

<b>08/11/12 - Meteor Shower to be at Peak Tonight and Tomorrow</b>
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Meteors will streak the skies tonight, August 11, 2012, and early tomorrow morning in one of the most anticipated and watched shows each year.

The Perseid showers are typically active between July 23 and August 22, and are expected to peak tonight. Most meteors can be seen early Sunday morning, between the hours of 2 AM and 5 AM, with an average of 60 to 100 meteors per hour in some areas.

Every August, the Earth moves through the orbit of a comet called Swift-Tuttle and the meteors that streak across the sky are pieces of debris left behind from the comet. Most are no larger than grains of sand as they enter the earth's atmosphere at more than 100,000 miles per hour before burning up. The comet, which is in an elliptical orbit that brings it around close to the sun every 133 years, isn't expected to reappear in the area until 2126.

ABC News offered some good viewing tips for this year's show:

**Where to look?** The whole sky, actually. The shooting stars will seem to come from the constellation Perseus, in the northeastern sky. But they may appear anywhere as quick streaks.

**Where not to look?** Don't look at the moon, or anything else bright. You want your eyes to get really, really used to the dark.

**Where should I go?** Any place will do, but darker is better, with a nice expanse of open sky. Get away from city lights if you can.

**When to watch?** The Perseid is best after midnight Sunday morning, but there might be meteors to see for several nights before or after. Depending on your schedule, it might be worth a look if Sunday morning doesn't work for you.

**Special equipment needed:** None. Just your eyes.

**Can I take pictures?** Sure. It might be fun. You need a camera with manual settings, though, and a tripod is a must. Set your lens to the widest possible setting. Set the ISO (sensitivity to light) to a high number, such as 400 or 1600. And ? this is critical ? your exposures need to be l-o-n-g. Experiment. An exposure of 30 seconds might give you

a field of stars with a couple of streaks across it. Or you might try for an hour (close down the f/stop) and get very little.

**What if it's cloudy?** You're out of luck. Get a good night's sleep.