

Northern Lights



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Introduction



Northern lights are often known as the polar lights.

The northern lights most commonly take place in Iceland, northern parts of Sweden, Finland, Norway, Russia, Canada and Alaska as well as southern Greenland.

About



The best time to see the Northern Lights is on clear nights around midnight starting at the end of August and finishing by mid-April. If you are lower latitude and there is a big solar storm, you may be able to enjoy the Aurora during the summer months, like June or July.

Norse Mythology

The northern lights feature in Norse mythology

One Norse legend has the lights as reflections from the shield and armour of the Valkyries. These female warriors would choose which of the fallen would gain entry to Valhalla. Norse legends also suggest that these pulsating green ribbons of light served as an archway into Valhalla.



Chinese dragon

The northern lights play a part in Chinese dragon legends

Many say that early Chinese legends about dragons can be linked to these rare light shows, taken to be a battle between good and evil dragons.



European harbinger war

Some in Italy and France believed the lights to be a bad omen that could herald the outbreak of anything from war to plague.



Japanese culture

The Japanese culture believe that a child conceived during a northern lights display will be blessed with good looks, intellect and good fortune.



Earth's magnetic field

When the solar wind reaches the earth, it causes a distortion in the magnetic field. This collision of the charged particles and the gases in our atmosphere cause the light, which is a release of photon energy.



Occurrence

It feels like you can reach up and touch the lights but in actual fact, the lights are high up in the planet's atmosphere, between 90km and 130 km above ground level, although they can be even higher.



Visability

The aurora borealis can occur at any time of day, but our eyes need darkness to be able to see them.



German physicist and astronomer Otto Rudolf Martin Brendel (1862–1939) took the first known photograph of the northern lights. Taken on 5 January, 1892, the black-and-white photo was published in 'The Century' magazine in October 1897.





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Thank you

