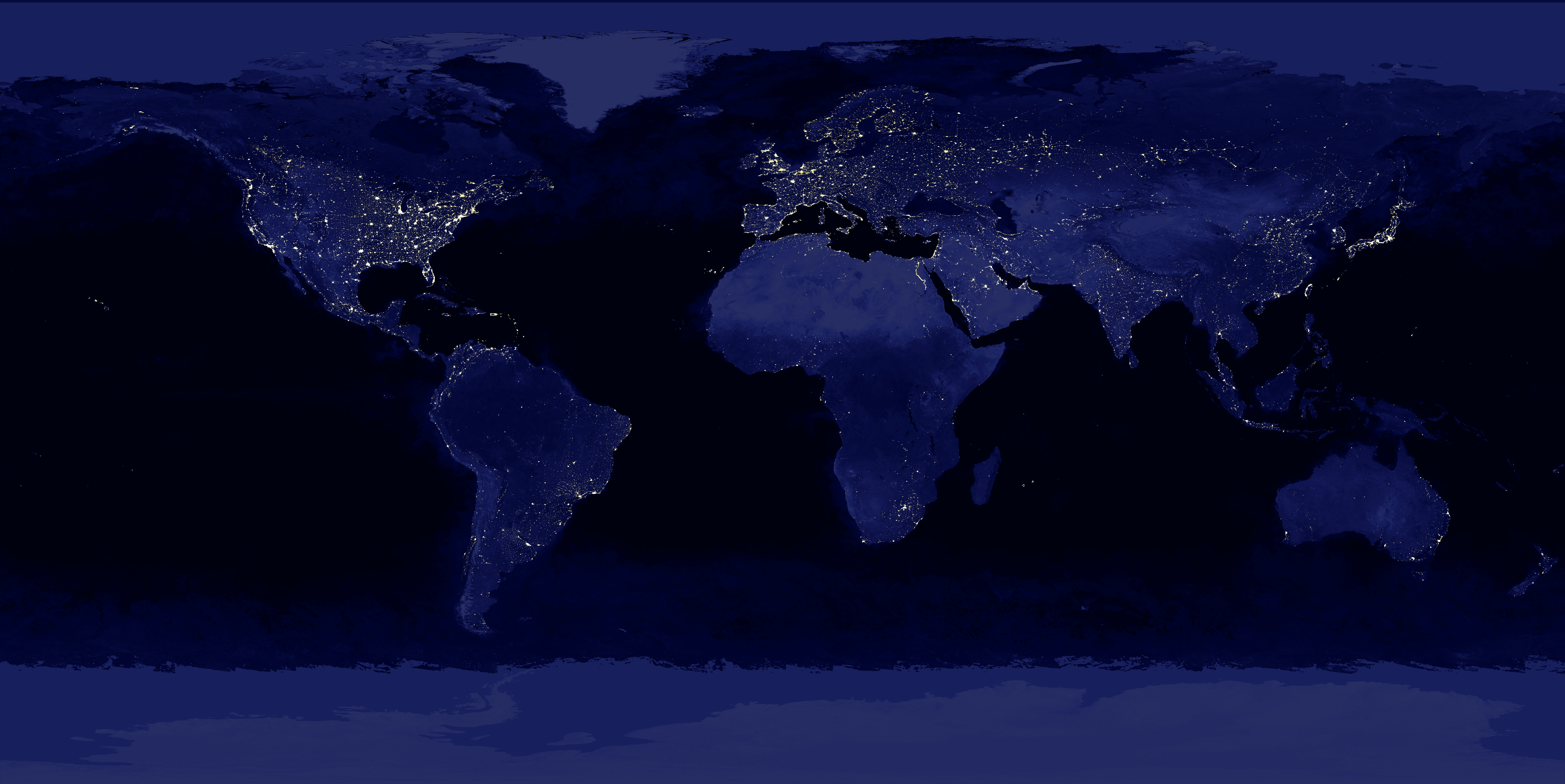




Helix Nebula

This photograph of the coil-shaped Helix Nebula is one of the largest and most detailed celestial images ever made. The composite picture is a seamless blend of ultra-sharp images from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope combined with data from Kitt Peak National Observatory near Tucson, Ariz. At 650 light-years away, the Helix is one of the nearest planetary nebulae to Earth. A planetary nebula is the glowing gas around a dying, Sun-like star.

Credit: NASA, NOAO, ESA, the Hubble Helix Nebula Team, M. Meixner (STScI), and T.A. Rector (NRAO)



Earth's City Lights

This image of Earth's city lights was created with data from the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) Operational Linescan System (OLS). Originally designed to view clouds by moonlight, the OLS is also used to map the locations of permanent lights on the Earth's surface. The brightest areas of the Earth are the most urbanized, but not necessarily the most populated. (Compare western Europe with China and India.) Even without the underlying map, the outlines of many continents would still be visible.

Credit: Data courtesy Marc Imhoff of NASA GSFC and Christopher Elvidge of NOAA NGDC. Image by Craig Mayhew and Robert Simmon, NASA GSFC.