

## **Eclipse Dates in 2017**

The scientific point of view:- An eclipse occurs when one object gets in between you and another object and blocks your view. From Earth, we routinely experience two kinds of eclipses: an eclipse of the Moon and an eclipse of the Sun.

Eclipses of the Moon:- Sometimes, as the Earth orbits the Sun, it comes between the Sun and the Moon. When this happens, the Earth throws a dark shadow across the Moon. This is known as an eclipse of the Moon, or a lunar eclipse.

Eclipses of the Sun:- Sometimes, the Moon passes between the Earth and the Sun. The Moon blocks the light of the Sun and a shadow of the Moon is cast on the Earth's surface. This is an eclipse of the Sun, or a solar eclipse.

There are three types of a solar eclipse: total, partial, and annular. During a total eclipse, the Moon completely covers our view of the Sun. A total eclipse is only visible from a narrow strip (about 150 km wide) of the Earth's surface at any one time. From the areas outside this narrow strip, the Sun appears to be only partially covered and a partial eclipse is seen. A partial eclipse will also occur if the Sun, Moon, and Earth are not precisely lined up. The eclipse cannot be total unless the center of the Moon's shadow is able to strike the Earth. The eclipse type that occurs when the Moon is at its farthest distance from the Earth is an annular eclipse. The Moon then appears too small to completely block out the disk of the Sun.

During a solar eclipse, the Moon actually casts two shadows toward Earth. One shadow is called the umbra which becomes smaller as it reaches the Earth. This is the dark center of the Moon's shadow. The second shadow is called the penumbra. This shadow becomes larger as it reaches the Earth. A total solar eclipse, or a complete blocking out of the Sun's light, can only be seen by those who live in the area covered by the umbra. People who live in the area of the Earth covered by the penumbra will see a partial eclipse.

A total solar eclipse can only occur when two events happen at the same time. The first event is a new Moon. This phase of the Moon occurs when the Sun is almost directly behind the Moon, and we see only a sliver of the Sun's light reflected by the Moon. During this time the Moon and the Sun appear close together. The second event that must occur is that the Moon must be in the right position, directly in the line of sight between the Earth and the Sun. These two events occur at the same time about once every year and a half.

### **2017 Lunar Eclipse's**

11<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (Saturday) Lunar Penumbral Eclipse. Visible in South Africa. 00H32 to 04h55.

07<sup>th</sup> August 2017 (Monday) Partial Lunar Eclipse. Visible in South Africa. 17h48 - 22h53

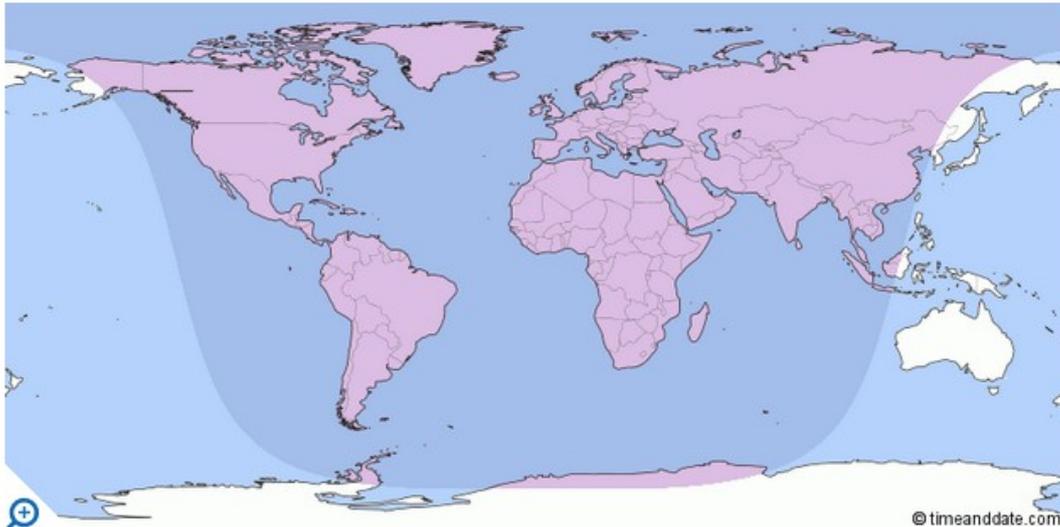
### **2017 Solar Eclipse's**

26<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (Sunday) Partial Solar Eclipse. Visible in South Africa. 14h11 to 19h36.

