

WEST
VIRGINIA®

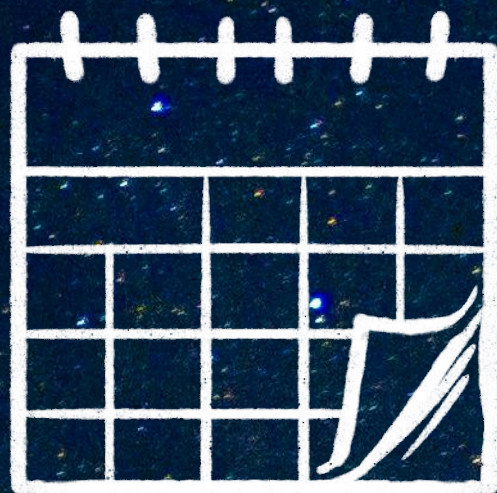
Dark Skies
Mobile
Photography
Guide

almost heaven®

GET STARTED WITH THESE SIMPLE STEPS



Choosing a location



Timing your shot



Planning your shot



Executing the shot



Choosing a location

West Virginia is full of wide-open spaces surrounded by rugged mountain beauty and far away from light pollution. Known for having some of the clearest skies east of the Mississippi.

Dark Sky Parks

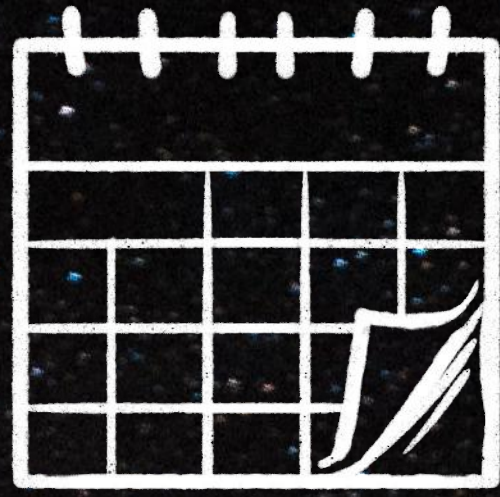
Watoga State Park

Calvin Price State Forest

**Droop Mountain Battlefield
State Park.**

The areas listed above are so out-of-this-world that the International Dark Sky Association has designated them as official Dark Sky Parks.

But don't forget: Star-studded skies can be found in every corner of the Mountain State.



Timing your shot

While the star-studded skies of Almost Heaven are stunning 365 days out of the year, certain times within the phases of the moon allow for better dark sky photography.



Wanting to capture the stars?

The moon can create too much light and overpower the sparkling stars, so four days before or after a new moon is considered to be the best time to get a starry shot.



Hoping to capture the moon in your photo?

During a full moon, dusk is the best time to nail your shot.



Planning your shot

There are many apps that allow you to plan your astro shot; PhotoPills is one great option. These exciting augmented reality tools can help you angle your shot in the perfect direction.





Executing the shot

The perfect settings for capturing your dark sky shot vary from device to device! Check out the step-by-step guidelines below, available for both Apple and Samsung devices.

For Apple Users

STEP 1: If you have a PRO model iPhone, start by turning on ProRAW. If not, skip to step 2.

STEP 2: Adjust the shutter speed to max. Most iPhone models have a setting called “Night Mode” which is best to use for dark sky photography.

STEP 3: The goal is to achieve zero motion as the photo is being taken. A tripod isn’t a must but is very helpful.

STEP 4: Set the photo timer to 3 or 10 seconds so that once you trigger the shot, all vibration has subsided and you can capture the most steady shot.



Executing the shot

For Samsung Users

STEP 1: Within the camera app on your smartphone, tap on “More” or “Mode” to open additional camera settings.

STEP 2: Select “Pro” mode to adjust settings manually. Tap on “Shutter” to adjust the shutter speed.

STEP 3: Darker scenes require longer shutter speeds. 20-30 seconds is recommended for most scenes.

STEP 4: The goal is to achieve zero motion as the photo is being taken. A tripod isn't a must but is very helpful.

STEP 5: Press the shutter button to start the exposure. After the exposure begins, be sure not to move or shake the smartphone.

STEP 6: If a brighter photo is desired, you can increase the camera's sensitivity by tapping “ISO” and increasing it by 2-3 steps.

Want to edit your new starry masterpiece?

Check out our custom Instagram filters on WVtourism.com/stars. Or our complete photo guide for detailed editing tips.

Share your photo!

Once your picture is perfected, be sure to use #AlmostHeaven and tag @wvtourism when you post it on social media!

Plan your trip!

Home to one of the largest and darkest skysheds on the East Coast, West Virginia is the perfect spot to unwind and soak in the beauty of the star-studded skies. Start planning your starry getaway today with the help of our Dark Skies toolkit. Find trip guides, exclusive discounts & deals, a sweepstakes and more at WVtourism.com/stars.

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