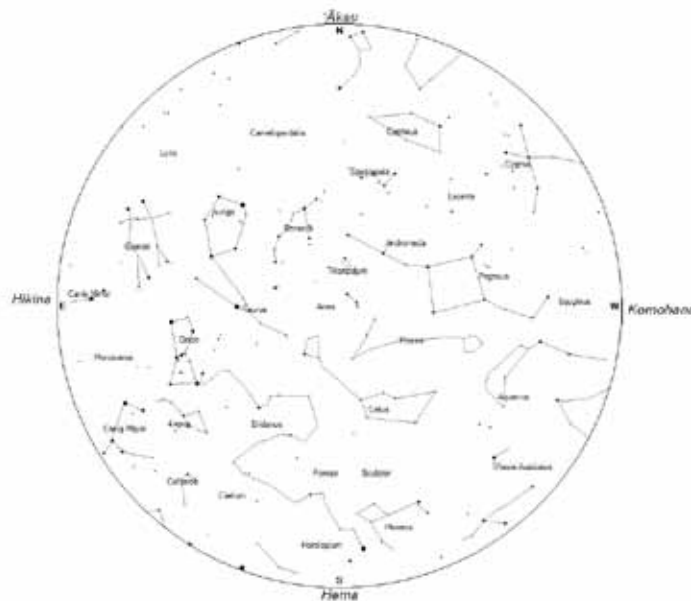


December 2011 Skies

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Thursday, Dec 1	Olekūkahi (First Quarter Moon) at 11:52pm HST
Tuesday, Dec 6	Ka'āwela (Jupiter) 5° south of the Moon
Saturday, Dec 10	Hoku (Full Moon) at 4:36am HST (Lunar Eclipse)
Tuesday, Dec 13	Geminid Meteor Shower
Saturday, Dec 17	Kāloakūkahi (Last Quarter Moon) at 3:48pm HST Hökū'ulapīna'au (Mars) 8° north of the Moon
Tuesday, Dec 20	Makulu (Saturn) 7° north of the Moon
Wednesday, Dec 21	Winter Solstice at 7:30pm HST Ukialialī'i (Mercury) 3° north of the Moon
Saturday, Dec 24	Muku (New Moon) at 8:06am HST
Tuesday, Dec 27	Hökūloa (Venus) 6° south of the Moon



December 2011 Highlights

Mercury is best viewed the last two weeks of December in the Eastern sky before sunrise.

Venus will be visible for about 2 hours after the sun sets. Look for this bright beacon in the west in the early evening.

Mars is visible in the morning sky in the east rising around midnight and is in Leo.

Jupiter is visible in Pisces. Look for it in the southeast at sunset, it will set shortly after 2am.

Saturn rises around 3am in the Eastern sky and is visible in Virgo.

This month we have a Total Lunar Eclipse! This is when the Moon passes through the Earth's shadow and will turn a coppery color. The eclipse takes place on Saturday, December 10th starting at 2:45am and finishing at 6:17am in morning twilight. Maximum eclipse is at 4:36am.

The Geminid Meteor Shower peaks on the morning of the 13th. The shower is associated with the Apollo asteroid Patheon, and usually has 20-30 per hour at its peak. Because Gemini rises early (about 8pm) this meteor shower can be viewed most of the evening.

On December 21st the season of Winter officially begins with the Winter Solstice. Solstice means "Sun stands still" as this is the day the Sun stops its southward progression on the horizon at its rising and setting points. This is the shortest day, and longest night of the year. It was celebrated by numerous cultures around the world by the lighting of candles and fires, and by exchanging gifts.