

# STARGAZING GUIDE

Ireland's rural West Coast offers some of the darkest skies in Europe, perfect for stargazing.

Whether you're a novice or looking for a family-friendly activity, stargazing provides a unique connection to space and our universe.



# STARGAZING TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

**Find a Dark Sky Location:** Choose any rural area away from artificial lights.

**Drinks:** A thermos with a warm drink helps on cold nights.

**Check the Weather/ Moon Phase:** Aim for clear, cloud-free nights for the best experience.

**Dress warmly!** Cold feet can ruin stargazing. Nights can get chilly, so layer up. In some areas, insect repellent might also be needed.



**Best Times:** Moonless nights offer optimal visibility. New moon phases are ideal.

**Eye Adjustment:** Allow 15-20 min for your eyes to fully adjust to the dark.

**Use Red-Light:** It preserves night vision, unlike bright white light.

**Identify Stars:** Use apps like Sky Guide or printed star maps to locate constellations.

**Safety and Respect:** Be mindful of wildlife.



# ASTROPHOTOGRAPHY FOR BEGINNERS (SMARTPHONES)

**Use Night Mode:** Both iPhone and Android cameras have built-in night modes to enhance low-light images.

**Use a Tripod:** A stable phone or tripod will prevent blurs caused by long exposure times.

**Adjust Camera Settings:** Manually control ISO and exposure for clearer night shots. Lower ISO helps reduce noise, and a longer exposure captures fainter stars.



**Astrophotography Apps:** Try apps like NightCap (iOS) or Camera FV-5 (Android) for enhanced control.

**Plan Your Shots:** Apps like PhotoPills can help plan shots of celestial events, from the Milky Way to meteor showers.

**Experiment with Time-Lapse:** Time-lapse captures the movement of stars across the sky, creating stunning sequences.

# BASIC EQUIPMENT FOR STARGAZING

## **Binoculars**

Start with 7x50 binoculars, an affordable and portable way to enhance your view.

## **Telescope for Beginners**

When ready, a small or refractor telescope offers great value and clarity for beginners.

## **Red-Light Torch**

Preserve night vision by using red-light torches for reading star maps.



# UNDER THE STARS, WE WONDER

Stargazing offers a magical way to explore the universe from the comfort of rural Ireland.

Whether you're a family, a beginner, or a business engaging in tourism, the night sky provides endless wonder. Use this guide to start your celestial adventure today.



[www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie](http://www.joycecountrygeoparkproject.ie)

Includes AI imagery. Photographer: Felix Sproll



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