

Planetary Wonderings
January 2007 Focus: the Moon
By Mary-Frances Bartels, NASA JPL Solar System Ambassador

Did you know that every full moon in a year has a name? Most have even **more** than one name. These names date back to Native Americans. A few hundred years ago those tribes kept track of the seasons by giving distinctive names to each recurring full Moon. European settlers followed their own customs and created some of their own names. Here are the names of the full moons of 2007 together with the times of their occurrences:

Jan. 3, 8:57 a.m. EST – Full Wolf Moon. It is also known as Old Moon or the “Moon After Yule,” and Full Snow Moon.

Feb. 2, 12:45 a.m. EST – Full Snow Moon, a.k.a. Full Hunger Moon.

March 3, 6:17 p.m. EST – Full Worm Moon, a.k.a. Full Crow Moon, Full Crust Moon, and Full Sap Moon. A **total lunar eclipse** will take place on this night; the Moon will appear to rise nearly immersed in the Earth’s shadow over the eastern United States. The rising Moon will be emerging from the shadow over the central United States, while over the Western U.S. the eclipse will be all but over by the time the Moon rises.

April 2, 1:15 p.m. EDT – Full Pink Moon, a.k.a. Full Sprouting Grass Moon, Egg Moon, Full Fish Moon, and the Paschal Full Moon; first full Moon of the spring season.

May 2, 6:09 a.m. EDT – Full Flower Moon, a.k.a. Full Corn Planting Moon, and Milk Moon.

May 31, 9:04 p.m. EDT – Blue Moon. The second full Moon occurring within a calendar month is usually bestowed this title.

June 30, 9:49 a.m. EDT – Full Strawberry Moon, a.k.a. Rose Moon.

July 29, 8:48 p.m. EDT – Full Buck Moon, a.k.a. Full Thunder Moon, and Full Hay Moon.

Aug. 28, 6:35 a.m. EDT – Full Sturgeon Moon, a.k.a. Full Red Moon, Green Corn Moon, and Grain Moon. A **total lunar eclipse** will coincide with moonset for the eastern United States. The Central and Mountain Time Zones will see the Moon’s emergence coincide with moonset, while the western United States will see the entire eclipse.

Sept. 26, 3:45 p.m. EDT – Full Harvest Moon, always the full Moon occurring nearest the Autumnal Equinox.

Oct. 26, 12:52 a.m. EDT – Full Hunter’s Moon. The Moon will also be at perigee at 7:00 a.m., at a distance of 221,676 miles from Earth. **Very high tides** can be expected from the coincidence of perigee with full Moon.

Nov. 24, 9:30 a.m. EST – Full Beaver Moon, a.k.a. Frosty Moon.

Dec. 23, 2:51 a.m. EST – Full Cold Moon, a.k.a. Full Long Nights Moon, “Moon before Yule,” and Long Night Moon. The midwinter full Moon takes a high trajectory across the sky because it is opposite to the low Sun.

There have been many missions to the moon with the Apollo program being the most familiar. What is probably not as well-known is that there are still missions to our closest neighbor and more to come. This month I would like to briefly mention upcoming Chandrayaan-1, India’s first mission to the moon. Due to launch in March 2008, the mission is devoted to high-resolution remote sensing of the lunar surface features in visible, near infrared, X-ray and low energy gamma ray spectrum regions. The Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M³) is one of two instruments that NASA is contributing to Chandrayaan-1. M³ is a state-of-the-art imaging spectrometer that will provide the first map of the entire lunar surface at high resolution, revealing the min-

erals of which it is made. There is still so much more to learn about the moon, and this mission will help pave the way for future ones, including man's return.

Resource of the Month

NASA has a kids club at <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>. It has lots of games, stories, arts and crafts, plus links to the coolest NASA sites. Please note that it is written using "flash," so might not be usable by those with dialup connections. Dialup users should check out the non-flash version at <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/nonflash/index.html?flash=0>.

Activity of the Month

One of the challenges I have each month is deciding on what topic or topics to cover in this column. I have a challenge to put to you readers now. I would like to have an upcoming column dedicated entirely to **you**. So, everyone who reads this, e-mail me a question or two having to do with the solar system or astronomy in general. I don't claim to know everything about these topics, far from it! However, it will give me a chance to see what is on your mind, and learn about them myself.

Most past *Planetary Wonderings* columns are now available at my www.KeepLookingUp.net site. Suggestions, questions, and comments about "Planetary Wonderings" are welcomed and may be directed to stargazer @ keeplookinup.net.

Remember to *keep looking up!*

Sources: Space.Com

<http://m3.jpl.nasa.gov/>

<http://solarsystem.nasa.gov/missions/profile.cfm?Sort=Target&Target=Moon&Era=Present>