21<sup>st</sup> August 2017 (Monday) Solar Eclipse. Not visible in South Africa. Nothing needs to be observed when the Eclipse cannot be viewed.

## **Lunar Penumbral Eclipse - 11<sup>th</sup> February (VISIBLE IN S.A.)**

The first eclipse of 2017 occurs on the 11<sup>th</sup> February (Saturday). The penumbral lunar eclipse will be visible from Europe, most of Asia, Africa and most of North America.



*Note that since it is a penumbral eclipse, it can be hard to see, as the Moon will only be a bit fainter.*

 Eclipse is visible.

 Eclipse not visible at all.

**Note:** Areas with lighter shadings left (West) of the center will experience the eclipse after moonrise/sunset. Areas with lighter shadings right (East) of the center will experience the eclipse until moonset/sunrise. Actual eclipse visibility depends on weather conditions and line of sight to the Moon.

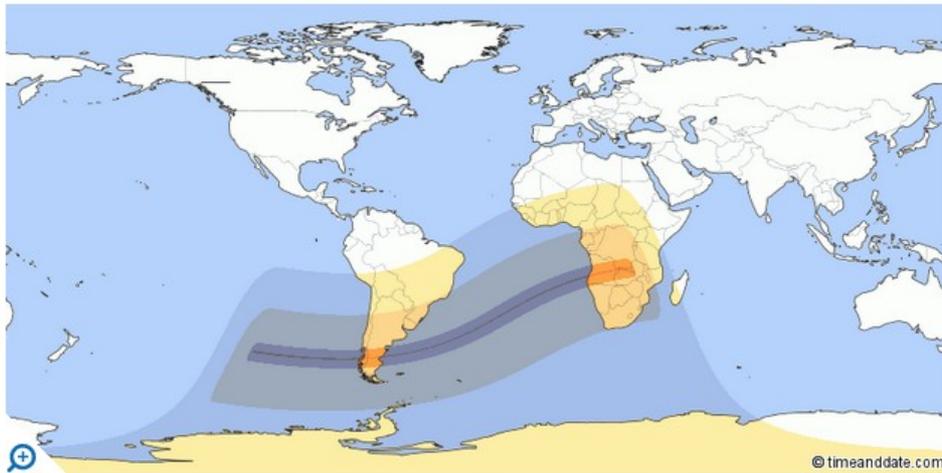
Penumbral eclipse begins	11 <sup>th</sup> February at 00h32
Maximum eclipse	11 <sup>th</sup> February at 02h43
Penumbral eclipse ends	11 <sup>th</sup> February at 04h55



## **Partial Solar Eclipse - 26<sup>th</sup> February (VISIBLE IN S.A.)**

The second eclipse of 2017 falls on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2017 in South Africa. The ring of fire, the total face of this annular solar eclipse, will be visible from a narrow path stretching from the southern tip of South America to southern and western Africa (kindly view the map next page), weather permitting. In the surrounding areas, people will see a partial solar eclipse.

First location to see the partial solar eclipse begins	26 <sup>th</sup> February at 14h11
Maximum partial solar eclipse time	26 <sup>th</sup> February at 16:58
Last location to see the partial solar eclipse ends	26 <sup>th</sup> February at 19:36

