

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)

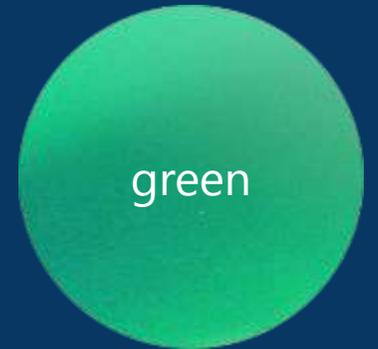
Named after *Aurora*, Roman goddess of dawn, and *Boreas*, Greek name for the north wind.

Southern Lights
(aurora australis)

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



Typical aurora colors



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.