



Star Stories

The seven brightest stars of the constellation Ursa Major (Big Bear) are often called **The Big Dipper**, because they resemble a ladle with a long curved handle and a deep bowl.

Throughout history, many cultures have seen pictures and told stories about these seven stars.

- Irish, Scandinavian and Slavic cultures saw objects like a wagon, plow or salmon net.
- In West Africa, this cluster of stars has been called “the drinking gourd.”
- The Iroquois people call them “the bear and the hunters” and tell a story about a bear chase.
- The Zuni tribe tell a story of a great bear who guards the land from a frozen winter.
- In ancient England, these stars were seen as a king's chariot circling the earth.
- In Ancient China, this grouping of stars was seen as a palace and a mountain.
- The Wasco tribe tells a story of a coyote who created the star formation by shooting arrows into the air so that his wolf brothers could get closer to animals that they saw in the sky.
- The ancient Egyptians thought the stars resembled the thigh bone of a bull.
- The Aztecs saw the shape as a sorcerer who could turn into any shape he wished.

Now, it's our turn to tell our own stories!
What do **you** see in these stars?

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