

Jupiter-bound space probe captures Earth and Moon

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This image of Earth (on the left) and the moon (on the right) was taken by NASA's Juno spacecraft on Aug. 26, 2011, when the spacecraft was about 6 million miles (9.66 million kilometers) away. It was taken by the spacecraft's onboard camera, JunoCam. The solar-powered Juno spacecraft lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on Aug. 5 to begin a five-year journey to Jupiter. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

(PhysOrg.com) -- On its way to the biggest planet in the solar system -- Jupiter, NASA's Juno spacecraft took time to capture its home planet and its natural satellite -- the moon.

"This is a remarkable sight people get to see all too rarely," said Scott Bolton, Juno principal investigator from the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio. "This view of our planet shows how Earth looks from the outside, illustrating a special perspective of our role and place in the universe. We see a humbling yet beautiful view of ourselves."

The image was taken by the spacecraft's camera, JunoCam, on Aug. 26 when the spacecraft was about 6 million miles (9.66 million kilometers) away. The image was taken as part of the mission team's checkout of the Juno spacecraft. The team is conducting its initial detailed checks on the spacecraft's instruments and subsystems after its [launch](#) on Aug. 5.

Juno covered the distance from Earth to the moon (about 250,000 miles or 402,000 kilometers) in less than one day's time. It will take the spacecraft another five years and 1,740 million miles (2,800 million kilometers) to complete the journey to Jupiter. The spacecraft will orbit the planet's poles 33 times and use its eight science instruments to probe beneath the gas giant's obscuring cloud cover to learn more about its origins, structure, atmosphere and [magnetosphere](#), and look for a potential solid planetary core.

The solar-powered [Juno](#) spacecraft lifted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida at 9:25 a.m. PDT (12:25 p.m. EDT) on Aug. 5 to begin its five-year journey to Jupiter.

Provided by JPL/NASA

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