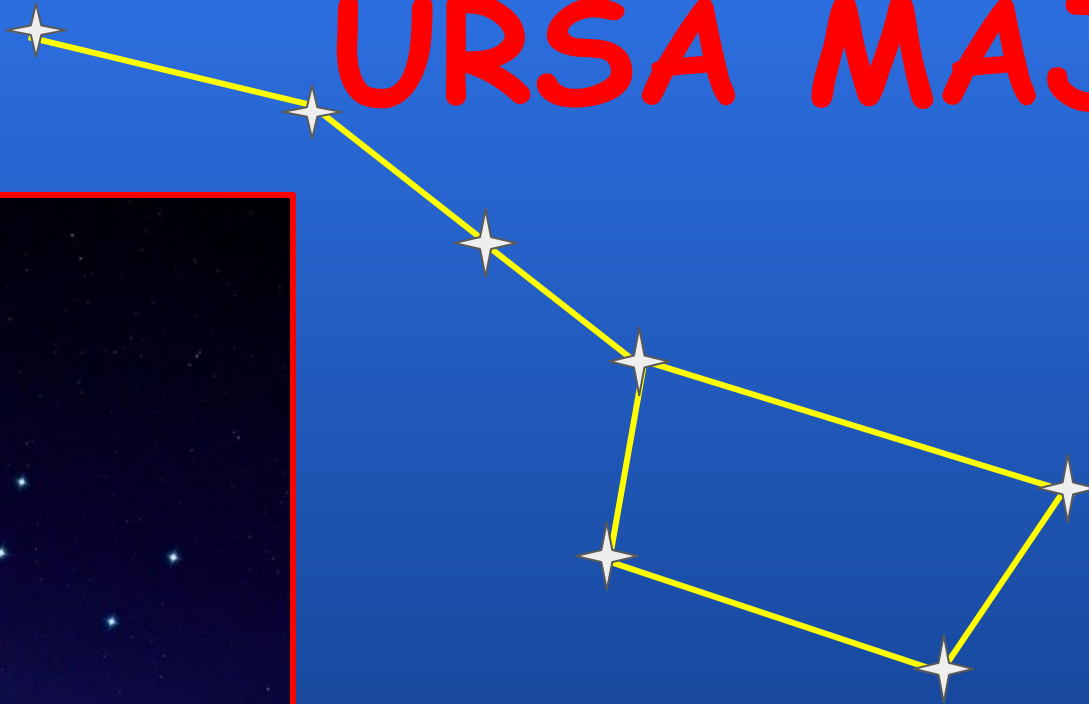
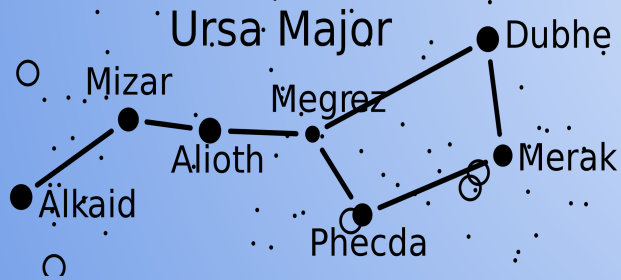


# URSA MAJOR





This constellation is typical of the northern sky. It has got 7 main stars, which form the Big Dipper:

Dubhe, Merak, Phecda, Megrez, Alioth, Mizar and Alkaid.

A Greek letter was assigned to each of them.

Dubhe » is a yellow star.

Merak e Phecda » are white-blue stars.

Megrez » is the dimmest star in this constellation.

