**What's Up - March 2021**

**Title:**

What's Up: March 2021 Skywatching Tips from NASA

**YouTube Tease (short description, i.e., "Show Less")***[~50 words; 300-350 characters****]*:**

What are some skywatching highlights in March 2021? Look for Mars close to the Pleiades in the first couple of weeks of March. Then wake up early to observe the giant planets Jupiter and Saturn, which return as morning planets this month.

Additional information about topics covered in this episode of What's Up, along with still images from the video, and the video transcript, are available at [https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/whats-up-skywatching-tips-from-nasa](https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/whats-up-skywatching-tips-from-nasa/).

Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

**Keywords:**

NASA, JPL, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, What's Up, Whats Up, WhatsUp, Mars, Perseverance, Pleiades, star cluster, Betelgeuse, red giant, Jupiter, Saturn, Great Conjunction, Moon, Moon phases, observing, stargazing, star gazing, skywatching, skywatching for beginners, sky chart, star chart, star party, space, astronomy, planets, stars, science, family, fun, free, night, STEM

**Transcript:**

What's Up for March? Mars and friends in the evening, and a brilliant pair of planets returns...

In the first week or so of March, you'll find Mars near the Pleiades star cluster high in the west in the few hours after sunset. NASA's Perseverance rover successfully landed on Mars on February 18th! And in addition to this latest surface explorer, orbiters from two other nations arrived in orbit around the Red Planet last month, making 2021 a truly international year of Mars exploration.

You may also notice a couple of other reddish objects forming a line with Mars – that is, the stars Aldebaran, which forms the angry eye of Taurus the bull, and Betelgeuse, the shoulder of Orion. And speaking of Betelgeuse, astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope and other observatories have determined the cause of the star's dimming last year was likely due to a cloud of dust ejected by the aging red giant. And while scientists think the star has moved into burning helium, instead of hydrogen, in its core, they think it's unlikely to explode in a supernova anytime soon.

Hopefully you managed to catch a glimpse of Jupiter and Saturn as they came ultra-close in their Great Conjunction in December. Not long after this, the two planets left the evening sky as they passed behind the Sun as seen from Earth. Well now the pair is back, this time as morning planets. In the second half of March, Jupiter and Saturn re-emerge as a bright pair in the pre-dawn sky. They won't be as close as in December, but they're still an absolute joy to observe. So if you're up early, grab a warm drink step outside to commune with the largest planets in our solar system.

Here are the phases of the Moon for March. You can catch up on all of NASA's missions to explore the solar system and beyond at nasa.gov. I'm Preston Dyches from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and that's What's Up for this month.