Family Stargazing: First Night Checklist

A small, low-pressure plan for a lovely first look at the night sky. No telescope needed.

Before you go

- ■ Check the local cloud forecast and choose a backup evening.
- ■ Pick a familiar, safe place with an open patch of sky.
- ■ Tell someone where you are going; bring a charged phone for emergencies.
- ■ Dress for the temperature after sunset, with one extra warm layer.
- ■ Set any sky-map app for your location before heading out.

Bring

- ■ Blanket or chairs
- ■ Warm layers for everyone
- ■ Water or a warm drink in a spill-safe container
- ■ Notebook and pencil for questions or drawings
- ■ Flashlight for safe movement; use dim red light only when safe to do so
- ■ Optional: binoculars you already own

Outside

- ■ Settle in and give your eyes 15–20 minutes away from bright screens.
- ■ Look for the Moon, if it is up, then choose one bright star or pattern.
- ■ Let each person share what shape, color, or story they notice.
- ■ Keep screens dim and pointed away; use enough light to move safely.
- ■ Never point binoculars or a telescope anywhere near the Sun.
- ■ Head inside while everyone is still comfortable. One discovery is a win.

After

- ■ Ask: “What was your favorite thing we noticed?”
- ■ Write down one thing to look for next time.
- ■ If clouds won, pick another evening and try again.

Gear is optional. *Start with what you have. Check local access and safety guidance for your chosen viewing spot. Product recommendations in the companion guide use affiliate links.*