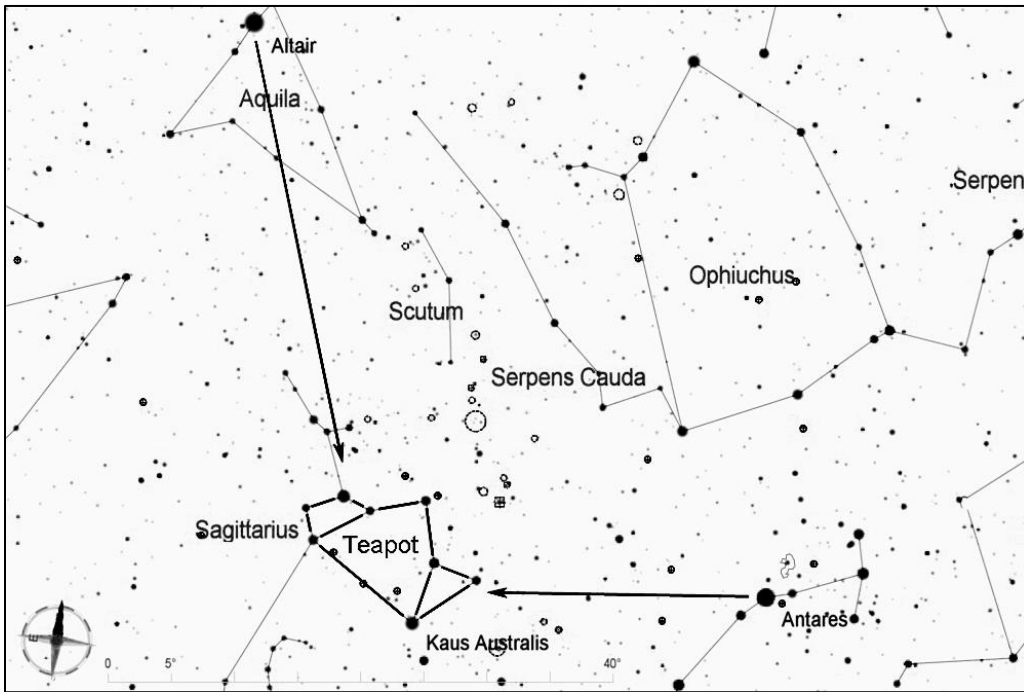


## Messier 55, Globular Cluster in Sagittarius

Messier 55 is one of the closest globular clusters, about 17,300 light years away. It is large and bright (magnitude 6.3). It is loosely packed for a globular cluster, and individual stars can be resolved all the way to its center though a medium-sized telescope. Even a small telescope or good binoculars will show some granularity suggesting that it is composed of numerous stars.



From mid-summer to early fall, the distinctive teapot shape of Sagittarius can be seen low in the southern sky during the evening. It is about 50 degrees south of Altair (part of the Summer Triangle) and about 30 degrees east of bright red Antares. It is well worth learning to recognize the teapot, for it can guide you to dozens of beautiful deep-sky objects.

Find the two stars that form the "handle" of the Sagittarius teapot, and use them as a pointer, extending the line to the southeast about 2.5 times the distance between these two stars. There are no bright stars nearby, but if it is a dark moonless night, M55 should be fairly easy to spot in that location using binoculars or a telescope with a low-power eyepiece.

