

# THE MOON



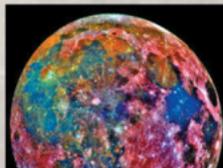
"OUR CLOSEST NEIGHBOR"



Earth's only natural satellite is smaller than four other moons in the solar system, yet it is larger than the planet Pluto. More than 70 spacecraft have been sent to the Moon and 12 astronauts have walked upon its surface. The presence of the Moon stabilizes Earth's wobble. Over billions of years, the Earth's stable spin made for a stable climate that may have influenced the development and growth of life here.

From Earth, we see the same face of the Moon all the time because the Moon rotates just once on its own axis in very nearly the same time that it travels once around Earth. This is known as "synchronous rotation."

This false-color image was taken by the Galileo spacecraft in order to help scientists interpret various lunar surface soil compositions.



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