



## USING THE PLANISPHERE

It works best between latitudes +30° and +40°.

First: if you are on Daylight Saving Time (usually between early April and late October), pretend it is one hour earlier than it already is. For example, if on DST and it is 6pm, use 5pm on the dialer.

Turn the star dialer so that the target date is aligned with the target time. It doesn't matter if you use the front or back – they should both be the same. For example, if you want to see what is up on September 19 at 12am (midnight), you would see the words “(Big Dipper)” just above the NORTH heading on the front side of the star dialer.

On the front side are mostly objects that are above the celestial equator, most of which will be in the northern hemisphere of the sky. (The objects at the very top of the dialer will appear a little south of zenith.) On the back side are objects that are mostly below the celestial equator, which will be found in the southern hemisphere of the sky.

To orient yourself, face the intended direction, and hold the planisphere so that the relevant direction is at the bottom of the planisphere. For example, if you are facing north, hold the planisphere so the word “NORTH” is below the star field. If you are facing west, rotate the planisphere until you see the word “WEST” at the bottom. Hopefully what you see in the lower part of the planisphere, nearest the direction, will appear as it does in the sky. Note, if you are looking straight up, start from one of the four directions (NSEW) and hold it over your head.

Bottom line: hold your arm out in front of you in the same direction you are looking, with that direction written on the bottom of the planisphere. Note that **“South” is on the back!**

Things in all CAPITAL LETTERS are constellation names. Also written on the dialer are declinations in 10 degree increments, the celestial equator, the ecliptic, the Milky Way (the fuzzy blue band), and other miscellany. Solid lines connect stars in a constellation, while dotted lines connect patterns that most people find useful (e.g. pointer stars pointing to Polaris, Ursa Major's handle stars arcing to Arcturus, the outline of the winter hexagon, etc.).

Polaris (a.k.a. the North Star) is where the gold circle is, in the center of the planisphere. Just as the planisphere rotates around this circular pin, all stars appear to rotate around Polaris.