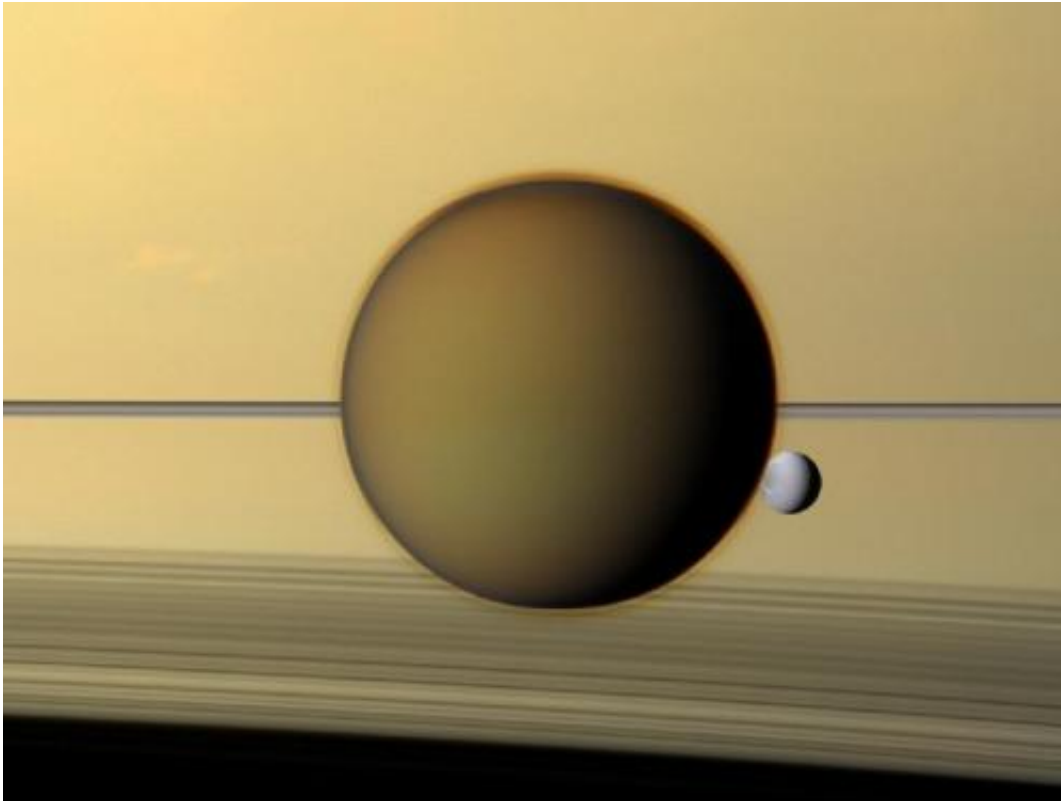


Cassini delivers holiday treats from Saturn

December 22 2011

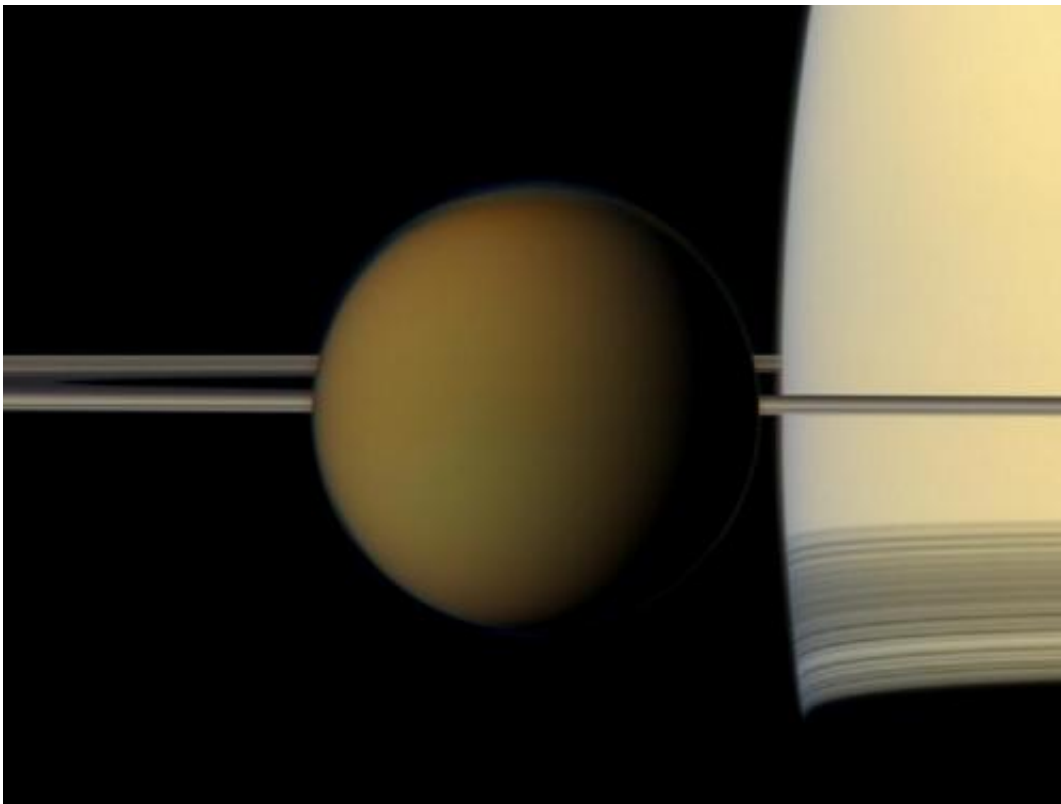


Saturn's third-largest moon Dione can be seen through the haze of its largest moon, Titan, in this view of the two posing before the planet and its rings from NASA's Cassini spacecraft. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/SSI