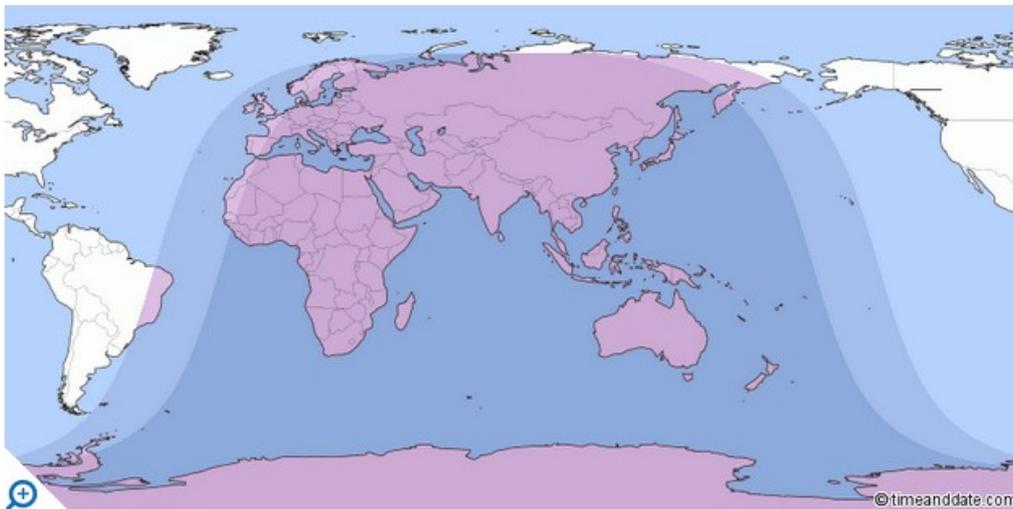


- Area seeing the annular solar eclipse.
- More than 90% of the Sun is covered.
- Up to 90% of the Sun is covered.
- Up to 40% of the Sun is covered.
- Eclipse is not visible at all.

**Note:** Percentage values (%) relate to moon coverage of the Sun and depends on location.  
 Visibility is weather permitting.

### Partial Lunar Eclipse – 7<sup>th</sup> August (VISIBLE IN S.A.)

The third eclipse of 2017 falls on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 2017 in South Africa. Regions seeing, at least, some parts of the eclipse: Much of Europe, Much of Asia, Australia, Africa, East in South America, Pacific, Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Antarctica.



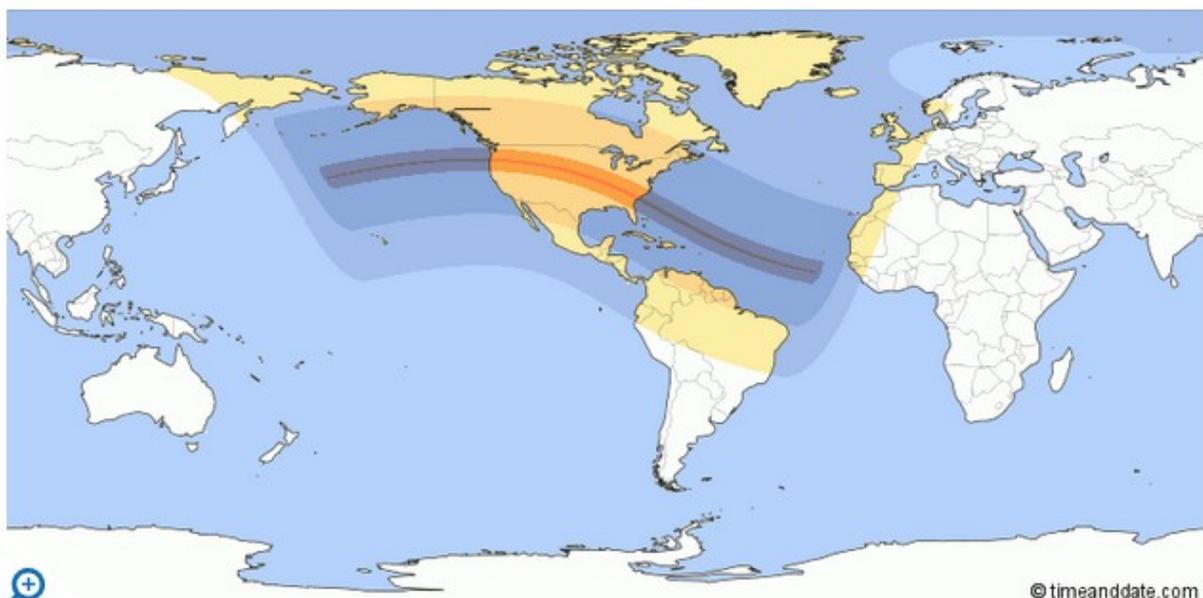
- Eclipse is visible.
- Only penumbral phase visible. Misses partial phase.
- Eclipse not visible at all.

