The Virtual Telescope Project

Enjoy the Universe from your Desktop

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"SuperMoon 2017"

The largest Full Moon of the Year

The Virtual Telescope Project will show, live and online, the spectacular 3 Dec. 2017 Supermoon, the only visible one of the year. It will provide amazing, real-time images, with audio commentary by astrophysicist Gianluca Masi, of our beautiful satellite, while it rises above the legendary monuments of Rome, Italy.

3 December 2017, starting at 16.00 UTC

on https://www.virtualtelescope.eu

The Virtual Telescope is a project of the Bellatrix Astronomical Observatory

***Media Kit available here**: https://www.virtualtelescope.eu/supermoon-2017-media-kit/*

Next 3 Dec. 2017, one year after its last show, the "**Supermoon**" will be back again in the sky, being the only one visible in 2017. On that day, our beautiful Moon will be full while close to its perigee (its minimum distance from the Earth, which will be reached on 4 Dec., at 357.495 km from us, compared to an average distance of about 384.000 km), then it will be a little closer, brighter and apparently bigger than usual.

This condition is now popularly referred to as "Supermoon". The term itself is of no scientific value: astronomers prefer to call it *perigee full Moon*, but undoubtedly "Supermoon" is by far a much more charming name.

Both the full and the new Moon can be "super", as long as they occur near the lunar perigee, that is, when our satellite is at its minimum distance from the Earth. The Moon moves around our planet along an elliptical orbit, so its distance from us is not constant, but varies between a minimum (perigee) and a maximum value (apogee). Of course, the new Moon is not visible in the sky, so only the full "Supermoon" can be observed (unless we have a solar eclipse during the new Supermoon, as in March 2016). In 2017, we had a total of four "Supermoons", but the only full and visible one will be the next 3 Dec. one, ending the 2017 cycle.

"The 3 Dec. 2017 "Supermoon" will appear about 7% bigger and a bit brighter than an average full Moon, but casual stargazers will not recognize this at their first glance," says Gianluca Masi, astrophysicist, scientific director of the Virtual Telescope Project. "In fact," Masi adds, "these are not really obvious variations, but they add charm to the event, a precious opportunity to admire our natural satellite in the night sky context, an increasingly overlooked and forgotten landscape."

The show of the full Moon (and of course of the "Supermoon") offers its best when our satellite rises or sets, which happens at sunset and at dawn, respectively (the full Moon shines in the sky on the opposite direction respect to the Sun, so it rises at sunset and sets at dawn). "During the twilight," says astrophysicist Gianluca Masi, "the residual solar light scattered all around by our atmosphere allows us to admire the scenery, while the full Moon rises or falls on the horizon."

"At night," continues Masi, "the full Moon is very bright, almost dazzling, compared to the darkness of the landscape." "At its rise", adds astrophysicist Gianluca Masi, " the Moon appears behind monuments and elements of the landscape, generating the feeling that its disk is larger than usual, but this is just an optical illusion, due to the presence of those terrestrial elements on the line of sight, giving grounds for comparison".

The Virtual Telescope, thanks to its roving instruments, will show the next 3 Dec. "Supermoon" while it will rise above the legendary skyline of Rome, behind the most famous monuments of the Eternal City, with commentary by astrophysicist Gianluca Masi, sharing the experience with curious people from all around the world.

The live, free observation session is scheduled for 3 December 2017, starting at 16:00 UTC. To join, simply enter at the date and time above the following website: https://www.virtualtelescope.eu.

Media Kit available here: https://www.virtualtelescope.eu/supermoon-2017-media-kit/

Rome, 10 November 2017

The Virtual Telescope Project

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About the Virtual Telescope Project.(https://www.virtualtelescope.eu)

Founded in 2006, the Virtual Telescope Project is a technologically advanced facility, doing both research and public outreach in Astronomy, which can be fully controlled remotely from any device connected to the Internet. Since then, it gained a legendary international reputation. Thanks to its online observing sessions, the Virtual Telescope Project could show in real-time amazing astronomical events, like close approaching asteroids, comets, supernovae, eclipses and meter showers, to millions of people from all around the globe. Its events and exclusive multimedia are regularly featured by the most important news, space and press agencies in the world. Since 2017, thanks to a cooperation with Tenagra Observatories in USA, it has exclusive use of a telescope installed in the Sonora Desert, Arizona.

Some past press coverage: https://www.virtualtelescope.eu/the-media-about-us/

About dr. Gianluca Masi, PhD

Definitely attracted by the night sky since his childhood, Italian astrophysicist Gianluca Masi graduated with full marks in Physics, Astrophysical address, before earning a PhD in astronomy. He discovered dozens of asteroids, co-discovered three exoplanets and the important ASASSN-15lh transient, the brightest supernova ever found in human history. NASA's ADS lists more than 800 of his scientific contributions. In 2006 he founded the Virtual Telescope Project, supporting both his professional research and widely recognized public outreach activities. His astronomical work is featured by the most important media of the planet. Asteroid (21795) "Masi" was named after him by the International Astronomical Union. He serves as National Coordinator in Italy for Asteroid Day and Astronomers Without Borders.

More about dr. Gianluca Masi: https://www.virtualtelescope.eu/the-author/