

Before Darkness Falls: Cassini to Scan Enceladus on Winter's Cusp

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Artist's concept of Cassini's Nov. 21, 2009, Enceladus flyby. Image credit: NASA/JPL

(PhysOrg.com) -- NASA's Cassini spacecraft will fly by Saturn's moon Enceladus this weekend for a last peek at the intriguing "tiger stripes" before winter darkness blankets the area for several years.

Scientists are particularly interested in the tiger stripes, which are fissures in the south polar region, because they spew jets of water vapor and other particles hundreds of kilometers, or miles, from the surface.

The flyby, which is sometimes called "E8" because it is the eighth targeted flyby of Enceladus, is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 21 UTC, which is the evening of Friday, Nov. 20 in U.S. time zones. Cassini team members expect to fly the [spacecraft](#) to within about 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) of the moon's surface, at around 82 degrees south latitude.

This will be a more distant flyby than the one on Nov. 2, when Cassini flew about 100 kilometers (60 miles) above the surface.

During this flyby, scientists will focus on a tiger stripe called Baghdad Sulcus and create a contiguous thermal map of the feature. The spacecraft will also be snapping high-resolution images of the southern part of the Saturn-facing hemisphere.

For more information on the [flyby](#), [click here](#).

Provided by JPL/NASA ([news](#) : [web](#))

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