

# Interesting Lunar Events February 16, 18 and 19, 2024

## By Greg Shanos

### Friday, Feb. 16: See the Lunar X and V



*The Lunar X, a prominent X-shaped pattern, appears when the rims of the craters Purbach, la Caille, and Blanchinus are illuminated from a particular angle of sunlight. Look for it beside the terminator about one-third of the way up from the southern pole of the moon. The Lunar V forms along the northern span of the terminator near the crater Ukert. The features will begin to develop by about 5:30 p.m. EST (or 22:30 GMT) on Friday, Feb. 16. (Image credit: Chris Vaughan/Starry Night)*

Several times a year, small claire-obscure effect features on the moon called the Lunar X and the Lunar V become visible in strong binoculars and backyard telescopes for a few hours near the moon's first quarter phase.

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The Lunar V forms along the northern span of the terminator near the crater Ukert. The features will begin to develop by about 5:30 p.m. EST (or 22:30 GMT) on Friday, Feb. 16. At that time the moon will be shining in a twilight sky in easterly time zones in the Americas and in a bright sky in western time zones. The patterns will peak in intensity about 90 minutes later and then disappear by about 8:30 p.m. EST or 5:30 p.m. PST, which converts to 01:30 GMT on Saturday. Viewing the moon through polarized glasses in daytime will increase the image contrast.

## Sunday, Feb. 18: Crater Clavius (all night)



*On Sunday evening, Feb. 18, the terminator on the gibbous moon will fall just to the west of the large and distinctive crater Clavius, which is located near the moon's southern pole. (Image credit: Chris Vaughan/Starry Night)*

On Sunday evening, Feb. 18, the terminator on the gibbous moon will fall just to the west of the large and distinctive crater Clavius, which is located near the Moon's southern pole. Binoculars or a backyard telescope will reveal a curved chain of craters, each descending in diameter, inside Clavius.

More magnification will show that its rim is degraded and polygonal in shape. A lunar base inside the crater was featured in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey.

## Monday, Feb. 19: Blue Mare Tranquillitatis (all night)



*The maria, Latin for "seas", are the large, dark regions visible on the moon's near side. (Image credit: Chris Vaughan/Starry Night)*

The maria, Latin for "seas", are the large, dark regions visible on the Moon's near side. They are basins excavated by major impactors early in the moon's geologic history and later infilled with dark basaltic rock that upwelled from the interior of the moon.

Several maria link together to form a curving chain across the northern half of the moon's near-side. Mare Tranquillitatis, where humankind first walked upon the moon, is the large, round mare in the center of the chain. Sharp eyes might detect that this mare is darker and bluer than the others, due to enrichment in the mineral titanium.