

# Europe's plans to visit the Moon in 2018

July 27 2012, by Jason Major

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Credit: ESA

The European Space Agency is aiming for the Moon with their Lunar Lander mission, anticipated to arrive on the lunar surface in 2018. Although ESA successfully put a lander on the surface of Titan with the Huygens probe in 2005, this will be the first European spacecraft to visit Earth's Moon.

Although [Lunar Lander](#) will be an unmanned robotic explorer, the

mission will be a forerunner to future human exploration of the Moon as well as Mars. Lunar Lander will use advanced technologies for autonomous landing and will be able to determine the best location for touchdown on its own, utilizing lasers to avoid obstacles on the Moon's surface.

With no GPS on the Moon, Lunar Lander will navigate by digitally imaging the surface on the fly. Landing will be accomplished via thrusters, which were successfully tested earlier this year at a test chamber in Germany.

Lunar Lander's destination will be the Moon's south pole, where no exploration missions have ever landed. Once on the [lunar surface](#), the Lander will investigate Moon dust using a robotic arm and a suite of onboard diagnostic instruments, sending data and images back to scientists on Earth for further study.

Watch a video of the Lunar Lander mission below, from launch to landing.

**More information:** Read more about Lunar Lander on the ESA site here. [www.esa.int/SPECIALS/lunarland ... r/SEMS5CA573H\\_0.html](http://www.esa.int/SPECIALS/lunarland...r/SEMS5CA573H_0.html)

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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