

Russia to send woman to space in 2014

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Astronauts sit inside a training module in Star City on May 6, 2009. Russia will send a female cosmonaut into space for the first time in two decades next year, an official at the space training centre said Wednesday.

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Yelena Serova, 36 and a professional cosmonaut, "is getting ready for a

[space flight](#) in the second half of 2014," said Alexei Temerov, an official at Russia's Star City space training centre.

Russia will this year celebrate the 50th anniversary of the first woman's trip to space. The feat was accomplished by Valentina Tereshkova on June 16, 1963, and was followed by that of another Soviet cosmonaut, Svetlana Savitskaya, who became the first woman to do a space walk.

But while [NASA](#) regularly sends female astronauts to work at the [International Space Station](#) (ISS), there has been only one Russian woman to fly to space since the early 1980s, Yelena Kondakova.

Kondakova spent five months in space on the since-retired Mir station in 1994-1995. She also travelled aboard the US Space Shuttle in 1997.

Yelena Serova will spend six months at the ISS, Temerov said.

"Her work programme at the ISS will not be anything extraordinary. It will be the usual research programme. A [space walk](#) is not planned," he added.

A second woman currently in training, 28-year-old Anna Kikina, has joined the cosmonaut program after becoming one of eight people selected in last year's recruitment drive.

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