

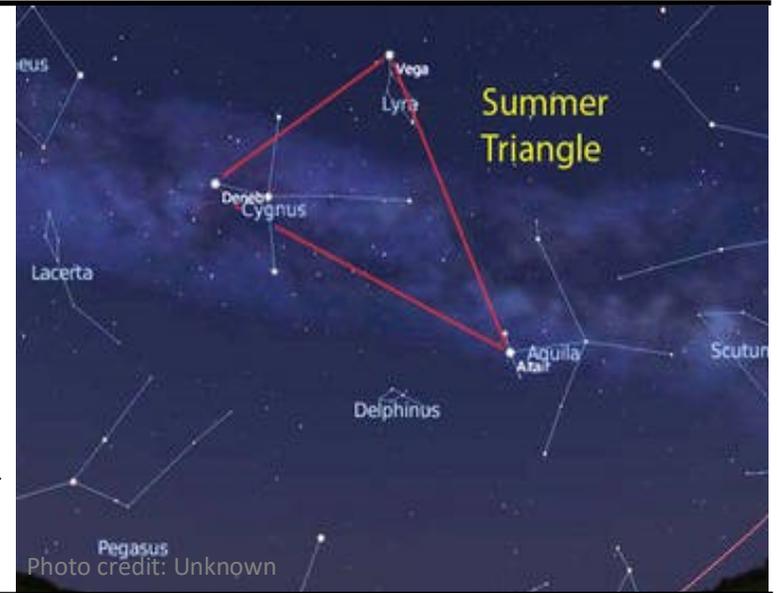
# Night Sky 101: Summer Constellations

## The Summer Triangle

The Summer Triangle is made up of three bright stars—Altair, in the constellation Aquila (the eagle), Deneb in Cygnus (the swan), and Vega Lyra (the lyre, or harp).

Also called “The Northern Cross” or “The Backbone of the Milky Way,” Cygnus is a horizontal cross of five bright stars. In very dark skies, Cygnus helps viewers find the Milky Way. Albireo, the last star in Cygnus’s tail, is actually made up of two stars (a binary star). The separate stars can be seen with a 30 power telescope. The Ring Nebula, part of the constellation Lyra, can also be seen with this magnification.

In Japanese mythology, Vega, the celestial princess and goddess, fell in love Altair. Her father did not approve of Altair, since he was a mortal. They were forbidden from seeing each other. The two lovers were placed in the sky, where they were separated by the Celestial River, represented by the Milky Way. According to the legend, once a year, a bridge of magpies form, represented by Cygnus, to reunite the lovers.



## Scorpius

Also called Scorpio, Scorpius is one of the 12 Zodiac constellations, which are used in reading horoscopes. Scorpius represents those born during October 23 to November 21.

Scorpio is easy to spot in the summer sky. It is made up of a long string bright stars, which are visible in most lights, especially Antares, because of its distinctly red color. Antares is about 850 times bigger than our sun and is a red giant. In Scorpius’s trail are two star clusters— M7, also called Ptolemy’s Cluster and M6, also called the Butterfly Cluster.

In Greek mythology, Scorpius, the scorpion, was the downfall of the great hunter, Orion. This is why Scorpius seemingly chases the Orion constellation across the sky, which only appears in the winter.



## The Teapot

Nine bright stars in the constellation Sagittarius make the shape of a teapot. It can usually be found low in the summer sky. The spout of the teapot points directly to the center of the Milky Way. The formation is also close to the star clusters M22 and M28 in the night sky.

Like Scorpius, Sagittarius is a Zodiac constellation and represents those born from November 22 to December 21. According to Greek mythology, Sagittarius, the centaur, invented archery, and was placed in the stars to reward his skill.

