

## Astronomy Picture of the Day

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2009 August 24



### Morning Glory Clouds Over Australia

Credit & [Licence](#): [Mick Petroff](#); *Tip Thanks*: James Holmes ([Cairns](#))

**Explanation:** What causes these long, strange clouds? No one is sure. A rare type of cloud known as a [Morning Glory cloud](#) can stretch 1,000 kilometers long and occur at altitudes up to two kilometers high. Although similar [roll clouds](#) have been seen at specific places across the world, the ones over [Burketown, Queensland Australia](#) occur predictably every spring. Long, horizontal, circulating tubes of air might form when flowing, moist, cooling air encounters an [inversion layer](#), an atmospheric layer where air temperature atypically increases with height. [These tubes](#) and surrounding air could cause dangerous turbulence for airplanes when clear. [Morning Glory clouds](#) can reportedly achieve an [airspeed](#) of 60 kilometers per hour over a surface with little discernible wind. Pictured above, photographer Mick Petroff photographed some [Morning Glory clouds](#) from his airplane near the [Gulf of Carpentaria](#), Australia.

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