

Fun facts you should know about the August 21, 2017, Total Solar Eclipse

Adapted from posts by Michael Bakich, Astronomy Magazine

1. This will be the first total solar eclipse in the continental U.S. in 38 years. The last one occurred February 26, 1979. Totality crosses only through the US, no other country. It has been coined the "*Great American Eclipse*".
2. Everyone in the continental U.S. will see at least a partial eclipse. This eclipse will be the most-viewed LIVE ever! More than 500 million people in the US, Canada and Mexico will have opportunity to see a partial eclipse. More than 10 million people are in the path of totality and 28 million people live within 60 miles of the path.
3. The Moon's shadow crosses through 10 states, making landfall in Oregon at 10:15 am PDT. After Oregon, the shadow crosses through Idaho, Wyoming, and the northeastern part of Kansas. The shadow enters northwest Missouri at 1:06pm CDT and it will take 13 minutes for the shadow to cross into Illinois! From Illinois it crosses into Kentucky and Tennessee. Finally the Moon's shadow moves into North Carolina and South Carolina before heading out to sea.
4. A spot near Carbondale, Illinois will experience the longest duration of Totality, more than 2 minutes and 40 seconds.
5. About half of both Kansas City (pop. = 464,000) and Saint Louis (pop. = 318,000) lie within the path of totality. The remaining population is only a 30 minute drive to the path!
6. State Capitals in the path: Salem, OR (pop.=157,000); Jefferson City, MO (pop.=43,000); Nashville, TN (pop.=609,000); and Columbia, SC (pop.=132,000)
7. Only totality reveals the true celestial spectacle: the diamond ring, the Sun's glorious corona, strange colors in our sky, and seeing stars in the daytime.
8. Totality is safe to look at. During the time the Moon's disk covers that of the Sun, it's safe to look at the eclipse. In fact, to experience the awesomeness of the event, you must look at the Sun without a filter during totality.
9. You won't need a telescope. One of the great things about the total phase of a solar eclipse is that it looks best to naked eyes. The sight of the corona surrounding the Moon's black disk in a darkened sky is unforgettable.
10. You may experience strange things. Apparent nightfall, dusk to dawn lights may come on. Shadows will look eerie. Breezes may vanish and birds may come in to roost. A 10°–15° F drop in temperature is not unusual.