Aurora 2027

THE AMAZING NORTHERN LIGHTS

★ ★ ★

SPECIAL FEATURE

Solar Cycle Explained

★ ★ ★

★ INSIDE ★

GETTING *the* SHOT

PHOTOGRAPHERS SHARE THEIR STORIES

AN ALASKA PHOTOGRAPHERS' CALENDAR

Photo by Kris Luckenbach

Donnelly Creek State Recreation Site, Alaska

Canon EOS R6, Canon RF 15-35mm f/2.8, ISO 5000, f/2.8, 8 secs, taken in February

Kris Luckenbach

GETTING *the* SHOT

Despite the freezing winter temperatures, certain creeks in northern Alaska remain partly open, allowing moving water to flow and provide a mirror-like reflection in such a harsh environment. A close friend and I were out exploring compositions just south of Delta Junction when we noticed this particular creek still running clear. With no wind disturbing the surface, we decided to wait until nightfall in hopes of the sky remaining clear. As darkness blanketed the sky, so did something magical. The aurora borealis began to appear faintly, with green slowly drifting further over the horizon. Patiently, I framed what I felt was the perfect composition, wishing the aurora would drift into that exact frame. Fortunately, within only a few minutes, the lights gracefully danced into position, allowing me to capture this very photograph.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2
3	4	5	6	7 Eastern Orthodox Christmas, New moon ●	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Eastern Orthodox New Year	15	16
17	18 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.	19	20	21	22 Full moon ○	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

DECEMBER 2026

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

FEBRUARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

2027 JANUARY

Photo by John Hyde

Dobson Landing, Juneau, Alaska

Sony ILCE-7RM4, Sony 14mm f/1.8 lens,
ISO 2000, f/1.8, 2.0 secs, taken in December

John Hyde

GETTING *the* SHOT

Here in Southeast Alaska, aurora photography can be a challenge. Even when the forecasts show great potential it's often cloudy. But when clear skies and a good aurora display have been forecast, it's a good time to take an afternoon nap so you can stay up all night! This photograph was taken on New Year's Eve at about midnight and the peak lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The strength, duration, and timing depend on so many metrics the best strategy is to devote as much time as you can in order to maximize your chances of seeing an awe inspiring show. There have been times when I was just about to give up after hours of waiting and then suddenly everything came together without any warning.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2 Marmot Day (Alaska)	3	4	5	6 Chinese New Year New moon ●
7 Ramadan Begins	8	9	10 Ash Wednesday	11	12 Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 PRESIDENTS' DAY	16 Elizabeth Peratrovich Day (Alaska)	17	18	19	20 Lunar Eclipse Full moon ❍
21	22 George Washington (1732-1799)	23	24	25	26 Heritage Day (Yukon Territory)	27
28	1	2	3	4	5	6

JANUARY

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

MARCH

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

2027 FEBRUARY

Photo by Myron Wright

Knik River Public Use Area, Alaska

Nikon D850, Nikkor 14-24mm f/2.8, ISO 3200, f/2.8, 1 sec, taken in December

Myron Wright

GETTING *the* SHOT

On the last day of 2024 I received a robo-call from the aurora forecast service that I subscribe to. The forecast predicted a high KP level of auroral activity in our region. Since I am based in south Anchorage, I often drive to east Turnagain Arm to view the night sky to the northeast. But alas, that area was clouded in according to weather satellites. I decided to proceed north and scout an alternate location. In this case I had seen many excellent aurora photos taken by others along the Knik River, so that became a location for the rest of the evening. My wife and I spent three hours at this spot located west of the headwaters of the Knik River in complete awe of the displays that mesmerized us. Red aurora is unusual and from what I have witnessed, usually only occuring during the peak of the eleven-year solar cycle. In this case, being there for New Year's Eve was a gift from above and the best way to enter the new year!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	1	2	3	4	5	6 Susan Butcher Day (Alaska)
7	8 Ramadan ends New moon ●	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Saving Time begins	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Spring Equinox
21 Palm Sunday	22 Full moon ❍	23	24	25	26 Good Friday	27
28 Easter	29 Vietnam Veterans' Day (Alaska) Seward's Day (Alaska)	30	31	1	2	3

