



ECLIPSE EDITION

How to...



BIG EVENT
The National Air and Space Museum will host a solar eclipse festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC, on April 8.

View a stunning sight in the sky

Get set to take part in an exciting and rare celestial event!

On the afternoon of April 8, there will be a total solar eclipse—when the Moon passes between the Sun and Earth and blocks the face of the Sun. (Find out about the science of the eclipse in “Rare total solar eclipse arrives” on page 14.) To enjoy this special event, here’s how to get started.

Know where to watch

The eclipse’s path will travel from Mexico to Canada over the US (see the map on the next page). About 32 million people live in “the path of totality” (the parts of the US where people can see the maximum phase of a total solar eclipse, when the Moon completely covers the face of the Sun). Some Americans have plans to travel to be in the path of totality. However, everyone in North America should see at least a partial solar eclipse. With an adult’s help, you can find out if a local astronomy club, observatory, or park is hosting a viewing party. NASA (the US space agency) is also posting a livestream of the eclipse at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-2024eclipse.



A total solar eclipse

Protect your eyes

It’s essential to have proper eye protection while watching a total or partial solar eclipse. Without it, the intense light of an eclipse can damage your eyes. Talk to an adult about getting certified solar eclipse glasses (also called viewers) or a handheld solar viewer. If you’re planning to use binoculars, a telescope, or a camera, these items will also require the attachment of special-purpose solar filters. (Don’t use solar viewers in combination with binoculars, telescopes, or cameras.) The American Astronomical Society offers a list of trustworthy suppliers of solar eclipse viewers and solar filters on its site, aas.org. You can also check with your local library. Some libraries are distributing certified solar eclipse viewers to the public for free.

Notice effects of the eclipse

Once the eclipse begins, the Moon will spend about an hour gradually covering the Sun. During these

partial phases of the eclipse, you can watch with your solar viewers. Look at what’s happening all around you. For example, the partial Sun may cast shadows of small crescent suns. About 15 minutes before totality, notice how daylight begins to change—it may look eerie and the sky may darken. If you are located in the path of totality, once the Moon has completely covered the Sun and you can no longer see anything through your solar viewers, you can remove them to look. The Sun’s bright atmosphere will shine a ring around the Moon. People around you may cheer! This totality phase may last about four minutes. As soon as a sliver of Sun reappears, immediately put your viewers back on.

Share your experiences

NASA wants the public’s help to better understand how the eclipse affects wildlife. For example, when the sky darkened, did birds stop chirping? You can share what you observed at eclipsesoundscapes.org. With an adult’s help, you can also send a photo of yourself enjoying the eclipse to hello@theweekjunior.com.



How to...

See the path of the total solar eclipse across the US



Celebrate the eclipse with an out-of-this-world party!

The total solar eclipse—an event that won’t happen again across this much of the US for 20 years—is a great occasion for throwing a celebration! Mindy Thomas, co-host of the popular kids’ podcast *Wow in the World*, has these fun tips to add a “wow” factor to your party.



Decorate your space

Once you’ve picked a time and place—you can celebrate before or after the eclipse—get ready to decorate! String gold and black galactic garlands around the room, and hang cutouts of suns, moons, and stars from the ceiling. Turn sofa cushions into a rocket ship!



Set out celestial snacks

In keeping with the eclipse theme of your party, you can serve sun chips, moon pies,

cosmic cookies, and meat-eor balls (get it?).

Plan games

Pump up the fun with a game of “Pin the Moon on the Sun,” or turn out the lights for a round of flashlight tag. With an adult’s help you could also plan a fun craft, like making eclipse T-shirts using glow-in-the-dark fabric paint.



Add accessories

Get your guests into a festive mood with eclipse-themed party accessories like sun hats, moon masks, and star-shaped sunglasses. (Those sunglasses are for the party only, not for eclipse viewing!)



Make a playlist

Have a dance party with a space-themed playlist including songs like “Moonboots” by Recess Monkey, “Why Does the Sun Shine?” by They Might Be Giants, “Walking on Sunshine” by Katrina and the Waves, and “Space Cadet” by Secret Agent 23 Skidoo.

Get into the eclipse spirit

Check out the special *Wow in the World* podcast episode titled “The Great Solar Eclipse Party” starting April 1! It’s available at Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts.