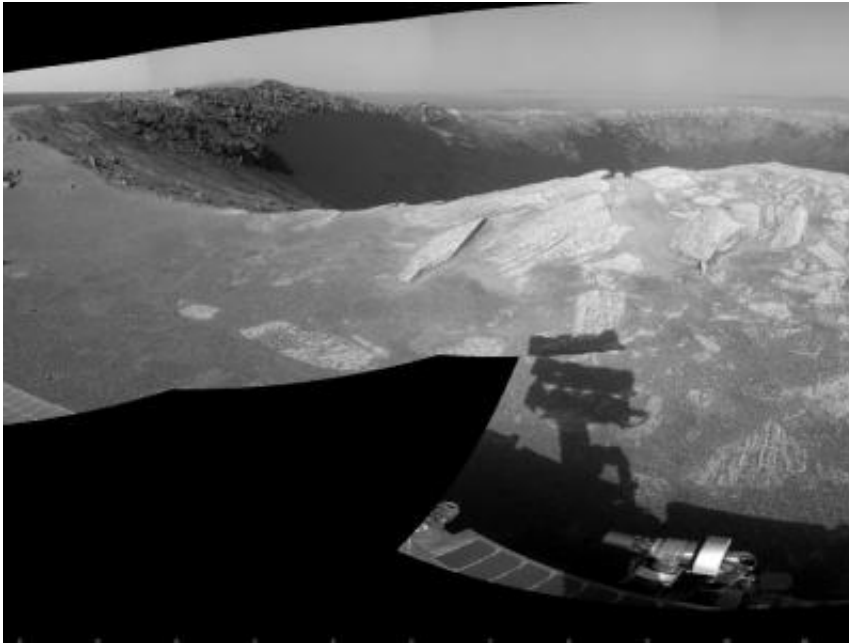


Opportunity studying a football-field size crater

December 23 2010



A football-field-size crater, informally named "Santa Maria," dominates the scene in this 360-degree view from NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity. Following a 25-meter (82-foot) drive on the 2,451st Martian day, or sol, of the rover's work on Mars (Dec. 16, 2010), Opportunity used its navigation camera to take the frames combined into this mosaic. South is at the center. North is at both ends. The view is presented as a cylindrical projection. Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(PhysOrg.com) -- On Dec. 16, 2010, NASA's Mars Exploration Rover Opportunity reached a crater about the size of a football field-some 90

meters (295 feet) in diameter. The rover team plans to use cameras and spectrometers during the next several weeks to examine rocks exposed at the crater, informally named "Santa Maria."

A mosaic of image frames taken by Opportunity's navigation camera on Dec. 16 shows the crater's sharp rim and rocks ejected from the impact that had excavated the crater.

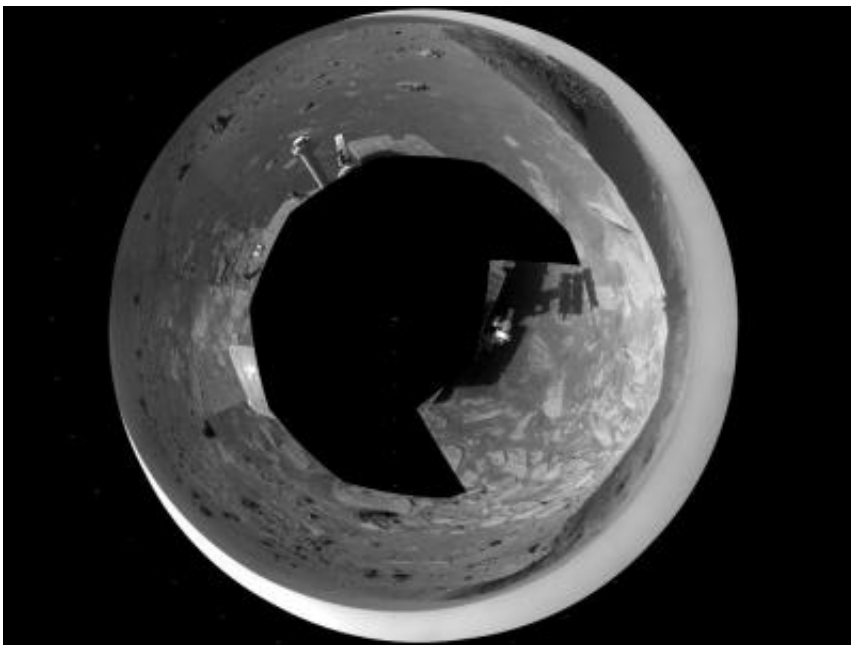


Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

Opportunity completed its three-month prime mission on Mars in April 2004 and has been working in bonus extended missions since then. After the investigations at Santa Maria, the rover team plans to resume a long-term trek by Opportunity to the rim of [Endeavour](#) Crater, which is about 22 kilometers (14 miles) in diameter.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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