(PhysOrg.com) -- No team of reindeer, but radio signals flying clear across the solar system from NASA's Cassini spacecraft have delivered a holiday package of glorious images. The pictures, from Cassini's imaging team, show Saturn's largest, most colorful ornament, Titan, and

other icy baubles in orbit around this splendid planet.

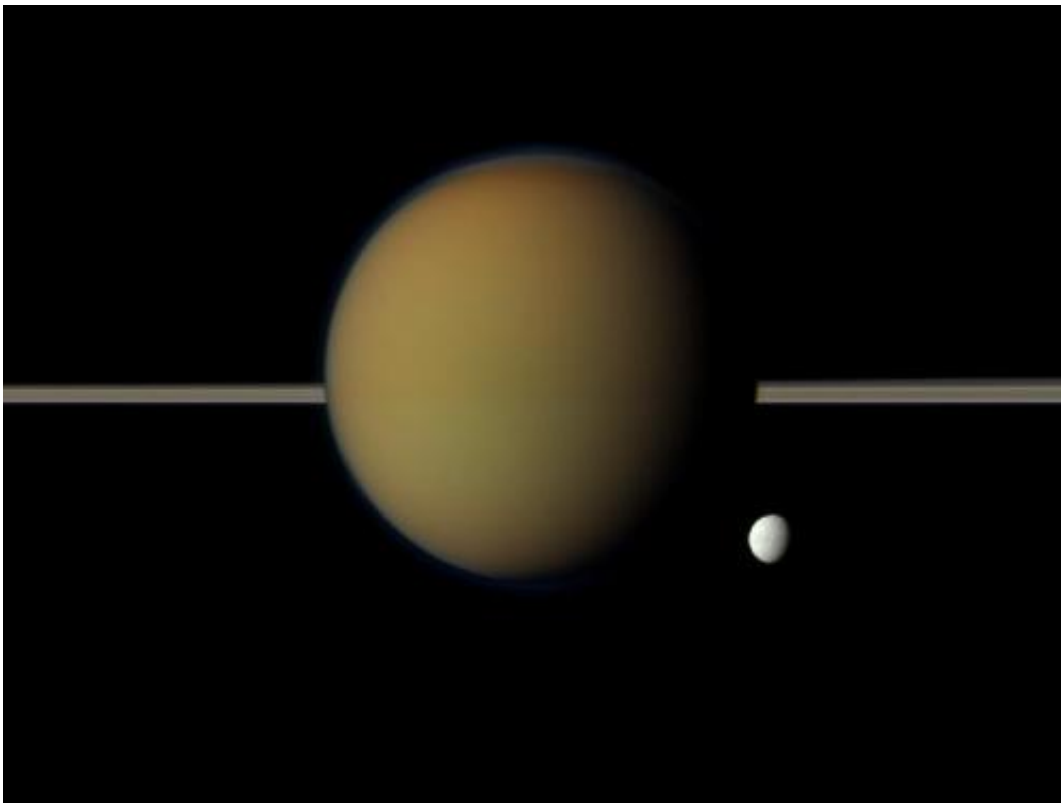
The release includes [images](#) of satellite conjunctions in which one moon passes in front of or behind another. Cassini scientists regularly make these observations to study the ever-changing orbits of the planet's moons. But even in these routine images, the Saturnian system shines. A few of Saturn's stark, airless, icy moons appear to dangle next to the orange orb of Titan, the only moon in the [solar system](#) with a substantial atmosphere. Titan's atmosphere is of great interest because of its similarities to the atmosphere believed to exist long ago on the early Earth.



The colorful globe of Saturn's largest moon, Titan, passes in front of the planet and its rings in this true color snapshot from NASA's Cassini spacecraft. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/SSI

The images are online at: nasa.gov/cassini"
target="_blank">www.nasa.gov/cassini .

While it may be wintry in Earth's northern hemisphere, it is currently northern spring in the Saturnian system and it will remain so for several Earth years. Current plans to extend the Cassini mission through 2017 will supply a continued bounty of scientifically rewarding and majestic views of Saturn and its moons and rings, as spectators are treated to the passage of northern spring and the arrival of summer in May 2017.



Saturn's moon Tethys, with its stark white icy surface, peeps out from behind the larger, hazy, colorful Titan in this Cassini view of the two moons. Saturn's rings lie between the two. Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech/SSI

"As another year traveling this magnificent sector of our solar system draws to a close, all of us on Cassini wish all of you a very happy and peaceful holiday season, " said Carolyn Porco, [Cassini](#) imaging team lead at the Space Science Institute, Boulder, Colo.

Provided by JPL/NASA

Citation: Cassini delivers holiday treats from Saturn (2011, December 22) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-12-cassini-holiday-saturn.html>

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