

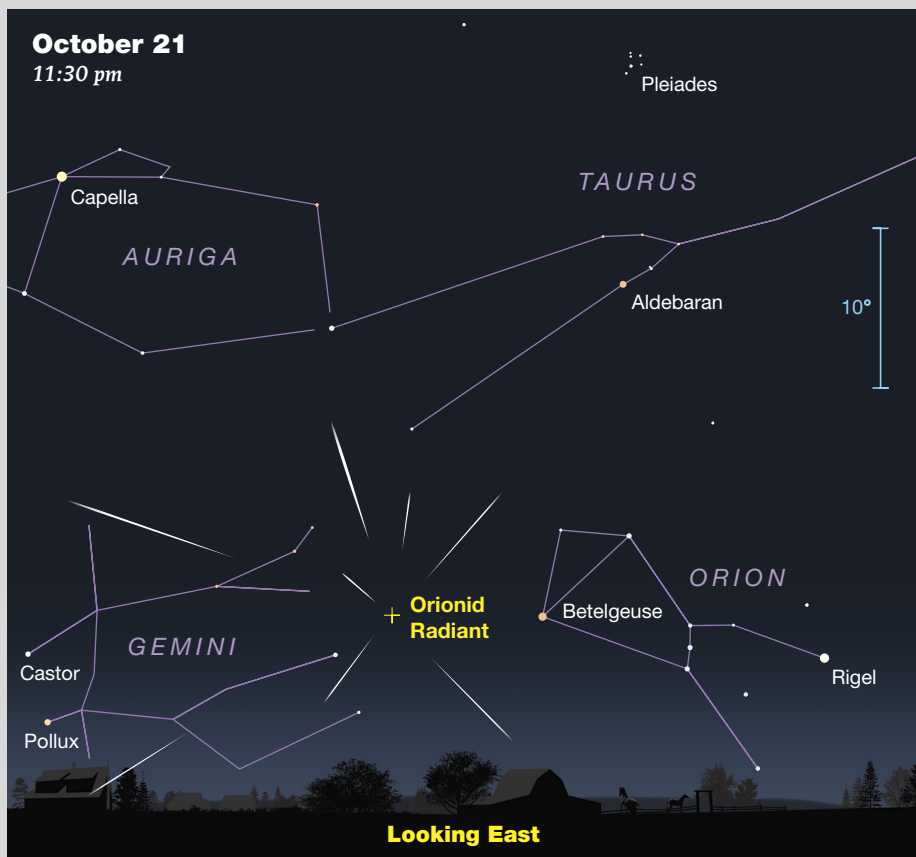
Orionids Delight after Moonset

WANT TO SEE Halley's Comet? Or at least its castoffs? Get up **early on the morning of October 22nd**, when pieces of the famed comet shoot from Orion's upraised club from around 3:30 a.m. local time till dawn. During that approximately 3-hour span, observers with access to a dark sky can see some 20 meteors per hour tear past the silent stars. Each flash results from a sand-grain- to pea-size fragment slamming into the upper atmosphere at more than 235,000 km per hour (146,000 mph).

Every year, Earth traverses **the trail of debris left by Halley's Comet** twice: first in May through the stream's outbound

leg, which gifts us with the Eta Aquariid meteor shower, and in October across the inbound leg. To watch the Orionids in comfort, bundle up and ease back into a reclining chair. Face about 90° away from the radiant, for example to the east or west, for the best view of both short- and long-trailed meteors.

The Orionids often toss in a few fireballs to keep things interesting. My favorite part of watching meteor showers is what I call the Just-One-More effect. You might plan to spend just an hour with the shower but find it impossible to call it quits until you see *just one more*.



▲ While not a strong shower like the Perseids or Geminids, the Orionids are swift and reliable. Originating from Halley's Comet and streaming from a radiant in Orion's upraised club, the shower reaches maximum on the night of October 21–22. If it's cloudy, one night on either side of maximum will still provide good views.