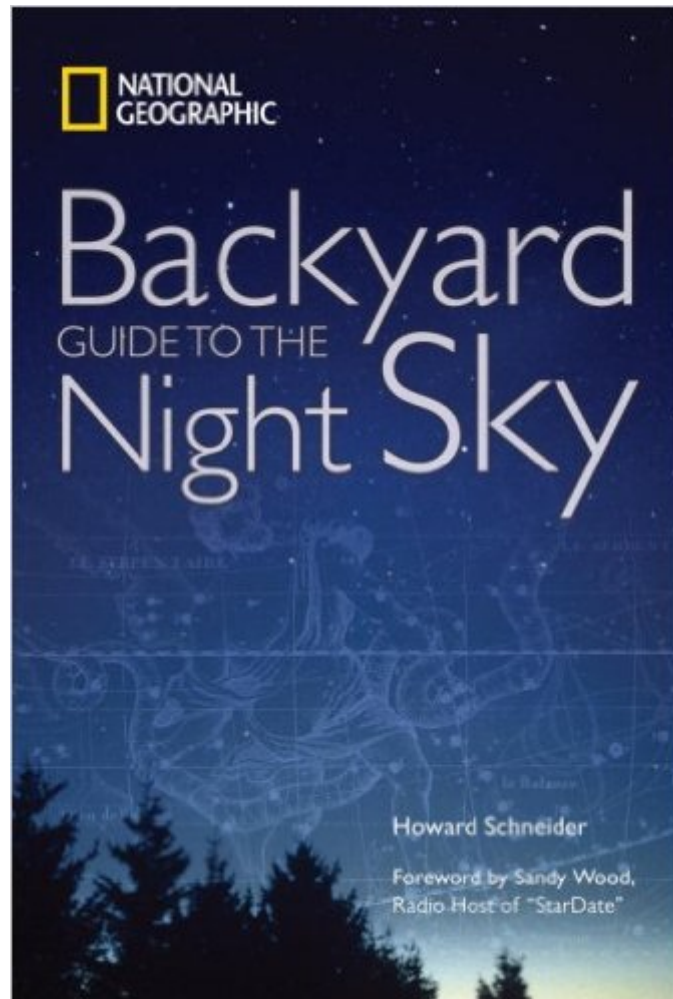


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National Geographic Backyard Guide To The Night Sky



Synopsis

Stargazing's too much fun to leave to astronomers, but often we're blinded by science's dry facts can easily turn enchantment into a chore. We just want to lie down, look up, and understand the heavens above. The National Geographic Backyard Guide to the Night Sky shows us how. Authors Howard Schneider and Patricia Daniels take an expert but easygoing approach that doesn't overwhelm; it invites. Ten chapters cover everything a beginning stargazer will need to know, from understanding the phases of the moon to picking Mars out of a planetary lineup to identifying the kinds of stars twinkling in the constellations. Throughout the book, star charts and tables present key facts in an easy-to-understand format, sidebars and fact boxes present illuminating anecdotes and fun facts to sweep us swiftly into the stardust, and by the time we realize we've been schooled in solid science we're too engrossed to object. Along with practical advice and hands-on tips to improve observation techniques, the guide includes an appendix full of resources; from books and web sites to lists of astronomy clubs and associations to local planetariums and museums. This indispensable book guides us on a new path into the night sky, truly one of the greatest shows on Earth.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I teach the occasional astronomy class at my local community college, in addition to being an avid amateur astronomer -- I suppose that being paid to teach astronomy could afford me the honor of being called a professional astronomer, but knowing what I don't know in the field, I shall resist any such temptation. Besides, astronomy is perhaps the last great scientific area where to be an

amateur is still a role respected by the field at large, for many discoveries (from comets and asteroids to recent supernovae images by the under-16 set) come from those whose technical knowledge may not be at the differential equation level, but whose love of the heavens keeps them ever interested. My goal as a teacher is to try to bring some of that love together with more systematic knowledge, and part of that is getting people to look up in the sky, and to understand what it is they are seeing when they do. To that end, this 'Backyard Guide to the Night Sky' is an excellent resource. A question that I ask my students is this - what is the number one instrument for astronomy. Answer: your eyes. Binoculars, telescopes, and all other things come in later, but simply looking up and learning does wonders. This book opens up the sky to those who don't have hundreds or thousands of dollars to spend on fancy equipment. On the other hand, this book is certainly useful for those who have such equipment - I have found in my experience that telescopes are often like home fitness equipment: there is much excitement and good intention when purchased, but within a very short time, the expensive things are gathering dust in a corner, or relegated to a closet, 'for when we have time.' One needn't plan extensive star parties or buy expensive equipment to enjoy the sky.

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