



Solar eclipse in ghana 2019

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The shadow of totality will move from Mexico into south Texas around 2:30 p.m. EDT, and continue quickly northeast across the Mississippi Valley, Midwest and eastern Great Lakes before exiting eastward out of Maine just one hour later.

Having two total eclipses cross the continental United States only seven years apart is a rarity. Before 2017, the last total eclipse to cover this much American territory was in 1970, when the moon's shadow moved out of the Gulf of Mexico, across the Florida Panhandle, and up the East Coast.

A total solar eclipse occurs when the moon passes directly and entirely in front of the sun, and it is rare because the orbit of the moon is not a perfect circle around Earth, and it does not orbit Earth in the same plane as Earth orbits the sun.

On average, the moon is 239,000 miles from Earth, but the orbit is slightly elliptical. As a result, it is not the same distance away from Earth all the time. The variation is not large, about 10 percent, but this is why the moon sometimes looks a little bit larger -- or smaller -- in the night sky.

That difference explains a special type of partial eclipse called an annular eclipse. When the moon is slightly farther away, it will appear smaller in the sky. If the geometry still allows the moon to cross the sun's disc in the sky, it may not cover it entirely, creating a bright circular ring in the sky known as an annulus.

Complicating matters further, the lunar orbit is not in the same plane as Earth's orbit around the sun, it is inclined about 5 degrees. The moon does pass through this plane -- known as the ecliptic -- about two times a month, and a solar eclipse can happen when that crossing of the ecliptic occurs.

Plus, solar eclipses only happen during a new moon phase, when the moon rises and sets at about the same time as the sun. During the rest of the lunar cycle, the moon is nowhere close to the sun as they each move across the sky. You have probably noticed this difference as the full moon rises in the eastern sky at around sunset, but you can sometimes catch a waxing crescent moon setting in the western sky shortly after sunset.

Over a long enough time frame, there is a pattern to these eclipses, called the Saros Cycle, which is a period of about 18 years and 11 days. But even this cycle does not take into account the rotation of Earth, so while the shapes of the shadows on the ground are similar in these cycles, the location of the shadows changes.

This all makes a total solar eclipse a once-in-a-lifetime experience for many people. But for those who have the means to travel, the chances come around more frequently. The next total eclipse is in 2026, visible from Greenland, the North Atlantic, and southwestern Europe.



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The Great American Eclipse expects between 1 and 4 million people to travel to see the eclipse; that doesn't include the 31 million Americans who live in the path of totality, the 115-mile-wide stretch where you'll be able to see the eclipse in full, spanning from Mexico to Maine. "It will likely be the most-viewed astronomical event in American history," Michael Zeiler, eclipse cartographer and co-founder of Great American Eclipse, said in a statement.

Part of what's driving the popularity of eclipse travel this year is its timing--the busiest week for spring break travel happens to be the week the eclipse will occur. Others who aren't on school schedules may be watching the eclipse due to scarcity; according to NASA, the next total solar eclipse visible in the contiguous United States won't occur until August 2044.

If you plan to travel for the total eclipse, prepare to fly into and out of busy airports. Once you've reached your destination, look for nearby eclipse events. Many cities are planning eclipse block parties, astronomy lectures, and more. Airlines like Delta and Southwest are even planning special eclipse flights. Finally, make sure you have eye protection to view the eclipse safely. It's unsafe to do so through lenses like cameras, so finding proper eyewear ahead of time is a must.

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Web: <https://www.sumthingtasty.co.za/contact-us/>

Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com

WhatsApp: 8613816583346