**Note:** Areas with lighter shadings left (West) of the center will experience the eclipse after moonrise/sunset. Areas with lighter shadings right (East) of the center will experience the eclipse until moonset/sunrise. Actual eclipse visibility depends on weather conditions and line of sight to the Moon.

Penumbral eclipse begins      7<sup>th</sup> August at, 17h48  
Maximum eclipse                      7<sup>th</sup> August at, 20:20  
Penumbral eclipse ends              7<sup>th</sup> August at, 22:53

### **Solar Eclipse – 21<sup>st</sup> August (NOT VISIBLE IN S.A.)**

The final eclipse event of 2017 occurs the 21<sup>st</sup> August and will NOT be visible in South Africa. The total phase of this total solar eclipse will be visible from a narrow path spanning all across the USA from the East Coast to the West Coast (see map below), weather permitting. Regions seeing, at least, a partial eclipse: West in Europe, North/East Asia, North/West Africa, North America, Much of South America, Pacific, Atlantic, Arctic. If an eclipse is not visible in your area or as stated then THERE IS NO NEED TO OBSERVE THE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THIS ECLIPSE.



- Area seeing the total solar eclipse.
- More than 90% of the Sun is covered.
- Up to 90% of the Sun is covered.
- Up to 40% of the Sun is covered.
- Eclipse is not visible at all.

**Note:** Percentage values (%) relate to moon coverage of the Sun and depends on location.  
Visibility is weather permitting.

### **Eclipse – Simple Do's and Don'ts...**

Local times shown above do not refer to when the eclipse can be observed from Durban. Instead, they indicate the times when the eclipse begins, is at its max, and ends, somewhere else on earth. Unless an Eclipse is visible to the naked eye, it's of no significance to us awesome Hindus. So Satak (contamination period) is observed only when Eclipse is visible

at the place under discussion.

- An eclipse is an important spiritual event that has lasting adverse effects that are capitalised upon by negative forces like ghosts and the like.
- One needs to take all spiritual precautions especially if the eclipse is visible over where one lives.
- Regular spiritual practice performed throughout the year, helps to reduce the adverse effect of an eclipse. In addition if one performs intense spiritual practice during the eclipse it will be positive, so far as the individual's spiritual growth goes.

## **Practical Do's and Don'ts to counteract or minimise the negative effect of an eclipse.**

Certain inauspicious times before Solar and Lunar Eclipse are known as Satak (contamination period). So during an eclipse there is a heightened amount of black energy flowing around and hence an excess of *Raja-Tama*. (the modes of passion and ignorance). Even if we don't have the sixth sense to perceive it, it's best that we modify our actions during an eclipse to counteract the very subtle (intangible) harmful effects of an eclipse.

### **Do's**

- Perform spiritual practice (like chanting mantras, etc) helps to nullify the effect of the increased *Raja-Tama* and black energy in the environment due to an eclipse.

So if a person is performing intense spiritual practices during an eclipse that person effects from the eclipse is greatly minimised. So accordingly, people who make the effort to do intense spiritual practice during the time of an eclipse will benefit up to 30 % more spiritually.

### **Don'ts**

- **Don't plan important functions:** All actions and thoughts come under the purview of the subtle basic components, i.e. they are either sattvik (mode of goodness), rajasik (mode of passion), tamasik (mode of ignorance) or a combination of them, e.g. rajasik-tamasik. All good and auspicious actions are predominantly sattvik or rajasik-sattvik. As a lot of *Raja-Tama* frequencies are transmitted during the eclipse period, even good actions performed during this period do not yield expected results. Hence it's advisable to avoid all important actions like inaugurations, important business deals etc. during an eclipse period time frame like the one given above.
- **Avoid Raja-Tama activities:** Avoid doing things like sleeping, consuming food, sexual intercourse, oil massage, drinking water, combing hair, brushing teeth, etc as they are *Raja-Tama* predominant and only leave one more vulnerable to getting affected by negative spirits, ghosts and the like.
- **Avoid Eating:** The increase in the subtle basic *Raja-Tama* in the atmosphere during the period of an eclipse affects food as well as the digestive processes. Hence it's advisable to avoid meals during the period of the eclipse. The time period when we should avoid meals depends on the type of eclipse. This is because the amount of sunlight or moonlight reaching Earth depends on the percentage area of the Sun or Moon covered during the eclipse.

