May 2012 Solar Eclipse To Cast 'Ring Of Fire' Around The Sun

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http://www.asianscientist.com/topnews/may-20-2012-annular-eclipse-jaxa-nasa-hinode-mission/

AsianScientist (May 21, 2012) - Early Monday morning in Asia, hundreds of millions of people will witness an annular eclipse of the sun - visible from within a narrow corridor along Earth's northern Hemisphere - beginning in eastern Asia, crossing the North Pacific Ocean, and ending in the western United States.

A partial eclipse will be visible from a much larger region covering East Asia, North Pacific, North America and Greenland.

During an annular eclipse the moon covers as much as 94 percent of the sun, and leaves a bright ring of light visible at the edges.

For the May eclipse, the moon will be at the furthest distance from Earth that it ever achieves - meaning that it will block the smallest possible portion of the sun, and leave the largest possible bright ring around the outside.

A joint JAXA/NASA Hinode mission will observe the eclipse and provide images and movies on the NASA website at http://www.nasa.gov/sunearth. As an added bonus, Hinode's X-ray Telescope will be able to provide images of the peaks and valleys of the lunar surface.

The next solar eclipse will take place on November 13, 2012.

Source: NASA; Photo: HINODE/XRT January 6, 2011 eclipse.
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