FEBRUARY

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

APRIL

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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

2027 MARCH

Photo by Matthew Quaid

Chugach State Park, Alaska

Canon EOS 6D, Irix 15mm f/2.4 Firefly, ISO 5000, f/2.8, 8 secs, taken in March

Matthew Quaid

GETTING *the* SHOT

I headed down Eagle River Valley toward Chugach State Park after the rest of the family was asleep in pursuit of the forecasted aurora and clear skies. After getting away from the city lights, I started to notice the aurora showing up and decided to park the vehicle and hike off into the woods until I found a clearing. I settled on this spot just off the river and watched the spectacular auroral rays pulsating toward earth directly overhead as my camera fired off shots, all while hearing a pack of coyotes howling a short distance away. The moment sent chills down my spine with the visual and auditory effects, just another only-in-Alaska-moment in the books.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6 New moon ●	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 U.S. tax returns due	16	17
18	19	20 Full moon ❍	21 Passover begins	22 Earth Day	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 Passover ends	30 Arbor Day	1

MARCH

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

MAY

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

2027

APRIL

Photo by Steven Miley

Tanana River, Alaska

Sony a7iii, Sony FE 12-24mm f/2.8, ISO 1600, f/2.8, 5 secs, taken in January

Steven Miley

GETTING *the* SHOT

Before midnight in Alaska on New Year's Eve 2024, a geomagnetic storm began to set in over Earth. The aurora started dancing early that night while people shot fireworks off around my hometown of Delta Junction. The storm continued to intensify, and after the year rolled over to 2025 and the fireworks had begun to wane, I caught this incredible curtain looking south over the Tanana River with the Alaska Range on the horizon. The red color was the brightest I've seen in over a decade of photographing the aurora and so captivating I temporarily forgot how painfully numb my fingers were while operating my camera in the -15°F cold.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2 Eastern Orthodox Easter	3	4	5 Cinco de Mayo	6 New moon ●	7	8
9 Mother's Day	10	11	12	13	14	15 Armed Forces Day
16	17 Arbor Day (Alaska)	18	19	20 Full moon ❍	21	22
23	24 Victoria Day (Canada)	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 MEMORIAL DAY					

APRIL

			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

JUNE

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

2027
MAY

Photo by Tom Bol

Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area, Alaska

Nikon Z9, Nikkor Z 14-24mm f/2.8, ISO 1250, f/2.8, 2.5 secs, taken in December

Tom Bol

GETTING *the* SHOT

We were returning from photographing aurora along the Dalton Highway near Coldfoot. We had seen incredible displays up north, generally very late at night. As we were returning to Fairbanks the aurora forecast looked promising for early evening, so we turned off the Elliot Highway towards Olnes Pond in the Lower Chatanika State Recreation Area. I like trees to contrast with aurora displays, and there is a tall forest along this road. Right as we found a nice location the display started pulsating in a circle above our car. I quickly set up for the shot using my 14-24mm lens. The green circular oval was so large I needed every bit of 14mm to capture the entire display. It was just 6pm in the evening, so I thought we would have great displays all night. But it turned out this was the best aurora of the evening.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2	3	4 New moon ●	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Flag Day	15	16	17	18 EMANCIPATION DAY (Juneteenth) observed Full moon ❍	19 EMANCIPATION DAY (Juneteenth)
20 Fathers' Day	21 Summer Solstice	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	1	2	3

MAY

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

JULY

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

2027 JUNE

Photo by Ayumi Bakken

Ester Dome, Fairbanks, Alaska

Canon EOS 5D MkIII, Sigma 14-24mm f/2.8 DG HSM, ISO 5000, f/2.8, 8 secs, taken in October

