

Apollo Landing Sites

What They Are

It's possible to spot the general regions where all the Apollos landed on the moon with a large telescope, but for small backyard telescopes the sites for Apollo 11 (1969) and Apollo 15 (1971) are the best targets. Don't expect to see Apollo equipment there, though—that would require a telescope many hundreds of feet in diameter!

When To See Them

Not surprisingly, the best times to see these landing areas are around the moon phase when the missions actually occurred—the phase giving you the best view also gave the crews the best view!

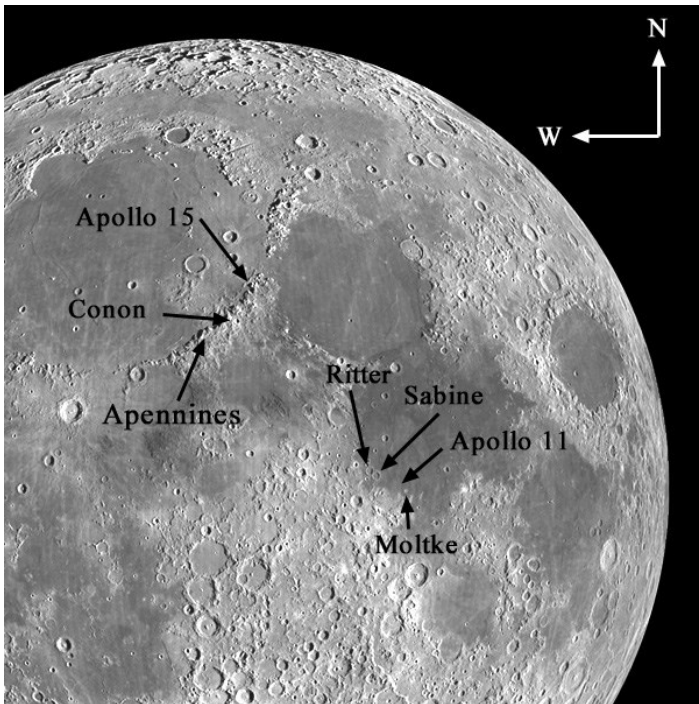
Apollo 11: 6 to 8 days after new moon and again at 18 to 20 days after new

Apollo 15: 7 or 8 (better) days after new moon and again at 21 to 23 days after new

Where They Are

Apollo 11: At the SW edge of the Sea of Tranquility find the craters Ritter & Sabine side by side, and the much smaller crater Moltke. Imagine a line from Ritter through Sabine to Moltke. Apollo 11 landed about 3/4 of the way from Ritter & Sabine to Moltke, just north of that line.

Apollo 15: Find the Apennine Mountains between Mare Imbrium and the Sea of Serenity. Apollo 15 landed close to the northern tip of the mountain range on the western edge of the range. If you can spot the small crater Conon in the mountains, the landing site is about 2/3 of the way from Conon to the tip of the range.



Why They're Cool

The Apollo 11 landing site is where the first piloted lunar landing occurred on July 20, 1969. Apollo 15 was the 4th piloted landing, the first Apollo to use the Lunar Rover, and the first to land in a mountainous region. The crew stayed on the moon for nearly 3 days, longer than previous missions.