



THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN SPACE TRAVEL

NASA's Artemis II mission has sparked the beginning of a new wave of space travel, aimed at the Moon and beyond. The United States plans to send several Artemis missions over the next few years, including manned missions to the Moon and working to establish a permanent settlement.

Did you know?...

- Artemis III is scheduled to [launch](#) in mid-2027 for a crewed Low Earth Orbit mission, testing rendezvous and docking between Orion and commercial lunar landers with the stated purpose to validate docking/transfer procedures before committing crew to a lunar surface descent.
- Artemis V is scheduled to [launch](#) in late 2028 for a crewed Moon landing, the goal of which will be the beginnings of construction of the Artemis Base Camp, a permanent settlement which is currently estimated to be completed in the 2030s.
- In March 2026, NASA unveiled a [plan](#) for a \$20 billion seven-year plan to build a base on the Moon, with Elon Musk's SpaceX commenting that they have shifted focus to developing a "self-growing city" on the Moon.



NASA Unveils Nuclear-Powered Mission as First Step Toward Mars

During the buildup to the Artemis II launch, NASA announced their commitment to producing nuclear-powered vessels to advance future space programs, including future missions to Mars.

Space Reactor 1 Freedom will be the first mission to Mars, utilizing a nuclear-powered unmanned vessel to learn more about the red planet.

The Future Of American Space Travel

Executive Summary

NASA's Artemis II mission has sparked the beginning of a new wave of space travel, aimed at the Moon and beyond. As the Artemis II mission makes history by breaking the record of maximum distance from Earth, it will also help test innovations and technologies to support further human exploration of space.

The innovations assessed on the Artemis II mission will inform future space travel, including new rocket propulsion technology, new communications systems, radiation sensors, and human biology evaluation technology to make space travel safer and more efficient as humanity explores the solar system.

With the success of Artemis II, the United States plans to send several Artemis missions over the next few years, including manned missions to the Moon and working to establish a permanent settlement there. Plans have also been announced to send an unmanned nuclear-powered ship to Mars to pave the way for future efforts to colonize the planet. Private corporations have also pledged to continue efforts to advance space travel, including efforts to build commercial space stations around Earth and Elon Musk's commitment to building a permanent settlement on the Moon.

Additionally, following directives from President Trump and Congress, the U.S. government has pledged to declassify and disclose all available information related to UFO/UAPs. While all documents reviewed and disclosed thus far have shown no evidence of UFOs, the continuing whistleblower comments and public interest will help to ensure that any proof of extraterrestrials is revealed, as mandated by law.

Artemis II Space Mission

- On April 1, 2026, the Artemis II space mission [launched](#) from Kennedy Space Center in Florida with the stated mission of carrying four astronauts around the Moon and back onboard the spacecraft, "Integrity."
 - This mission is the first [crewed](#) deep-space flight of any kind since Apollo 17 in 1972.
- On April 6, 2026, the crew [surpassed](#) the previous record of 400,171 km (248,655 miles) set by Apollo 13 in 1970. Their maximum distance reached 406,771 km from Earth — breaking the 56-year-old human spaceflight distance record by over 6,600 km.

Technology Being Tested On Artemis II

- The Artemis II mission's stated goals include testing new technologies, including life support systems and manual maneuvering systems, for use in future space missions.
 - This is the first [crewed](#) flight of both the SLS rocket and Orion capsule, validating them as human-rated deep space transportation. The data collected, including trajectory precision, engine performance, and propellant consumption, feeds directly into Artemis III, IV, and Mars mission planning.