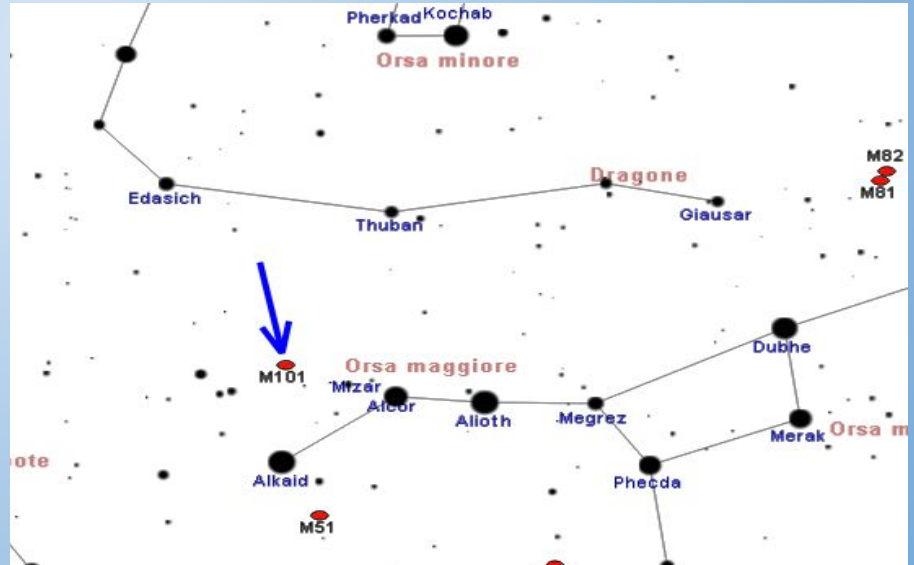
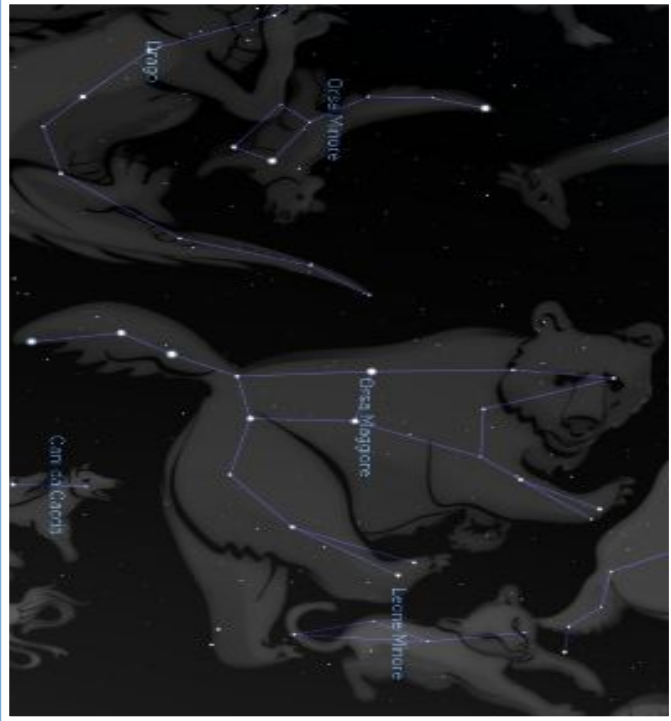
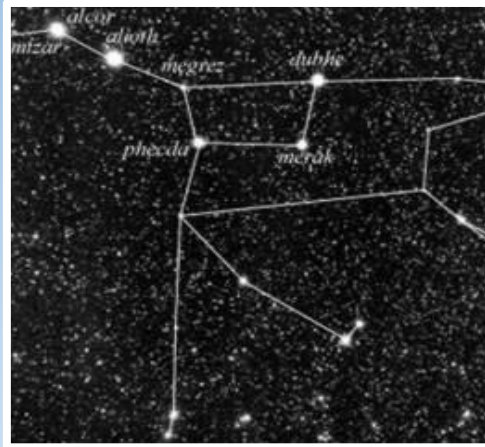
Alioth » is the main star of the Big Dipper.

Mizar » is a system of six gravitationally bound stars.

Alkaid » is a white star.

# Pictures and Videos of the Constellation

ref: [ORSA MAGGIORE. Il mito, le stelle e altre curiosità](#)  
- [Bing video](#)



# ORIGIN

This group of stars has been known since ancient times and various interpretations have been given of it; the reference to the myth of a bear being chased by three hunters is probably the oldest to which humanity refers.

The constellation is known by different names around the world: in North America it is the "Great Ladle", in the United Kingdom it is the "Plow", while "Septem Triones" is the name given by the ancient Latins.



# CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

In classical mythology, Callisto, one of the nymphs who were Artemis's companions, joined Jupiter; angered by the betrayal, Hera turned herself into a bear. Callisto's son Arcas nearly killed his mother while he was hunting, mistaking her for a bear. Jupiter and Artemis stopped him and put them both in the sky as Ursa Major and Ursa Minor.

An alternate version of the myth is told by the poet Aratus: the two celestial bears are said to be the ones who saved Jupiter as a child, hiding him in a cave from his father Cronus, who wanted to eat him as he had already done with his brothers.



# GRECO-ROMAN MYTHOLOGY

For this people it was the nymph Callisto, turned into a bear by the jealous Hera, Jupiter's wife.

For the Romans, these seven stars represented as many oxen. Seven oxen was "Septem Triones" in Latin. The word "settentrione", used today to indicate the North, comes from it.

# CHINESE AND ARABIC MYTHOLOGY

This constellation was called the "Scale of Destiny" by Chinese astronomers, whereas it was known as the "Grain Measurer" among the peasants.

The square represented a coffin and the three stars of the "tail" were the three children of the deceased, as they were chasing the North Star, guilty of killing their father.

# IRISH AND FRENCH MYTHOLOGY

It was a chariot to them too, but that of the mythical King David, who was considered one of the most ancient rulers of Ireland.

In southern France these stars represented a hen followed by her chicks, or a butcher's cleaver.



# GERMAN AND ENGLISH MYTHOLOGY

For these peoples of Northern Europe, even if they lived in close contact with bears, this constellation did not represent a bear but a large chariot.

Legend has it that this constellation represents the chariot that carried King Arthur to heaven, after his death.

# NATIVE AMERICAN AND BASQUE MYTHOLOGY

Many tribes in North America also saw a large bear in this constellation.

Once a man was robbed by two thieves. Enraged, he ordered his servants to capture them and, after a long wait, he decided to chase them himself.

As a punishment for his impatience, the man was hurled into the sky along with the other protagonists of the story.

# TUAREG AND JAPANESE MYTHOLOGY

The Tuareg people see a camel in it, whose neck extends until it reaches Arthur (who is also included in the constellation).

The Big Dipper is frequently mentioned in the famous manga and anime *Ken the warrior and the Knights of the Zodiac*.

# Sources:

<https://www.astrofilivaltellinesi.com/orsa-maggiore.asp>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orsa\\_Maggiore#Storia](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orsa_Maggiore#Storia)

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