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Great Orion Nebula

Quick Facts:

Distance: 1,300 light-years **Size: 25 light-years**

Constellation: Orion

One of the closest stellar nurseries. It's a naked-eye object, with the Trapezium Cluster in the center and remaining parts of a giant molecular cloud forming stars behind the visible nebula. Protoplanetary disks (proplyds) and brown dwarfs abound inside. It was also the first deep-sky object to be photographed (1880 by Henry Draper). Part of the larger Orion Molecular Cloud Complex, which includes many objects throughout the constellation. Also called Messier 42.

Find it: The middle fuzzy star in Orion's Sword. GOTO: M(Messier).

Image by NASA/Hubble. Quick reference card by Derek Wallentinsen.