

Mare Imbrium

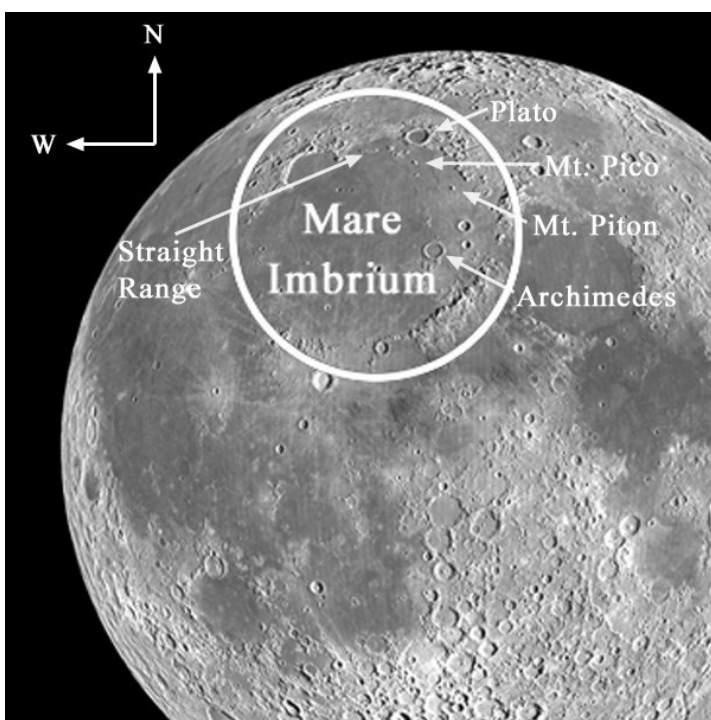
What It Is

Mare Imbrium, one of the lunar “seas,” formed when a huge impact basin was filled by a later lava flow. It’s loaded with interesting craters, mountain ranges, and individual peaks.

The crater Plato, 68 miles wide, has a smooth lava-flooded floor with some smaller craters in it.

The Straight Range, Mt. Pico, and Mt. Piton mark the inner wall of the Imbrium impact basin.

Archimedes crater is 50 miles wide and flat-floored by lava flows like Plato.



Why It's Cool

One of the most picturesque regions on the moon, Mare Imbrium is an impact basin over 700 miles wide, filled by ancient lava flows. It’s surrounded by mountains that are its original crater walls, and has a number of large impact craters formed after the mare. Some craters around the edges of Mare Imbrium are flooded on one side, an indication that the mare floor subsided between magmatic events.

“Mare Imbrium” is a Latin phrase meaning “Sea of Showers.” The word “mare” is a two-syllable word pronounced similar to “MAWR-ay” rather than being pronounced like the English word for a female horse.

When To See It

The Imbrium region can be completely seen from about 11 days after new moon through full moon to about 22 days after new. Parts can be seen for about 4 days before and after that.

Archimedes is visible from about 8 to 22 days after new moon, best near the start and end of that period.

Plato is visible from about 9 to 22 days after new moon, best near the start and end of that period.

The Straight Range is best from about 9 to 11 days after new moon and again from about 21 to 23 days after new. Between those times it can be seen as a bright, shadowless line.

Mt. Pico, small and challenging, is best from about 9 & 10 days and again from 20 to 22 days after new moon.

Mt. Piton is also tough, seen from 8 to 11 and 20 & 21 days after new moon.

Where It Is

Mare Imbrium is the large, round, smooth dark region northwest of the center of the lunar disk. It’s surrounded on three sides by apparent mountain ranges