

# Blue moon, supermoon, total lunar eclipse rolled into one

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The moon is providing a rare triple treat this week.

On Wednesday, much of the world will get to see not only a blue moon and a supermoon, but also a total lunar eclipse, all rolled into one. There hasn't been a triple lineup like this since 1982 and the next won't occur until 2037.

The eclipse will be visible best in the western half of the U.S. and Canada before the moon sets early Wednesday morning, and across the Pacific into Asia as the moon rises Wednesday night into Thursday.

The U.S. East Coast will be out of luck; the moon will be setting just as the eclipse gets started. Europe and most of Africa and South America also will pretty much miss the show.

A blue moon is the second full moon in a month. A supermoon is a particularly close full or new moon, appearing somewhat brighter and bigger. A total lunar eclipse — or blood moon for its reddish tinge — has the moon completely bathed in Earth's shadow.

"I'm calling it the Super Bowl of moons," lunar scientist Noah Petro said Monday from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. Others prefer "super blue blood moon."

Either way, it's guaranteed to impress if skies are clear. The moon will actually be closest to Earth on Tuesday — just over 223,000 miles. That's about 1,500 miles farther than the supermoon on Jan. 1. Midway through Wednesday's eclipse, the moon will be even farther away — 223,820 miles — but still within unofficial

supermoon guidelines.

While a supermoon is considered less serious and scientific than an eclipse, it represents a chance to encourage people to start looking at the moon, according to Petro.

As the sun lines up perfectly with the Earth and then moon for the eclipse, scientists will make observations from a telescope in Hawaii, while also collecting data from NASA's moon-circling Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter.

Just like the total solar eclipse in the U.S. last August cooled the Earth's surface, a lunar eclipse cools the moon's surface. It's this abrupt cooling — from the heat of direct sunlight to essentially a deep freeze — that researchers will be studying.

Totality will last more than an hour.



AP Photo/Marco Ugarte, File

In this 2007, file photo, the moon takes on different orange tones during a lunar eclipse. On Wednesday, a super moon, blue moon and a lunar eclipse will coincide for first time since 1982.

## BRIEFLY

### FBI's McCabe, a frequent Trump target, abruptly leaves post

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, a target of frequent and aggressive criticism by President Donald Trump, abruptly stepped down from his position Monday ahead of his planned retirement this spring.

A 22-year veteran of the FBI, McCabe has been publicly and repeatedly lambasted over the past year by Trump, who has accused him of bias because of his wife's political connections and an FBI investigation that produced no criminal charges against Hillary Clinton.

McCabe, who has held a number of FBI leadership roles and been heavily involved in investigations into major crimes including the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, becomes eligible for retirement in a matter of weeks. FBI staff learned Monday that McCabe was leaving the bureau's No. 2 post effective immediately, according to people who spoke only on condition of anonymity to discuss an internal personnel move. He is expected to retire with full pension benefits.

### GOP senators call on Trump to show restraint in probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two Republican senators say President Donald Trump would be wise to keep a public silence on an independent investigation into his 2016 campaign's contacts with Russia.

That's in the wake of news reports that he sought to fire the special counsel.

The senators, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Susan Collins of Maine, also urged special counsel Robert Mueller Sunday to review whether Trump tried to fire him last June, an accusation the president has labeled "fake news."

Graham, co-sponsor of legislation that would protect Mueller from being fired without a legal basis, said he would be "glad to pass it tomorrow." But he insisted that Mueller's job appeared to be in no immediate danger, pointing to the political costs if Trump did remove him.

### Syria violence overshadows Russia-hosted talks

KILIS, Turkey (AP) — Intense clashes erupted Monday on a strategic hilltop in northwestern Syria as Kurdish forces tried to enter the area a day after it was captured by Turkish troops.

Turkish military officials cancelled a government-organized press tour to Bursayah Hill, separating the Kurdish-held enclave of Afrin from the Turkey-controlled town of Azaz, due to what they described as "security concerns."

Separately, in the nearby rebel-held province of Idlib, suspected Syrian government airstrikes killed at least 21 people and put a hospital out of order.

The violence has overshadowed a peace conference hosted by Russia.

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