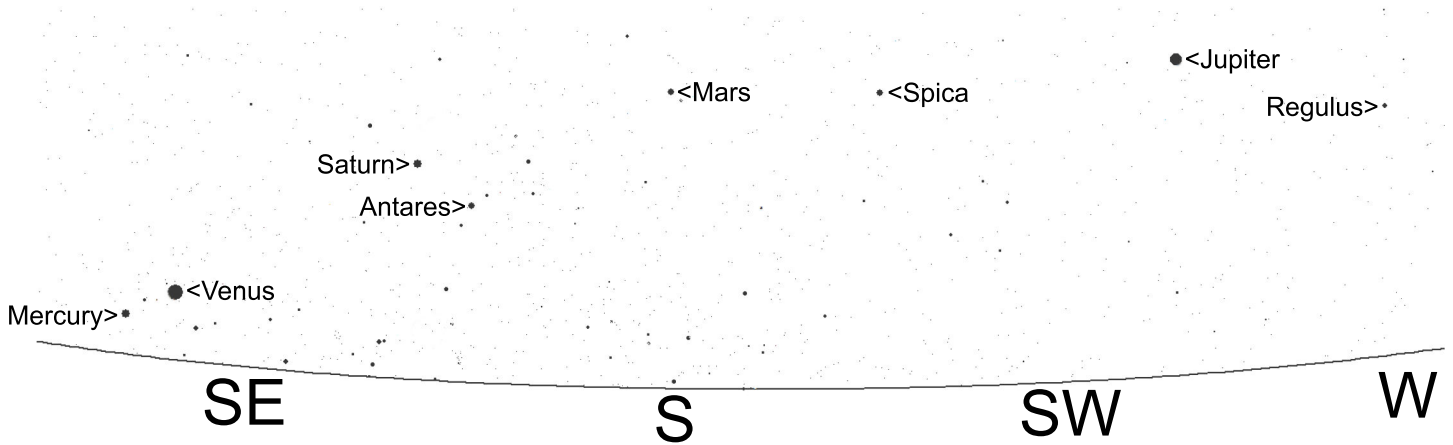


How to identify the five planets in late Jan / early Feb 2016



From January 20 to February 20, it is technically possible to see 5 naked eye planets in the sky during the early morning hours. However, because Mercury moves quickly and only rises above the horizon for a short time before sunrise, the time period from January 30 through February 8 is the ideal time to see all five most easily.

Follow these steps to identify the planets, using the chart above to guide you.

In the northern hemisphere, the planets will be in approximately the locations seen in the chart above, about one hour before sunrise. **Start looking about 75 to 90 minutes before sunrise**, to give yourself time to find and identify the brighter ones.

1) **Locate Venus towards the southeast.** Other than the Moon (and later, Sun) it will be the brightest object that direction.

2) **Locate Jupiter towards the southwest.** It is the next brightest object in the night sky after Venus, so it will be easy to identify.

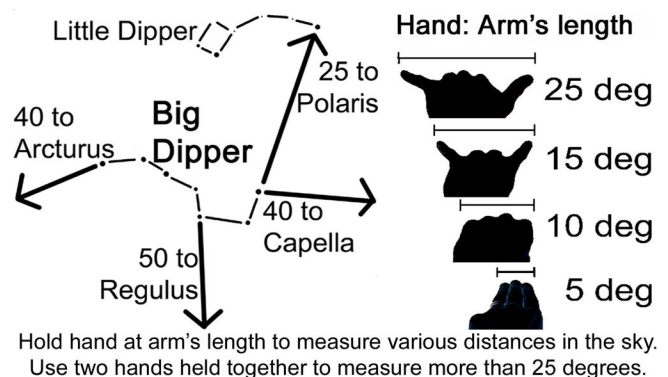
3) **Draw a long line from Jupiter to Venus.** Between that line are two stars, and two planets of about equal brightness (dimmer than Venus and Jupiter).

4) Using the chart at right, estimate 30 degrees from Jupiter to find the star Spica.

5) From Spica, estimate 20 degrees to Mars.

6) From Mars, estimate ~ 25 degrees to both Antares, and Saturn. The color of Antares is close to that of Mars. Saturn is cream or white.

7) Venus is easy to find; continue a line from Saturn through Venus to find Mercury, about 5 to 7 degrees away, towards where the Sun will be rising.



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