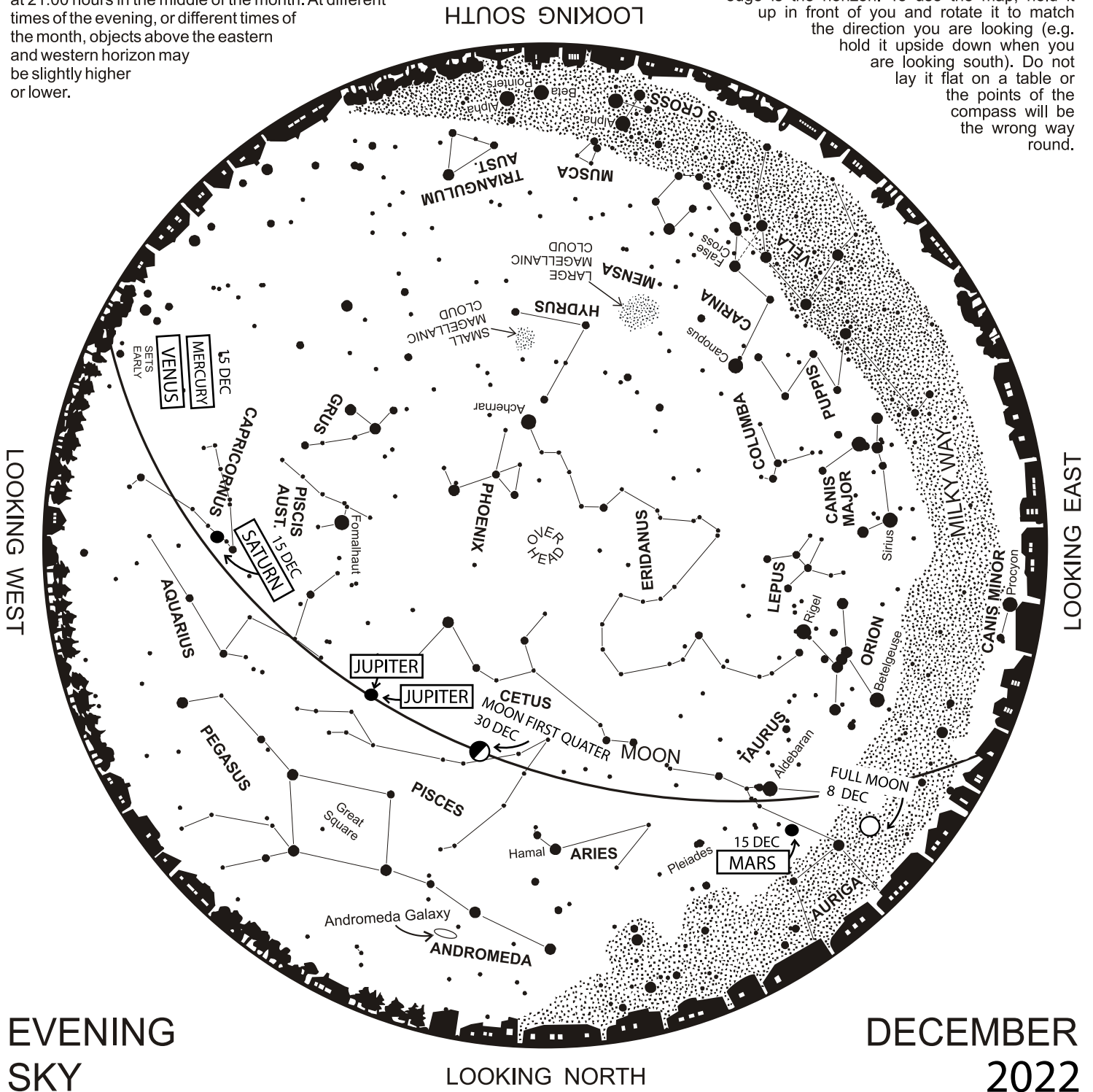


IZIKO PLANETARIUM AND DIGITAL DOME

The map shows the night sky visible above the Cape at 21:00 hours in the middle of the month. At different times of the evening, or different times of the month, objects above the eastern and western horizon may be slightly higher or lower.

The centre of the map is the overhead point, the edge is the horizon. To use the map, hold it up in front of you and rotate it to match the direction you are looking (e.g. hold it upside down when you are looking south). Do not lay it flat on a table or the points of the compass will be the wrong way round.



EVENING SKY

DECEMBER 2022

As we move towards South Africa's Summer Solstice (longest day) on 22 December, keep an eye out for the impressive 'open cluster' of stars; the Pleiades (isiLimela) in the north-east just below Aries (ram). Although only a few of the cluster's stars are visible to the naked eye, binoculars reveal hundreds more, all formed from the same giant molecular cloud with roughly the same age. The summer constellations Taurus (bull) and Orion (hunter) return to our evening skies, followed closely by the Milky Way as it stretches across our eastern horizon. Sirius, the brightest star in the night sky, lies within Canis Major (big dog) in the east. The second brightest star, Canopus, is in the south-east in Carina (ship's keel).

Since Sirius rises later than Canopus, in Xam Bushman starlore, Sirius was considered the 'grandmother of Canopus', trailing behind the more agile Canopus.

The Moon will be in the evening sky until 12 December with New Moon on 23 December and Full Moon (the 'Springbok Moon') on 8 December. All eight Solar System planets are theoretically visible at dusk around 23 December. However, you will need a telescope to find Neptune and Uranus. Setting just after sunset, Mercury and Venus may also be difficult to spot. Saturn, Jupiter and Mars are bright, and visible for most of the month before midnight.