

SKY CALENDAR DECEMBER 2021

An aid to enjoying the changing sky

Use this scale to measure angular distances between objects on diagrams below.



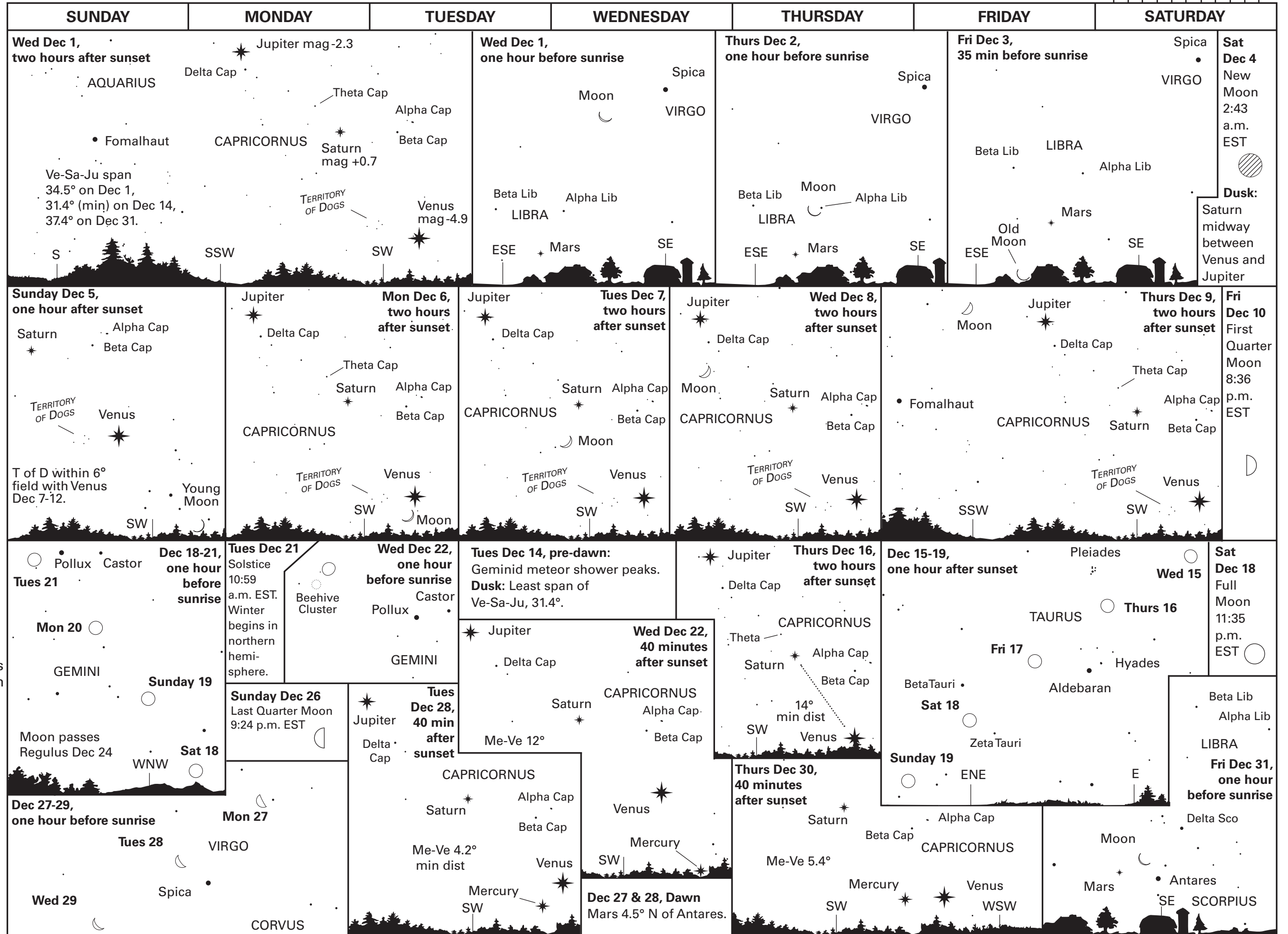
Evening Planets: Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus are easily visible at dusk in the south-southwest to southwest all month long. Venus is the brightest of the three and to the lower right. Jupiter is 2nd in brightness and is to the upper left. Saturn, in the middle, is the faintest of the three. Mercury joins the scene below and to the right of Venus late in the month. Venus and Mercury pass each other by 4.2° on December 28. Venus is seen as a thin crescent when viewed through magnification. On December 16, Venus is a 15% crescent. On December 21, a mere 10% crescent, and by December 27, Venus has thinned down to just 5%. As Venus thins, it grows in angular size. Venus subtends one minute of arc on December 29. Try looking for the crescent shape with binoculars. Look while the sky is still bright and blue, before the contrast is too great between the planet and the dark sky.

Morning Planets: Mars can be found low in the ESE to SE dawn sky. Look for a thin waning crescent Moon near Mars on December 2 and again on December 31.

Winter begins in northern hemisphere on Tuesday December 21 at 10:59 a.m. EST.

The best time to watch the **Geminid meteor shower** is the pre-dawn sky of December 14. The waxing gibbous moon will set about four hours before the Sun rises, leaving the sky dark for a few hours of shooting star watching.

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