



International Observe the Moon Night: An Opportunity for Global Community Engagement

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Introduction: International Observe the Moon Night is an annual worldwide public engagement program that encourages observation, appreciation, and understanding of our Moon and its connection to planetary science and exploration. It is also a time to celebrate our personal and cultural connections to Earth's nearest celestial neighbor. Every autumn, we ask people around the globe to observe the Moon in some way (virtually or in-person) – whether that be from one's own backyard, a local library, an event at a university, a planetarium, or other locales. In doing so, participants become part of a worldwide collection of individuals united in admiring the Moon.

Anyone anywhere on Earth can participate by hosting or attending an event, or by joining in as individual lunar observers. By registering on the International Observe the Moon Night website, moon.nasa.gov/observe, event hosts and observers add themselves to a worldwide map of International Observe the Moon Night participants and receive additional event information and resources. Events can be registered as either public or private; public events allow everyone to see when and where the event will be held. This year, we are also making registration more accommodating of virtual events, so people will have the option of registering an event as virtual or in-person.

Global Event: Since the first International Observe the Moon Night was held in 2010, we have engaged with an estimated 1.4 million participants in 107 different countries and all 50 U.S. states, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia [1]. It is incredible and inspiring to see how people around the world celebrate our nearest celestial neighbor and to learn how different cultures view the Moon.

Each year, we strive to reach an even larger and more diverse global audience by reaching out to potential international partners. These new partners are able to directly connect with their local communities and can use International Observe the Moon Night as a tool for strengthening

community ties.



Figure 1: International Observe the Moon Night 2019 participants in Damascus, Syria. Image credit: Nasser Alkadi, <https://flic.kr/p/2htghFu>

Engaging Local Communities. We endeavor to better connect International Observe the Moon Night with local communities, and in doing so, share and inspire Moon-themed stories, images, artwork, and more through these community connections. International Observe the Moon Night provides the opportunity to unite in learning about and observing the Moon and the wonders of lunar and planetary exploration. It is also a great way for scientists to share lunar science with their communities and to connect with community partners.

Not only is there a variety of science to share, there are also numerous other ways that people can observe and celebrate the Moon. We encourage broad interpretation; looking at the Moon through telescopes or binoculars or the naked eye, observing the Moon through art or writings, or "tasting the Moon" via cookie lunar models are just a few examples.



Figure 2: Participants in Brazil celebrating International Observe the Moon Night 2019. Image credit: Gunstar Team, <https://flic.kr/p/2hsxwZP>

All International Observe the Moon Night events are unique. We offer a variety of resources on our website, but this event is one that people can take and make their own, tailored to their interests and the resources they have available, and the needs and interests of their audience. Most International Observe the Moon Night events are hosted with community partnerships, whether they be local astronomy clubs, community centers, libraries, or other organizations, which bolsters the event's impact at both an individual and community level.



Figure 3: International Observe the Moon Night 2019 participants viewing the Moon in Iraq. Image credit: Eyad Khailany, <https://flic.kr/p/2hrpuF6>

Virtual Engagement. This year in particular, we are offering more opportunities for virtual engagement. There will also be an option to designate an event as virtual or in-person during registration. International Observe the Moon Night provides an opportunity to connect with fellow lunar enthusiasts around the world through our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/observethemoon/>, #ObserveTheMoon across social media platforms, and the International Observe the Moon Night Flickr group. We encourage the sharing of creative ideas and meaningful interactions through these online platforms.

No matter how individuals participate, they should observe in a way that is safe and healthy for both themselves and their communities. In particular, we recommend that all U.S. participants adhere to CDC and local health guidelines and that international observers follow local laws and guidelines when considering hosting in-person events.

We will offer a few recommendations for participating in the program, along with the benefits, and will highlight examples from past events.

International Observe the Moon Night is sponsored by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) mission and the Solar System Exploration Division at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, with many contributing partners.

References: [1] Buxner, S. et al.: Lessons Learned and Outcomes from 10 Years of Evaluating International Observe the Moon Night, AGU, 9-13 December 2019, San Francisco, CA, USA.