

## **The Partial Lunar Eclipse of 28th August 2026**

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### **Eclipses of the Sun and Moon**

Hopefully some of you reading this will have been able to view the partial solar eclipse of 12<sup>th</sup> August using safe means such as approved eclipse glasses, or indirect means of observing such as projecting the Sun's image onto a screen using a small hole in a piece of card.

What many people don't realise is that eclipses often occur in pairs. A solar eclipse is either followed half a lunar cycle (about 2 weeks) later by a lunar eclipse, or else it is the opposite way round with a lunar eclipse first then a solar.

The former is exactly what is happening this month, August 2026. What is particularly helpful for people in the UK this month is that both eclipses are theoretically visible from these isles.

In a solar eclipse, the Moon passes in front of the Sun, blocking out part or all of the Sun's light. Therefore the Moon's shadow falls upon part of the Earth. This can only occur at New Moon when the Sun, Moon and Earth are in a near straight line in that order

In a lunar eclipse, the shadow of the Earth falls upon the Moon. This can only occur at Full Moon, when the Sun, Earth and Moon are in a near straight line in that order.

### **The Lunar Eclipse of 28<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

I suspect that most people will miss this event as it occurs at a very unsocial time of night, the early hours of Friday 28<sup>th</sup> August. Also, at the maximum eclipse (about 93% of the Moon's diameter obscured), the Moon will be low down in the south west at a time when the sky is brightening with approaching dawn.

Here's what you might see if it is a clear night:

The Full Moon begins to enter the darkest part of Earth's shadow (the umbra) around 3.34am. As this time approaches you may notice part of the edge of the Moon darkening. The shadow gradually encroaches across the Moon and maximum shadow extent is reached around 5.12am, before it starts to recede. The Moon will go below the horizon from the UK before the eclipse is finished, the Moon leaving the umbra around 6.52am. Observers further west, such as in parts of North and South America, may get a better view or even see the whole eclipse.

The image below was taken in 1996 during the partial stage of a total lunar eclipse.



(Photo taken in 1996 by Nick Hart)

The eclipse of 28<sup>th</sup> August is not total, but this photo of the partial stage gives an idea of what the Moon will look like on that night a little while before maximum eclipse. Note that the shadowed part of the Moon is still visible. This is because sunlight is refracted (bent) by the Earth's atmosphere, so some light still gets through to the Moon. This light will be red, as the atmosphere scatters blue light, the same reason that the Sun sometimes appears orange or red at sunset or sunrise.

Let's hope for clear skies in the early morning of 28<sup>th</sup> August!

### **Further information**

<https://www.timeanddate.com/eclipse/lunar/2026-august-28>

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/space-astronomy/partial-lunar-eclipse-on-28-august-2026-how-see-it>