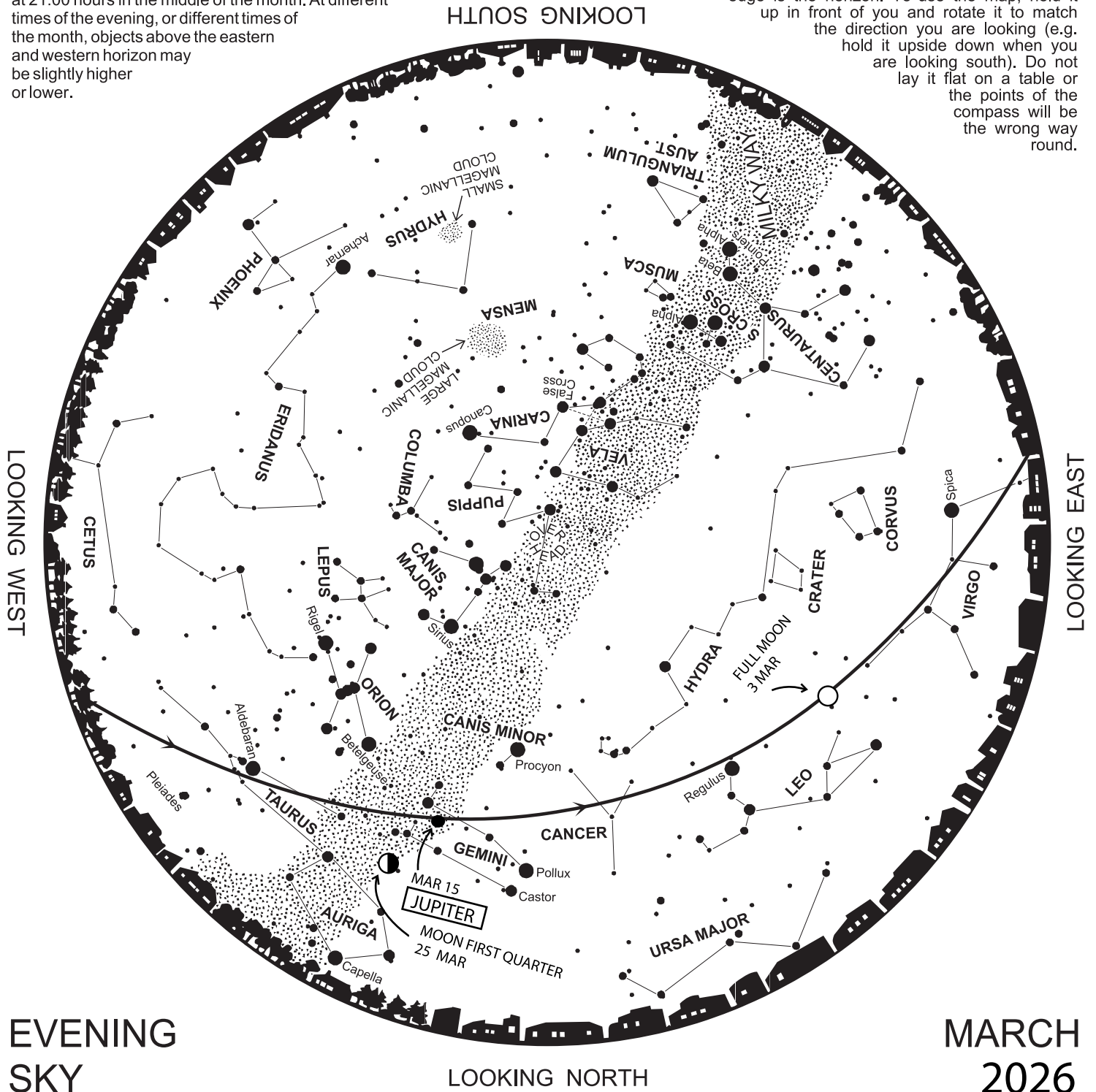


IZIKO PLANETARIUM AND DIGITAL DOME

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

MARCH 2026

The start of autumn brings a shift in our evening skies constellations from summer to winter. The Milky Way begins to return to prominence in the late evening and early morning hours, hinting at the rich winter sky to come. In the east, Virgo climbs higher each evening, led by its bright blue-white star Spica. Although it looks like a single star, Spica is made up of two stars orbiting extremely close to each other. They are so close, in fact, that their strong gravity pulls them out of shape, stretching them slightly so they are not perfectly round. Gemini, Cancer, and Leo drift westward as autumn advances. Orion, along with his hunting dogs Canis Major and Canis Minor, sinks toward the western horizon. In early March, the Moon appears close to Regulus in Leo, creating a striking pairing in the evening sky.

To the south, Centaurus climbs higher, with the famous Pointer Stars, Alpha and Beta Centauri.

The Full Moon occurs on 3 March, accompanied by a total lunar eclipse. However, this total phase is not visible from South Africa, as it occurs below our horizon.

The New Moon falls on 19 March, providing darker skies for deep-sky observing. Jupiter remains bright in the constellation Gemini, shining near the twin stars Castor and Pollux. As the month progresses, Taurus, with its reddish star Aldebaran, moves gradually toward the western sky.