Ayumi Bakken

GETTING *the* SHOT

In early October 2024, an X7-class solar flare was recorded, followed two days later by an X9-class event—the strongest in seven years. As the geomagnetic storm associated with these flares developed, I monitored solar wind data, anticipating intense auroral activity. One evening, I decided it was time to head out. I ran up the hill to a spot along Murphy Dome Road, overlooking Ester Dome. Shortly after sunset, the aurora was already visible. The display was overwhelming — I kept shooting, hardly able to believe what appeared on my camera's display: frame after frame of impossibly vivid pinks. Another curtain extended toward the south, blending with the twilight and gradually filling the sky. A bright arc grew above Ester Dome, intersecting with skinny fish scale clouds stretched across the ridge. The aurora expanded rapidly across the entire sky, accelerating until a breakup occurred. I had never witnessed such a dramatic and extraordinary display before.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	1 Canada Day (Canada)	2	3 New moon ●
4 INDEPENDENCE DAY	5 INDEPENDENCE DAY (Observed)	6	7	8	9 Alaska Flag Day	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 Full moon ❍	19	20	21	22	23	24 Ted Stevens Day (Alaska)
25 Parents' Day	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

AUGUST

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

2027 JULY

Photo by Carl Johnson

Brooks Range, Alaska

Nikon Z9, Nikkor Z 14-24mm f/2.8, ISO 6400, f/2.8, 10 secs, taken in September

Carl Johnson

Getting *the* Shot

Chasing the aurora in the northern arctic of Alaska is quite a different experience. The aurora starts overhead and slowly shifts southward. To keep photographing it, you also need to shift with it. On this night, as the aurora crept slowly south, it passed right across the front of an autumn Milky Way display. I prefer the slower, dimmer aurora at times like this to allow for the longer exposure necessary to include the Milky Way.

And while I often enjoy a little moonlight to add detail to the landscape, I appreciated the dark silhouettes of the trees and the mountains against the sky's color.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Civic Day (Canada) New moon ●	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Discovery Day (Yukon Territory) Lunar Eclipse Full moon ❍	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 New moon ●	1	2	3	4

JULY

				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER

				1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

2027 August

Photo by Tom Walker

Tanana Hills, Tanana Valley State Forest, Alaska

Nikon D850, Nikkor 17-35mm f/2.8, ISO 3200, f/2.8, 6 secs, taken in September

Tom Walker

Getting *the* Shot

Interior weather the last two years has been overcast and rainy while September is almost always a good month for auroras. The forecast called for three clear days north of the Yukon River, so I loaded up my camper and set out. The first day north of the Yukon was cloudy so I ended up driving into the Brooks Range on the Dalton Highway. The second night out, I stopped on the edge of two small ponds and waited for the broken clouds to disperse. This image was the result, and only one of two clear nights in a week.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1 Carrington Event 1859	2	3	4
5	6 LABOR DAY	7	8	9	10 Rosh Hashanah begins	11
12 Grandparents' Day	13	14	15 Full moon ○	16	17	18
19	20	21	22 Autumn Equinox	23	24	25
26	27	28	29 New moon ●	30	1	2

AUGUST

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

OCTOBER

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

2027 September

Photo by Aurora Dora

Knik River Public Use Area, Alaska

Canon EOS R5, Venus Laowa 10mm f/2.8, ISO 3200, f/2.8, 1.6 secs, taken in October

Aurora Dora

GETTING *the* SHOT

On the night of October 10, 2024, a powerful geomagnetic storm created a stunning aurora borealis that lit up North America. In Alaska, it was breathtaking!

Talkeetna was covered by clouds, and I wasn't going to miss capturing photos of this massive solar storm. I had a location in mind to photograph near Palmer, so I decided to head that way. I knew I had a night ahead of me following the auroras and the gaps in the clouds from Talkeetna to the lower Valley and then back. I arrived in Palmer near sunset, and even though it wasn't dark yet, I could already see the auroras. Just after sunset, I photographed this massive corona above Pioneer Peak, looking like an explosion of colors between green and purple. It was impressive to see Pioneer Peak dwarfed by the northern lights. Even though the skies weren't completely clear, the clouds beautifully complemented the G4 geomagnetic storm, creating contrast and adding depth to the scene.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	1 Rosh Hashanah begins	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 Yom Kippur	11 Thanksgiving (Canada) COLUMBUS DAY Indigenous People's Day (Alaska)	12	13	14	15 Full moon ❍	16
17	18 Alaska Day	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29 New moon ●	30
31 Halloween						

SEPTEMBER

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

NOVEMBER

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

2027

OCTOBER

Photo by Todd Salat

Brooks Range, Alaska

Nikon D850, Sigma 14mm f/1.8, ISO 1600, f/2.2, 3 secs, taken in October

Todd Salat

GETTING *the* SHOT

Early morning aurora rays resonate over the Brooks Range of Northern Alaska just before dawn on October 14, 2022.

