

GUEST SPOTLIGHT



THE 88 CONSTELLATIONS & THEIR BRIGHTEST STARS

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The Sleepopolis team created a beautiful graphic which depicts 88 International Astronomy Union recognized constellations, what they represent, where and when you can see them, and identifies each constellation's brightest star.

Click [here](#) to see the project

Ancient Interpretations of the Stars

In modern astronomy, the International Astronomical Union officially recognizes 88 constellations. 42 represent animals, 29 represent inanimate objects, and 17 represent humans or mythological characters.

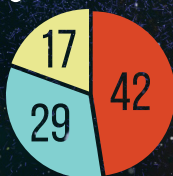
The ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, and later, the Greeks established most of the northern constellations that we still recognize today. These civilizations interpreted many of the constellations through the lens of mythology and legend.

For example, the Aries constellation is associated with the golden ram of Greek mythology. Ursa Major has been seen as a bear, usually female, in many distinct civilizations. In Roman mythology, Ursa Major is a bear that was once a beautiful nymph, transformed by the jealous queen of the gods, Juno. The Iroquois saw it as a great bear being pursued by three hunters.



88 CONSTELLATIONS

represented by:



ANIMALS



INANIMATE OBJECTS



HUMANS/ MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS

While bears are mighty, it is actually a dog constellation that contains the brightest star in the sky. Sirius is colloquially called the "Dog Star" because it is contained within the constellation Canis Major. The heliacal rising of Sirius marked the impending flood of the Nile to ancient Egyptians. To ancient Greeks, its return to the northern night sky was a precursor to sweltering summer days, hence the term "the dog days of summer".

[This infographic](#) provides information and visualization of the 88 officially recognized constellations. It includes the meaning, the brightest star, the date of origin, how much of the sky it encompasses, when the best time to see each constellation is, and the celestial hemisphere in which they appear.

How many of these constellations have you spotted?



THE 88 CONSTELLATIONS AND THEIR BRIGHTEST STARS

Meaning/Mythology
 Brightest Star
 First Appearance
 Area of Sky
 Celestial Hemisphere
 Northern
 Southern
 Equator
 Best time to see



ANDROMEDA

- Greek princess
- Alpheratz
- Ancient
- 1.8%
- September



ANTLIA

- Air pump
- α -Ant
- 1756
- 0.6%
- February



APUS

- Bird of paradise
- α -Aps
- 1598
- 0.5%



AQUARIUS

- Water-bearer and wine-waiter to the gods
- Sadalsuud
- Ancient
- 2.4%
- August



AQUILA

- Eagle, retriever of Zeus's thunderbolts
- Altair
- Ancient
- 1.6%
- June



ARA

- Altar used by the gods to vow allegiance before battle with the Titans
- α -Ara
- Ancient
- 0.6%
- May



ARIES

- Ram whose golden fleece was recovered by Jason
- Hamal
- Ancient
- 1.1%
- October



AURIGA

- Charioteer, son of Vulcan
- Capella
- Ancient
- 1.6%
- February



BOÖTES

- Herdsman, son of Zeus
- Arcturus
- Ancient
- 2.2%
- May



CAELUM

- Chisel
- α -Cae
- 1756
- 0.3%
- November



CAMELOPARDALIS

- Giraffe
- β -Cam
- 1612
- 1.8%



CANCER

- Crab that bit Hercules's foot
- β -Cnc
- Ancient
- 1.2%
- February



CANES VENATICI

- Hunting dogs of Boötes
- Cor-Caroli
- 1687
- 1.1%
- April



CANIS MAJOR

- Orion's greater hunting dog
- Sirius
- Ancient
- 0.9%
- January



CANIS MINOR

- Orion's lesser hunting dog
- Procyon
- Ancient
- 0.4%
- January

Visit sleepopolis.com to see all 88 constellations.