- The Interim Cryogenic Propulsion Stage [performed](#) the critical Translunar Injection burn. Future missions will use an [upgraded](#) Exploration Upper Stage (EUS), currently in testing for Artemis IV at Stennis Space Center.
- The Artemis II Optical Communications System is a laser-based [communications](#) payload capable of data downlink speeds up to 260 megabits per second, far exceeding traditional radio frequency (RF) systems.
- The Hybrid Electronic Radiation Assessors consist of six active radiation sensors [deployed](#) throughout the Orion cabin, plus individual pocket dosimeters worn by each crew member. This is the first use of this technology by a crew beyond Earth orbit.
- Human biology evaluation technology, [including](#) ARCHeR (Artemis Research for Crew Health and Readiness) wristband devices which continuously monitor sleep patterns, movement, stress, and cognition in deep space, and AVATAR Organ-on-a-Chip devices which [utilize](#) USB-drive-sized chips containing crew members' own bone marrow cells (derived from pre-flight blood donations) to serve as biological "avatars" that measure individual responses to radiation and microgravity.

The Future Of The Artemis Program

- Over the next several years, the United States plans to send multiple Artemis missions to the Moon as we explore the technology needed to advance space colonization efforts.
 - Artemis III is scheduled to [launch](#) in mid-2027 for a crewed Low Earth Orbit mission, testing rendezvous and docking between Orion and commercial lunar landers with the stated purpose to validate docking/transfer procedures before committing crew to a lunar surface descent.
 - Artemis IV is scheduled to [launch](#) in early 2028 for the first crewed U.S. Moon landing since Apollo 17 (1972), targeting the lunar South Pole. Annual lunar missions will begin to be scheduled after this mission.
 - Artemis V is scheduled to [launch](#) in late 2028 for a crewed Moon landing, the goal of which will be the beginnings of construction of the Artemis Base Camp, a permanent settlement which is currently estimated to be completed in the 2030s.

Journey to Mars

- During the buildup to the Artemis II launch, NASA [announced](#) their commitment to producing nuclear-powered vessels to advance future space programs, including future missions to Mars.
- Space Reactor 1 Freedom will be the first mission to Mars, [utilizing](#) a nuclear-powered unmanned vessel to learn more about the red planet.
- SR-1 Freedom will [deploy](#) aerial helicopters to explore Mars from the air and to inform NASA on propulsion systems for eventual crewed Mars missions.
- SR-1 Freedom is [projected](#) to launch in late 2028.

Looking Beyond Artemis

- On April 5, 2026, after the launch of Artemis II, the White House [released](#) a statement saying “America will never give up on the Moon again.”
- In March 2026, NASA [unveiled](#) a plan for a \$20 billion seven-year plan to build a base on the Moon, with Elon Musk’s SpaceX commenting that they have shifted focus to developing a “self-growing city” on the Moon.
- SpaceX remains under [contract](#) for NASA's Human Landing System for Artemis IV (first lunar landing, 2028), cementing its role as the primary commercial lunar infrastructure provider.
- Other private corporations have [continued](#) to work on producing commercial space stations, including Blue Origin and Sierra Space’s joint commercial station designed as a “mixed-use business park in orbit,” targeting operational status before ISS decommission (~2030).

UFO Declassification

- The FY2024 NDAA [mandated](#) that all federal agencies transfer digital copies of UAP (Unidentified Aerial Phenomena) or UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) records to the National Archives on a rolling basis and [ordered](#) the ODNI, Pentagon, FAA, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NSA, and State Department’s UAP records to be transferred and made publicly accessible.
- The All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) is an office [within](#) the Department of War which is tasked with investigating and resolving UAP reports. AARO currently has a caseload of over 2,000 reports and in 2024 [disclosed](#) that it found no verifiable evidence of recovered non-human craft or reverse engineering programs in government files. This report has been [contested](#) by whistleblowers who claim records are not being fully disclosed.
- Per AARO's September 2025 information paper, records remain [classified](#) when they would reveal sensitive collection methods (how military sensors detected UAPs), expose sources and methods of intelligence collection, disclose classified technology capabilities of U.S. systems used to detect or intercept UAPs, or compromise foreign intelligence relationships
- However, as President Trump has [instructed](#) Secretary Hegseth and federal agencies to release all documents related to UAPs, additional disclosures are likely as records are reviewed and declassified.