Right when the night was almost over, and I was just chillin' out and relaxing ~ Chillaxing ~ while tending to my campfire and listening to the slushy ice pans float down the river, this incredibly well-defined aurora curtain shimmered out of nowhere right over moonlit Sukakpak Mountain at 6 am. Yes, 6 am!

The tall purple rays illuminating Earth's magnetic field lines are the result of "resonance scattering" - a rare process that occurs when dawn's early sunlight strikes high-altitude aurora photons and turbo-boosts them into the violet end of the color spectrum. I clearly remember the glowy feeling and am incredibly thankful to have witnessed this unique alignment of water-mountain-moon and purple dawn auroras.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7 Daylight Saving Time ends	8	9	10	11 VETERAN'S DAY Remembrance Day (Canada)	12	13 Full moon ❍
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 THANKSGIVING	26	27 New moon ●
28	29	30	1	2	3	4

Order next year's Aurora calendar today at GreatlandGraphics.com

OCTOBER

					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

DECEMBER

			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

2027

NOVEMBER

Photo by Shane Parker

Imaiqsaun Cemetery, Utqiaġvik, Alaska

Nikon Z6, Tamron 15-30mm f/2.8, ISO 1600, f/2.8, 4 secs, taken in January

Shane Parker

GETTING *the* SHOT

From the top of the world in Utqiaġvik, AK, this is the resting place of a remote Alaskan village, a community that endured the unforgiving cold, long winters, and the isolation of the arctic frontier. For centuries, the people here lived with the rhythm of the land and surviving where few dared to settle. The snow-blanketed cemetery rests those now at peace under a sky alive with the aurora borealis. The northern lights in this moment are more than a spectacle - they are the sky's cosmic dance of remembrance. This cold, tranquil night, I braved the biting cold to capture this scene. The silence was so profound that the crackle of the aurora seemed audible. I was caught in the sacred meeting of earth, memory, and sky.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day	8	9	10	11
12	13 Full moon ❍	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 Winter Solstice	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Hanukkah begins	25 CHRISTMAS DAY
26 Boxing Day (Canada)	27 New moon ●	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	1

