

Day becomes night on August 21

America has a front-row seat to this month's solar eclipse

THE SUN, MOON AND EARTH WILL PERFECTLY ALIGN ON August 21, casting a dark moon shadow across the U.S., and bringing an eerie nightfall in the middle of the day. Birds will fly home to roost, spiders will dismantle their webs and crickets will chirp as if it were night. Temperatures will drop slightly. "There's a range of different responses, from 'Oh, no, the sun is going away!' to realizing that this is a celestial event of awe," says NASA scientist Alexa Halford.

Though solar eclipses occur on average every 18 months, they might happen over an ocean or remote region, and most populated areas only experience them every 375 years. The total eclipse path will stretch 70 miles wide and will be partially visible in all 50 states. The last total solar eclipse to occur exclusively in the U.S. was in 1778.—Jess swanson eclipse 2017.nasa.gov



The Moon or Martians?

On August 21, you can have both in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Besides the solar eclipse, the day also marks the 62nd anniversary of one of America's most famous alien sightings. In 1955, a local family said aliens landed in their inspired Steven Spielberg's E.T. The sighting is celebrated at the annual "Little Green Men" Days Festival (Aug. 18-21), featuring a 38-foot-wide "flying saucer" sculpture contest. Brooke Jung, Hopkinsville's solar eclipse visitors show up early, to "select the best seats on Earth" to view the eclipse.

