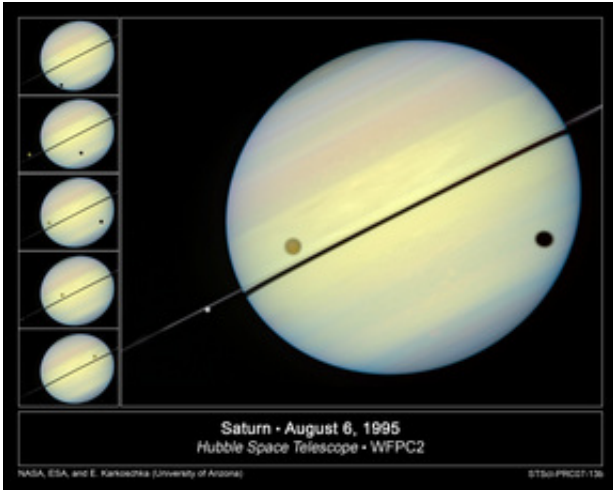


Saturn Stars in Three Hubble Movies

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This movie still shows Titan chasing its shadow across Saturn's disk. The still is from a movie created from images taken by NASA's Hubble Space Telescope. It reveals the planet's rings tipped nearly edge-on toward the Earth. This edge-on alignment happens once every 15 years. The last time this alignment occurred was in 1995 and 1996. The images for the movie were taken Aug. 6, 1995 with Hubble's Wide Field and Planetary Camera 2, in blue, green, and red filters. This true-color image of Saturn shows the bands of clouds that make up the planet's atmosphere. This banded structure is similar to Jupiter's. A thick haze covers the clouds. The moon Tethys is just beneath Saturn's rings on the left. The "thumbnail" images on the far left are frames from the movie that show the moons transiting the planet. Credit: NASA, ESA, E. Karkoschka (University of Arizona) and G. Bacon (STScI)

Photogenic Saturn has now become a movie star.

Astronomers have woven NASA Hubble Space Telescope images of Saturn, its rings, and several of its moons into three movies. Each movie highlights unique times in the planet's 30-year waltz around the Sun. Two of the movies show the motion of several of Saturn's moons when the planet's rings were tilted nearly edge-on to Earth and to the Sun.

These edge-on alignments of the rings occur roughly once every 15 years. Another movie presents a clear view of Saturn's Southern Hemisphere when the planet's rings were at maximum tilt toward Earth. Hubble snapped only about a dozen images during each of these three events, so astronomers created software to extend the photos into the hundreds of images needed for a movie.

Source: Space Telescope Science Institute

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