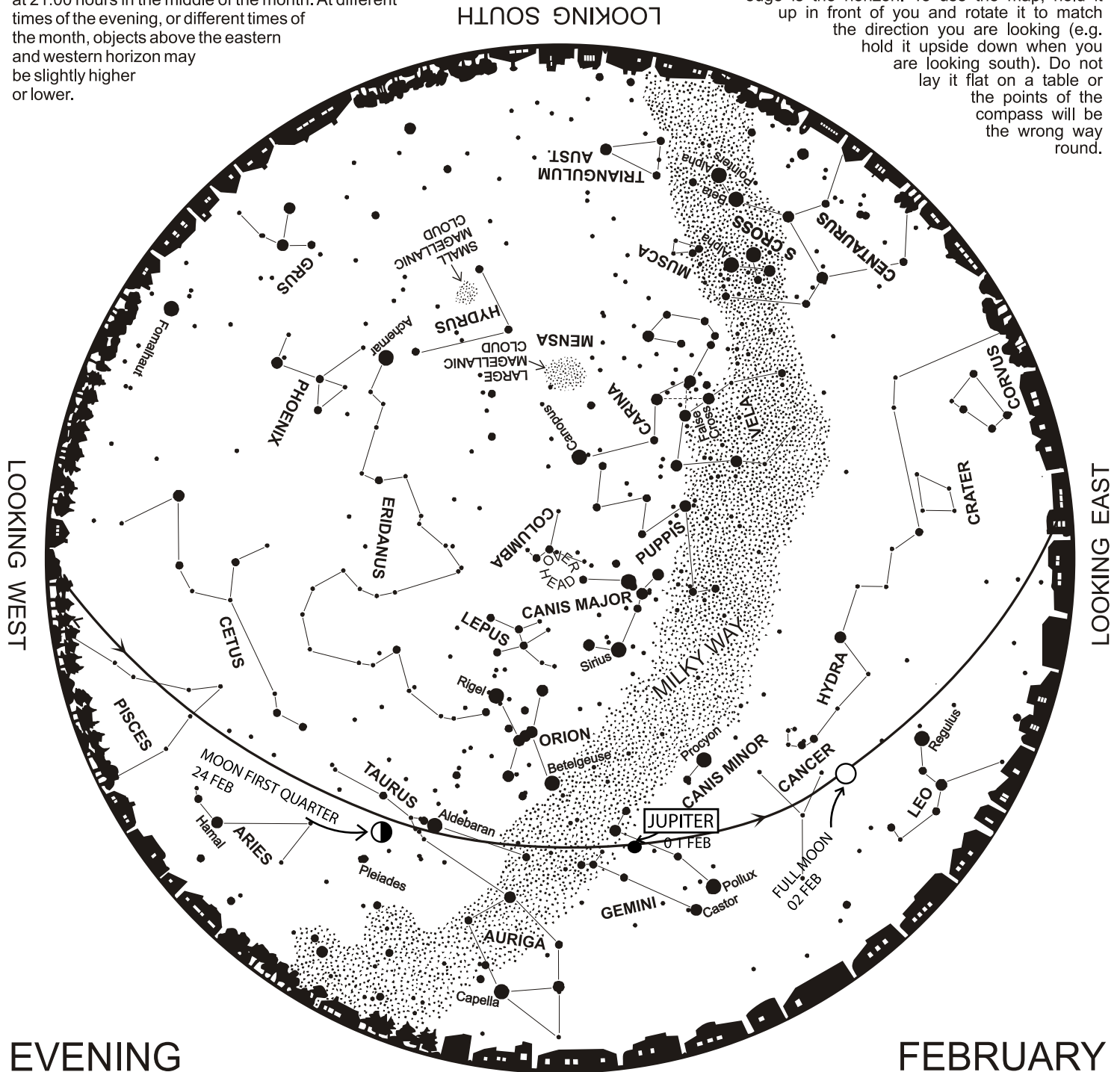


IZIKO PLANETARIUM AND DIGITAL DOME

The map shows the night sky visible above the Cape at 21:00 hours in the middle of the month. At different times of the evening, or different times of the month, objects above the eastern and western horizon may be slightly higher or lower.

The centre of the map is the overhead point, the edge is the horizon. To use the map, hold it up in front of you and rotate it to match the direction you are looking (e.g. hold it upside down when you are looking south). Do not lay it flat on a table or the points of the compass will be the wrong way round.



EVENING SKY

FEBRUARY 2026

During February evenings, the night sky features a blend of late-summer and early-autumn constellations. Prominent in the southern sky are Carina (the Keel), Vela (the Sails), and Puppis (the Stern). Together, these constellations once formed the ancient constellation Argo Navis. Within Carina and Vela, a group of stars forms what is often called the "False Cross", which resembles the Southern Cross but is larger and dimmer, making it easy to distinguish from the true Cross. Later in the month, multiple planets appear spread along the ecliptic, the plane of the Solar System. Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn are visible in the early evening sky, creating the impression of an apparent planetary alignment. Uranus and Neptune are also present along the same line but require binoculars or a telescope to observe.

Saturn sits low on the western horizon and gradually sets earlier each night. Nearby, Fomalhaut also descends. Known in Shona tradition as Ndemara, the "sweetheart star," Fomalhaut was said to guide lovers to secret meetings. Its position in a star-poor region of the sky makes it especially easy to identify. As these descend we can welcome the constellations Crater and Corvus. The Full Moon occurs on 2 February, with the New Moon following on 17 February. Close to the New Moon, a partial solar eclipse will take place; however, only a very small portion of the Sun will be obscured. Anyone wishing to observe the eclipse must use proper solar viewing protection at all times.