

Dutch astronaut's cheesy request

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Dutch astronaut Andre Kuipers will have a special treat waiting for him in orbit when he arrives in space next month: five kilogrammes of Amsterdam's finest cheese, its maker said Saturday.

The 53-year-old Kuipers is due to blast off on board a [Soyuz rocket](#) on December 21 with two other astronauts for a five-month-mission on board the [International Space Station](#).

"Andre is a big fan of our cheese and asked us in a letter to arrange with space authorities to see if we could send up some of his favourite Old Amsterdam," the cheesemaker's spokeswoman Henriette Westland told AFP.

"After numerous emails to NASA and the [European Space Agency](#), they agreed to send up around 10 kilogrammes (22 pounds)," she added.

She said the Dutch traditional snack had to be specially cut and wrapped before being shipped to Houston and then to Kazakhstan, where five kilogrammes were blasted off on board a cargo rocket to the ISS at the end of October.

Another five kilogrammes are expected to go up on another freight rocket from the [Baikonur](#) launching site by the end of January, Westland added.

Old Amsterdam cheese is one of the Westland company's best-known export brands and sold in some 70 countries.

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