ISO 1600–3200, focus locked on a bright star, shoot in RAW, tripod always.
- Edit later in a free app like Snapseed or Lightroom Mobile — lift the shadows, pull down the highlights, and the core appears.

Turn one of these nights into your best-ever photo

- The [Smartphone Milky Way Blueprint](#) teaches the techniques from the winners of the [Smartphone Astrophotographer of the Year](#) competition.
- This is your quickest route to getting an amazing photo without spending thousands of dollars on a new camera!

About Skies & Scopes

I'm **Anthony Robinson**, founder of **Skies & Scopes**.

You can find us here:

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We teach astrophotography to beginners by providing online courses, case studies & guides from some of the best astrophotographers in the world.

If you have any questions about this guide or anything else you can reach me at anthony@skiesandsopes.com.