

CLARITY GUIDES

In a world full of disinformation, get **Clarity**.

SPIRIT · STORY · SCIENCE

THE MOON

Moon rituals, drumming dates and lore from around the world,
the science behind it all, and how to watch it from Fife



Published by Clarity Guides · Cover: waning crescent Moon with earthshine, before dawn on 7 October 2026. Original photograph.

Preview – full guide coming soon – goclarity.uk

About this guide



The Moon is the one light in the night sky that everyone knows. It pulls the tides up the Forth, sets the dates of Easter, Ramadan and Lunar New Year, and has gathered more blessings, rituals and stories than anything else in the sky.

After a quick tour of the basics, this guide starts with the spirit of the Moon: rituals for every phase, the 2027 drumming calendar, moon lore from the Hebrides to China, and what each full moon means. Then comes the science, a gallery of moons over Fife, and a quiz.

Look out for **Did you know?** bubbles and **Try this tonight** ideas. Sources are listed at the back; all times are UK time.

01	Meet the Moon: the basics, and why it changes shape	3
02	Moon rituals for every phase	9
03	Drumming by the Moon: the 2027 circle calendar	14
04	The sacred Moon: spirit and story around the world	19
05	Full moon names, what they mean, and the 2027 full moons	24
06	The Moon and our calendars	28
07	Tides: the Moon's tug on the sea	31
08	Eclipses: when the shadows line up	33
09	From Apollo to Artemis	36
10	Moon over Fife: a gallery	40
11	Moon-watching in Fife	44
12	Myth or science? The full moon and us	47
	The great Moon quiz	50
	Glossary · Companion guides · Sources · Image credits	51



Meet the Moon: what it is, and why it changes shape

The Moon is a rocky world about a quarter of Earth's width, circling us at an average distance of about 384,400 kilometres. It has no light of its own: everything we see is sunlight bouncing off grey, dusty rock.

It is the fifth-largest moon in the Solar System and, compared with the size of its planet, one of the largest. Its pull is only about a sixth of Earth's, which is why astronauts bounced rather than walked.

It has almost no atmosphere, so there is no weather to wear away its craters, and footprints left in 1969 are still there.

Diameter	About 3,475 km, roughly 27% of Earth's
Average distance	About 384,400 km (it ranges from roughly 356,000 to 407,000 km)
Gravity	About one-sixth (16.6%) of Earth's
One orbit	27.3 days measured against the stars (the <i>sidereal</i> month)
New moon to new moon	About 29.5 days (the <i>synodic</i> month, or lunation)
Surface temperature	Roughly +120°C in sunlight to –130°C at night near the equator
Drifting away	About 3.8 cm a year, measured by bouncing lasers off reflectors left by Apollo crews



Did you know?

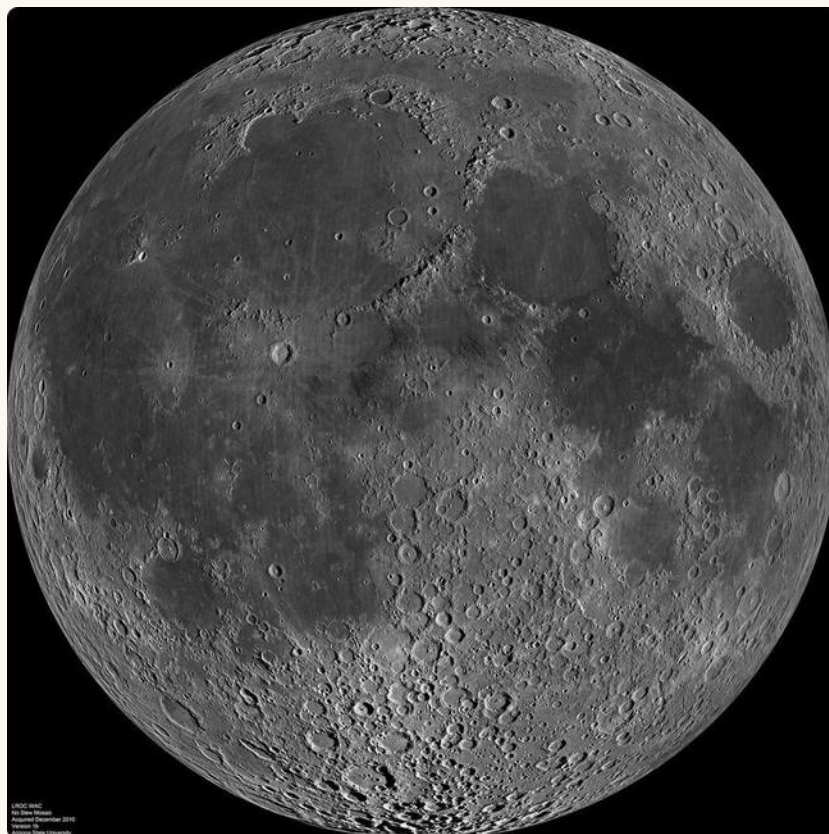
The Moon is drifting away by about **3.8 cm a year**, roughly as fast as your fingernails grow.

Why we only ever see one face

The Moon spins once on its axis in exactly the time it takes to go once around Earth. Over billions of years, Earth's gravity slowed its spin until the two matched, a state called *tidal locking*. So the same face always points our way.

Because its orbit is slightly tilted and oval, it seems to rock a little (this is called *libration*), and over time we can see about 59% of its surface from Earth.

The “far side” is not dark. It gets just as much sunlight as the near side; we simply never see it from home. At new moon, the far side is in full sunshine.



The near side, assembled from Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter images taken in December 2010. The dark patches are the *maria* (“seas”): old lava plains, not water. NASA/GSFC/Arizona State University.