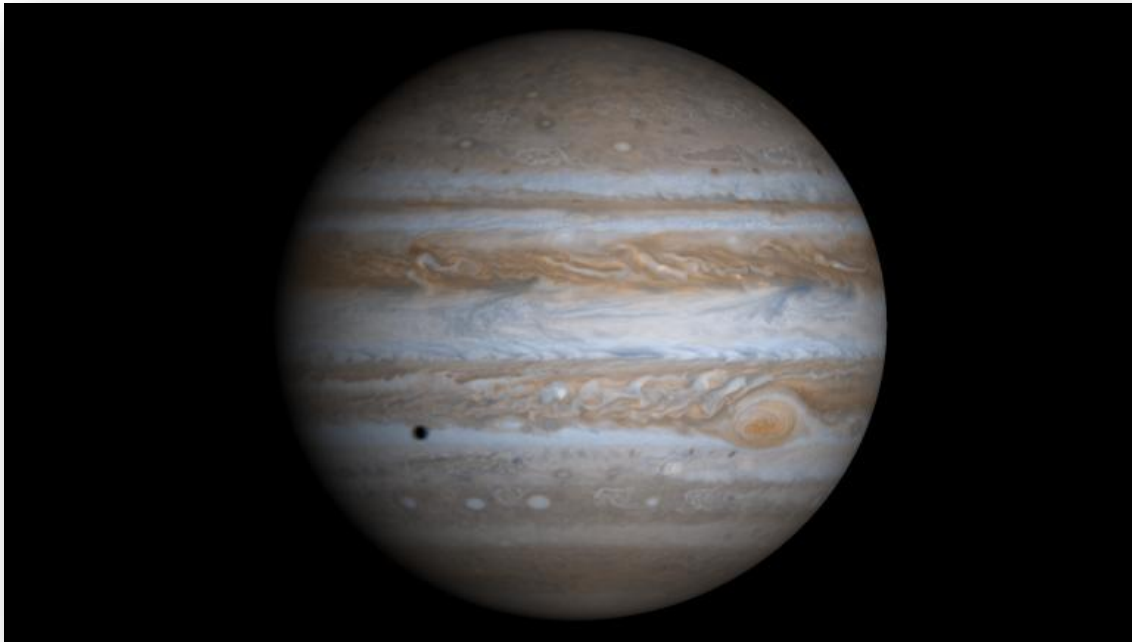


Mighty Jupiter



Visible just after sunset half way up from the north eastern horizon is a wonderful solar system object worthy of our attention, the planet Jupiter.

Looking just like a very bright star in the sky, Jupiter is not long past a position in its orbit known as opposition, the point where the sun, earth and Jupiter are perfectly lined up, in that configuration. This means it is visible all evening and is a great time to have a look at it.

More than twice as massive as all the other planets combined, Jupiter is by far the largest planet. Compared to the earth it is about 318 times as massive and over 11 times the diameter, yet it rotates in only 10 hours. Made almost entirely of gas, there is some suggestion of a small solid core about the size of the earth but essentially it is made up of mainly hydrogen and helium.

Through small telescopes and even a good pair of binoculars it is also possible to see the four largest moons of Jupiter: Io, Europa, Ganymede and Callisto.

So why not go out sometime and have a look at the mightiest planet in the solar system.