

The Magical Auroras

explore our solar system

Aurora

particles discharged from the sun, called solar wind, collide with gases in Earth's atmosphere creating a breathtaking display of light



Auroras occur in the polar regions

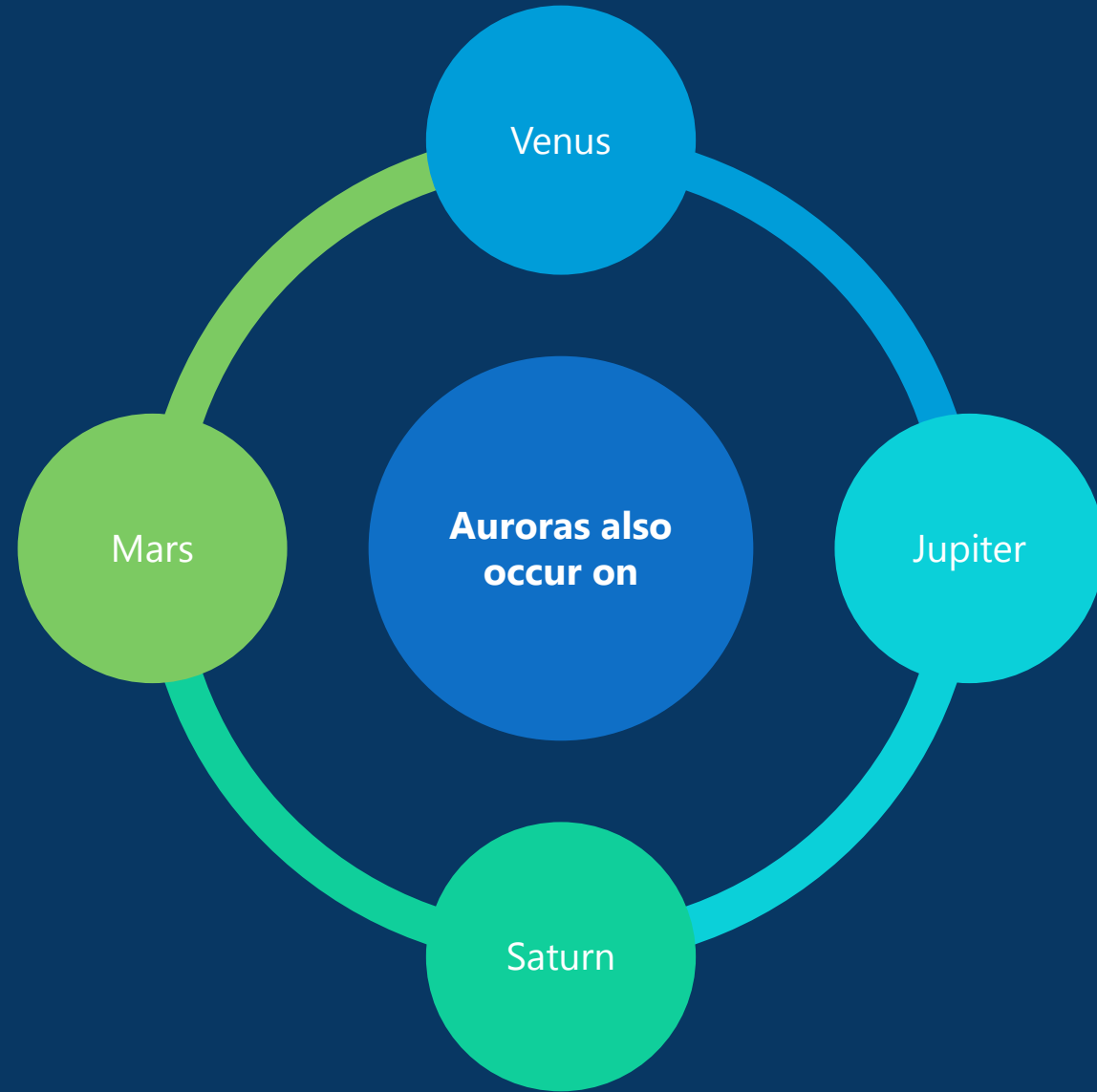


Northern Lights
(aurora borealis)

Named after Aurora, Roman goddess of dawn, and Boreas, Greek name for the north wind.

Southern Lights
(aurora australis)

Occur simultaneously with the aurora borealis and are almost a mirror image of each other.



Typical aurora colors



violet



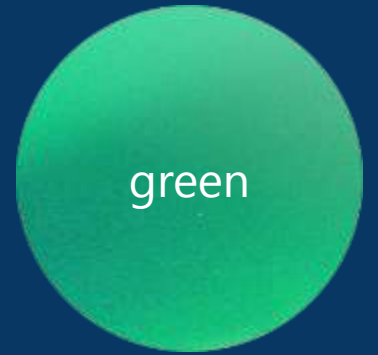
blue



red



yellow



green

When particles collide with nitrogen or oxygen, vivid colors are produced
violet, blue, red = nitrogen green, yellow = oxygen

Solar Maximum

greatest sun activity occurs
in 11 year cycles

lasts approximately 2-3 years

results in the most magnificent
displays

next projected cycle starts
2013-2016

The greater the sun activity, the greater and more frequent the auroral display.