The amount of time one should avoid meals during an eclipse:

- Total eclipse                      12 hours prior to the onset of eclipse
- If it is  $\frac{3}{4}$  covered              9 hours
- If  $\frac{1}{2}$  covered                      6 hours
- If  $\frac{1}{4}$                                       3 hours

If during moonrise, the moon is going to be eclipsed then one should not have food in the previous 12 hours. So also, if the sunrise is going to be in a state of eclipse (irrespective of the type of eclipse), then the period of fasting should start 12 hours earlier. This is because various subtle processes are set into motion approximately 12 hours before an eclipse. If the sun or moon sets in a state of eclipse, then one should have meals only on the next day after taking a bath. Small children, the elderly and ill people can observe this period for just 4 and 1/2 hours.

Rituals After An Eclipse:- It's generally advised to discard any cooked food and only freshly cooked food should be consumed after Eclipse – but this may seem rather wasteful. So if you did cook any foods before an eclipse place Kush grass (a.k.a. Kusha/Dharbha) or Tulsi leaves on top on the pot. The food items like wheat, rice, other cereals and pickles which cannot be discarded should be protected by adding Kusha grass or Tulsi leaves. Once eclipse is over one should take a bath and should make offerings at your lamp place to the Lordships or perform some type of charity. Making offerings after Eclipse is considered highly beneficial.

Q:- Can one distribute goodies like biscuits, cakes etc during this time?

A:- Yes, you can, but it's best not to.

Q:- Can we still celebrate Diwali during an eclipse?

A:- No... the above precautions are to be observed.

Q:- Can we visit families etc?

A:- No, within this time the information given above is to be observed.

Q:- Pregnancy and an Eclipse.. What are the do's and don't?

A:- As a pregnant woman is more susceptible to the negative forces due to having a life form in her stomach, that child can be adversely affected by what his/her mother does within this time frame of eclipse. Pregnant women are strictly advised not to venture out during an Eclipse. Due to contamination and malefic effects of Rahu and Ketu (the shadowy planets in Vedic Astrology), the baby might become handicapped or disabled and the probability of miscarriage is increased. Pregnant women are also advised not to cut or stitch any cloth or to do any other similar activities as these activities have similar effects on the baby.

The katha below on how the Eclipse originated is narrated in the Srimad Bhagavatam 8<sup>th</sup> canto chapter 5-10. To read the full katha below please visit this link from the Srimad Bhagavatam. <http://www.srimadbhagavatam.org/canto8/c8-contents.html>

“The devas and the demons assembled on the shore of the milk ocean that lies in the celestial region of the cosmos. The devas and the demons devised a plan to churn the milk ocean to produce the nectar of immortality. They then agreed to share the nectar equally once it was produced.

For the task of churning the milk ocean, the Mandara Mountain was used as the churning rod, and Vasuki, the king of serpents, became the rope for churning. As the churning began, the Mandara Mountain began to sink deep into the ocean, at which time Lord Vishnu incarnated as a great tortoise called Lord Kurma and supported the mountain on His back. With the devas at Vasuki's tail and the demons at his head, they churned the milk ocean for one thousand years.

The churning of the milk ocean first produced a deadly poison, which Lord Shiva drank without being affected. As Lord Shiva drank the poison, a few drops fell from his hands and were licked up by scorpions, snakes, and similar other deadly creatures. After Lord Shiva drank the poison, numerous opulent items were produced. First a Surabhi cow appeared who could yield unlimited quantities of milk. A white horse named Uccaihsrava was then produced, as well as a white elephant named Airavata. Then a valuable gem called the Kaustubha-mani appeared.

Next came the Apsaras, beautiful dancing girls and a host of other wonderful things appeared from the milk ocean. At last the Lord appeared in a form called Dhanvantari, carrying the pot of immortal nectar in His hands. Seeing Lord Dhanvantari with the pot of nectar, both the devas and demons became anxious. The devas, being fearful of what would happen if the demons drank their share of the nectar of immortality, forcibly seized the pot.

