

# Giant Crater on Titan

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A giant impact crater the size of Iowa was spotted on Saturn's moon Titan by NASA's Cassini radar instrument during Tuesday's Titan flyby. Cassini flew within 1,577 kilometers (980 miles) of Titan's surface and its radar instrument took detailed images of the surface. This is the third close Titan flyby of the mission, which began in July 2004, and only the second time the radar instrument has examined Titan. Scientists see some things that look familiar, along with scenes that are completely new.

It's reassuring to look at two parts of Titan and see similar things," said Dr. Jonathan Lunine, Cassini interdisciplinary scientist from the University of Arizona, Tucson. "At the same time, there are new and strange things."

This flyby is the first time that Cassini's radar and the imaging camera

overlapped. This overlap in coverage should be able to provide more information about the surface features than either technique alone. The 440-kilometer-wide (273-mile) crater identified by the radar instrument was seen before with Cassini's imaging cameras, but not in this detail.

A second radar image released today shows features nicknamed "cat scratches". These parallel linear features are intriguing, and may be formed by winds, like sand dunes, or by other geological processes.

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