NOVEMBER

	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

JANUARY 2028

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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
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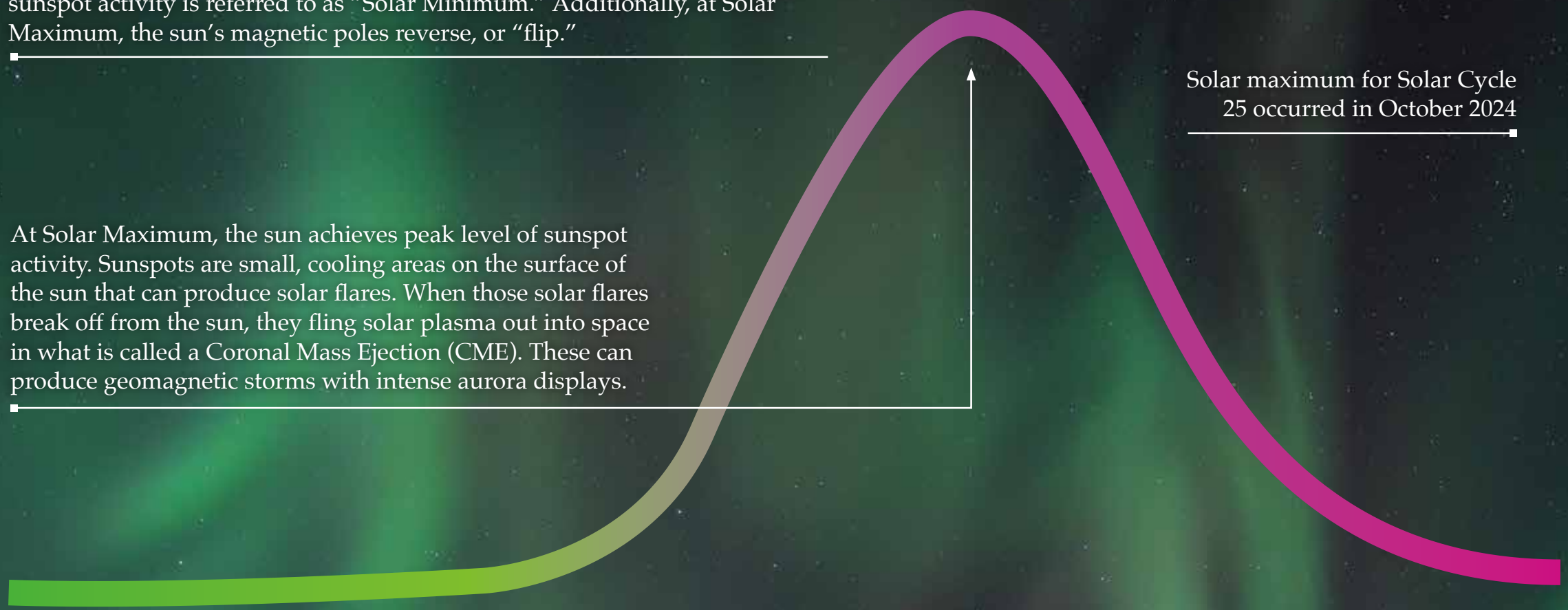
2027

DECEMBER

SOLAR CYCLE EXPLAINED

The sun goes through a roughly 11-year cycle where the level of magnetic activity in the sun corresponds to the level of sunspot activity. Peak sunspot activity is referred to as “Solar Maximum,” while the lowest period of sunspot activity is referred to as “Solar Minimum.” Additionally, at Solar Maximum, the sun’s magnetic poles reverse, or “flip.”

At Solar Maximum, the sun achieves peak level of sunspot activity. Sunspots are small, cooling areas on the surface of the sun that can produce solar flares. When those solar flares break off from the sun, they fling solar plasma out into space in what is called a Coronal Mass Ejection (CME). These can produce geomagnetic storms with intense aurora displays.



At Solar Minimum, sunspots are very rare. The sun can experience days or even weeks with no sunspots at all. However, it is during this time that Coronal Holes increase in both size and frequency. Coronal Holes will shoot high speed solar wind streams out into space. These coronal hole high speed streams (CHHSS) can also cause geomagnetic storms that produce active aurora displays.

Solar Cycle 25

Solar maximum for Solar Cycle 25 occurred in October 2024

The next Solar Minimum is estimated to be 2030.

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY

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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

MARCH

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APRIL

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MAY

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28	29	30	31			

JUNE

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JULY

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

OCTOBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

NOVEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

DECEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

2028

photo by Carl Johnson

Aurora 2027 The Amazing Northern Lights Calendar

Donnelly Creek, AK — Kris Luckenbach

Dobson Landing, AK — John Hyde

Knik River, AK — Myron Wright

Chugach State Park, AK — Matthew Quaid

Tanana River, AK — Steven Miley

Lower Chatanika, AK — Tom Bol

Ester Dome, Fairbanks, AK — Ayumi Bakken

Brooks Range, AK — Carl Johnson

Tanana Hills, AK — Tom Walker

Knik River, AK — Aurora Dora

Brooks Range, AK — Todd Salat

Utqiaġvik, AK — Shane Parker

Alaska's Aurora Photographers

Each year we publish the best images from Alaska's top aurora photographers in this Alaskan-produced calendar. They spend hours under the shimmering aurora-filled night skies to bring you outstanding images of this amazing night sky phenomenon. See our full line of award-winning calendars, books, and distinctive Alaska art at **GreatlandGraphics.com**.

INSIDE

- 12 feature photos from Alaska's top aurora photographers including camera and lens settings
- Photographers share the story behind the photo and reveal how they "Got the Shot"
- **Special Feature:** Solar Cycle Explained
- Photo location map

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