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The Mini Page

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Moon and Sun Star In a Show

Solar Eclipse on February 26

Big Show

When the sun gets up on the morning of February 26, it's got something to do.

Along with the moon, it will put on one of the greatest shows above the earth.

It's called a solar eclipse. Solar eclipses happen about every six months someplace above the world.

But they don't happen above the U.S. very often.

In fact, there won't be another total eclipse in our sky until August 21, 2017.

Total Eclipse



A solar eclipse happens when the moon passes between the earth and the sun. The moon hides the sun and makes a shadow on earth.

Soon scientists and other interested people will be going to parts of the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and North Dakota.

This is where they can observe a total eclipse. They will be able to see the moon's shadow completely hide the sun from view.

They will be in the path of totality. This is a path about 175 miles across. It will stretch into Canada, too.

It takes about three hours for the moon to pass across the sun.

But the sun is blocked out completely for only about two to three minutes in the middle of the eclipse.

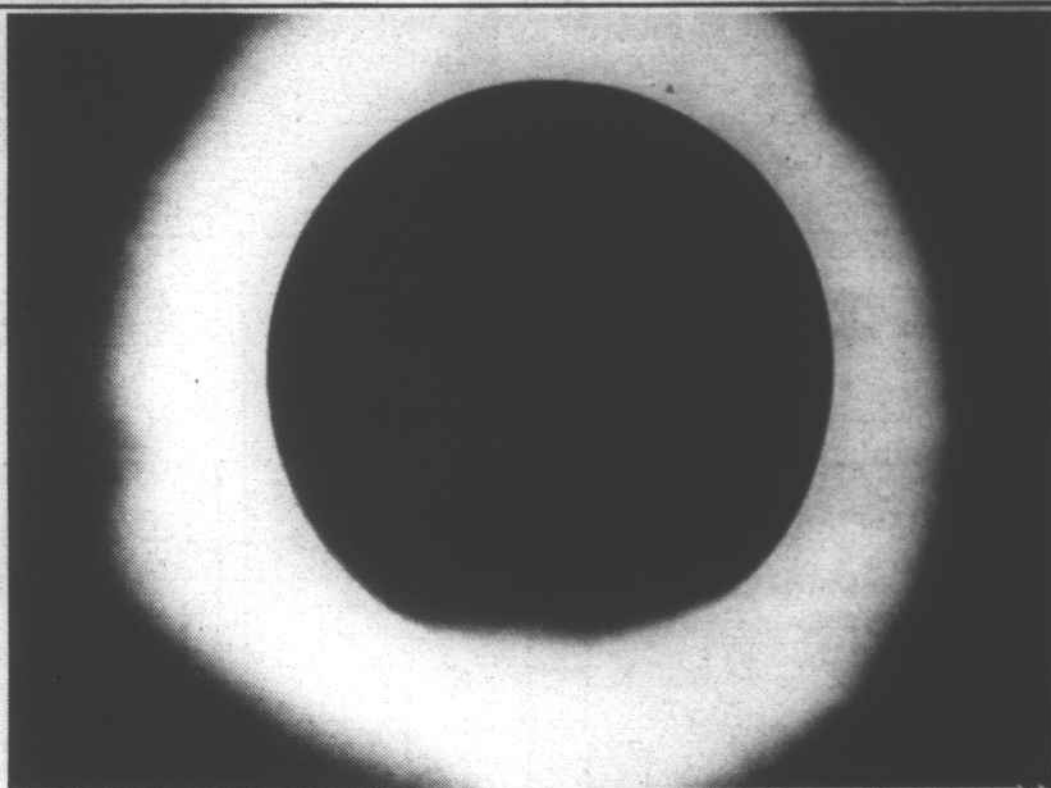


Photo courtesy NASA

This is how a total eclipse looks with the moon hiding the sun. See the halo.

What's it like?

Experts tell us that the skies become dark. Cows and chickens will probably get ready for the night. Some stars will come out. It will get colder.

The sun is a big ball of glowing gas. During an

eclipse, the part of the sun that we do not usually get to see can be seen.

This is the corona (ca-RO-nah) or very outer edges of the sun's atmosphere. During a total eclipse, the corona will look as if it could be the sun's halo.

Partial eclipse



The rest of us will have to settle for a partial eclipse.

The moon will be crossing the face of the sun, but there will still be some light.

In fact, most of us might not know that there is anything unusual about February 26 unless we knew there was an eclipse going on.

CAUTION

A scientist with the Naval Observatory told The Mini Page:

"Watching the sun without proper eye safeguards is always dangerous.

"But it is no more so during a solar eclipse than any other time.

"The problem with an eclipse is that it attracts many people who do not use the proper safeguards. That is what is dangerous.

"Kids should observe the eclipse only with the help of an expert adult, or they should watch it on TV," he cautioned.