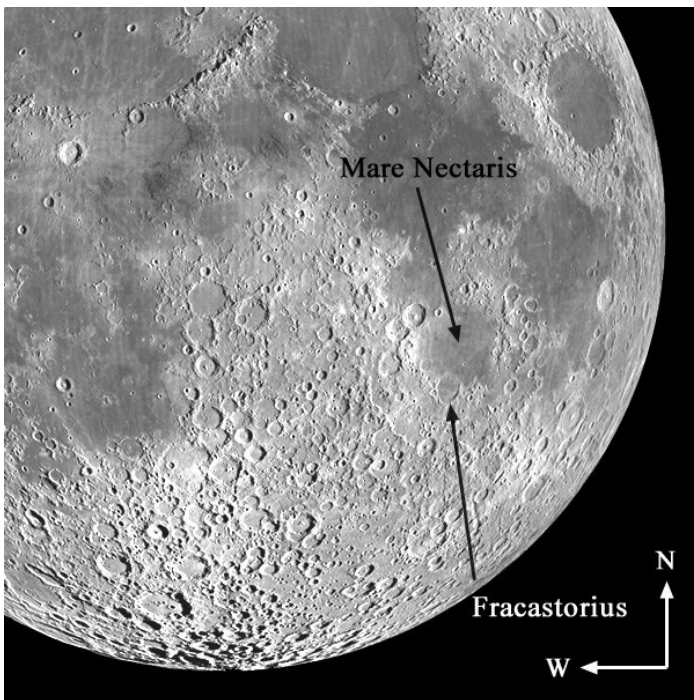


Mare Nectaris

What It Is

Mare Nectaris, the Sea of Nectar, is one of the smaller lunar “seas.” Clearly round, it is a big impact basin just over 200 miles in diameter, flooded with ancient lavas.

Fracastorius is a lava flooded crater about 75 miles in diameter.



Why It's Cool

Take some time to see the detail along the edge of the lava flows of Mare Nectaris, but then look to the southwest of the mare. Half the mare diameter or more from the mare bed you can see another rim to the Nectaris impact basin! It's a “multi-ringed” basin. Try to follow it around the south of the mare until it disappears in complex terrain. You may also be able to follow it northward around the mare to a promontory at the edge of the Sea of Tranquility.

Fracastorius is lunar history in a nutshell. It has an easily visible rim except at the portion nearest the mare. A giant impact formed the mare's impact basin and a later magma event flooded the basin. A smaller impact after that formed Fracastorius. The mare basin subsided, sinking a little and lowering the northern wall of Fracastorius. A later lava flow covered the mare, flooding past the lowered crater wall and into Fracastorius itself. Look around the edges of the lunar seas and you'll see this type of thing in many places!

When To See It

Mare Nectaris can be seen from about 8 to 16 days after New Moon, and parts of it can be seen for about 2 nights before and after that period.

The big Nectaran crater Fracastorius can be seen from about 6 to 8 days after new, and again about 17 and 18 days after new. It is visible (but without noticeable detail) between those times.

Where It Is

Mare Nectaris can be found on the southeastern half of the moon, beside the big, heavily cratered Great Peninsula.

Fracastorius is located at the southwestern edge of the mare.