Wherever the devas went with the pot of nectar, fierce fighting ensued. In an endeavor to keep the nectar from falling into the hands of the demons, the devas hid it in four places on the earth in Bharat (India) viz. Prayag (Allahabad), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nasik. At each of the hiding places, a drop of immortal nectar spilled from the pot and landed on the earth. These four places since then have acquired mystical powers.

Eventually, the demons overpowered the devas and took possession of the nectar of immortality. To rescue the devas from the hands of fate, Lord Vishnu incarnated as a beautiful woman, Mohini-murti, and approached the demons. When the demons saw the charming beauty of Mohini-murti, they lost all composure. Seeing Her slender hips, raised breasts, and pleasing smile, the demons completely forgot about drinking the nectar of immortality. While Her beauty thus bewildered the demons, Mohini-murti seized the nectar and returned it to the devas, who drank it immediately. But Rahu had disguised himself as a deva. The Sun (Suryadev) and the Moon (Chandradev) pointed this out to Mohini Devi who immediately slashed off the demon's head. Since the nectar had by then already reached up to the neck, he did not die. Thus the head came to be known as Rahu and the body as Ketu. To avenge this betrayal, Rahu and Ketu periodically eclipse the sun and the moon."

Astronomically speaking, when the Sun, the Moon and the Earth are all in line, with the Moon or the Earth at the centre, a solar or lunar eclipse takes place respectively.

At the time of the eclipse, many people, especially of Indian descent, bathe in the sacred rivers like River Ganga. They perform charitable acts and donate daan like cows, grains, gold and so forth. The day after the eclipse they feed the poor, the Brahmins and the Sadhus. After the eclipse they clean their houses, vessels, etc., and take a bath before they start cooking.

One should not consume food for the duration of the eclipse. When the eclipse begins, the food should, by then, have been digested. One should consume food only after seeing the sun or the moon free from the eclipse. When the clear sun or the moon is not seen before sunset or sunrise, in the case of the solar and lunar eclipse respectively, food can be taken only after the sun or the moon is seen the next day.

Pregnant women should not see the sun or the moon during the time of the eclipse. If they do the child born may have some kind of defect. The child may be born deaf, dumb or blind. Householders are forbidden from sexual intercourse on the day of the eclipse, for the same reason.

At this time one should take great care in avoiding bleeding, scorpion stings, etc. These have disastrous results. Even an earthworm has a poisonous effect when it bites one during an eclipse.

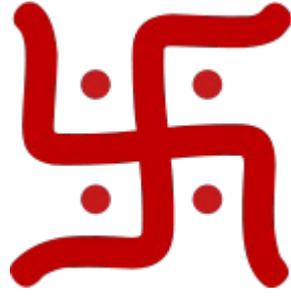
Those who perform Japa at the time of the eclipse derive great benefits. The effect of Japa and Sankirtana (the congregational chanting of mantras with other devotees of the Lord) during the eclipse contributes towards relieving the suffering of humanity and also of the planets. These people receive the blessings of all the devas and Shree Krsna Himself. They attain perfection quickly.

Now in these “so called modern times” we hear comments like “Oh this eclipse thing is so psychosomatic, it’s all myths and legends etc. Why do we have to follow it so strictly?” Well naturally to the primitive mind any sophisticated and advanced knowledge would be indistinguishable from the masses and be naturally scorned upon. Being confronted with these ideas someone inquired: “Can you prove that these things happen?” “Can anyone prove that they don’t?”, was the reply. A compromise can be reached by the adage: “for one who believes, no proof is required; and for the one who does not believe, no proof exists”. From my experience I have seen that those who had this non-believing attitude really suffered later and esp. expecting mothers who didn’t want to strictly observe the eclipse and it ended disastrously for them. Remember that the little intellect cannot understand many things in this universe. Hence, have faith in the words of sastras and sages.

Ignorance has eclipsed knowledge. However, this eclipse will disappear. You must learn to shine in life with knowledge. The more you study and learn, the more humble it makes you because then you realize how little we know. This is the spiritual significance of the eclipse.

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