

Solar system overview

Cassini carried a passenger to the Saturn system, the European Huygens probe--the first human-made object to land on a world in the distant outer solar system. After 20 years in space -- 13 of those years exploring Saturn -- Cassini exhausted its fuel supply.

Mars is one of the most explored bodies in our solar system, and it's the only planet where we've sent rovers to roam the alien landscape. NASA currently has two rovers (Curiosity and Perseverance), one lander, and one helicopter exploring the surface of Mars.

The Sun orbits the center of the Milky Way, bringing with it the planets, asteroids, comets, and other objects in our solar system. Our solar system is moving with an average velocity of 450,000 miles per hour (720,000 kilometers per hour).

Our solar system consists of our star, the Sun, and everything bound to it by gravity - the planets Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune; dwarf planets such as Pluto; dozens of moons; and millions of asteroids, comets, and meteoroids.

Our solar system's small bodies - asteroids, comets, and meteors - pack big surprises. These chunks of rock, ice, and metal are leftovers from the formation of our solar system 4.6 billion years ago.

Our home planet is the third planet from the Sun, and the only place we know of so far that's inhabited by living things. While Earth is only the fifth largest planet in the solar system, it is the only world in our solar system with liquid water on the surface.

Despite its proximity to the Sun, Mercury is not the hottest planet in our solar system - that title belongs to nearby Venus, thanks to its dense atmosphere. But Mercury is the fastest planet, zipping around the Sun every 88 Earth days.

The craters themselves, which have been preserved for billions of years, provide an impact history for the Moon and other bodies in the inner solar system. If you looked in the right places on the Moon, you would find pieces of equipment, American flags, and even a ...

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