

Soyuz capsule docks with space station

May 29 2013



In this image taken from video provided by NASA, the Soyuz TMA-09M carrying three new Expedition 36 crew members approaches the International Space Station Wednesday, May 29, 2013. The cramped capsule carrying NASA's Karen Nyberg, Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin and Italy's Luca Parmitano orbited the Earth four times before docking with the space station. (AP Photo/NASA-TV)

A Soyuz capsule carrying an American, Russian and Italian successfully docked Wednesday with the International Space Station, where the new

crew will spend six months conducting a variety of experiments.

The docking took place at 8:10 a.m. (0210 GMT, 10:10 p.m. EDT) less than six hours after the [Russian spacecraft](#) lifted off from the [Baikonur Cosmodrome](#), which Russia leases in Kazakhstan.

Live footage provided by NASA TV showed it soaring into the clear night sky. About four minutes later, the announcer said the Soyuz was traveling at 4,700 miles per hour (about 7,500 kilometers per hour).

The cramped capsule carrying NASA's Karen Nyberg, [Russian cosmonaut](#) Fyodor Yurchikhin and Italy's Luca Parmitano orbited the Earth four times before docking with the space station.



The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz TMA-09M space ship carrying a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, blasts off at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 29, 2013. The Russian rocket carries U.S. astronaut Karen Nyberg, Russian cosmonaut Fyodor

Yurchikhin, and European Space Agency astronaut Luca Parmitano. (AP Photo/Mikhail Metzel)

After docking, two hours passed before pressure equalized between the capsule and the station, allowing safe entry.

The three new arrivals were greeted by NASA's Chris Cassidy and Russians Alexander Misurkin and the station's commander Pavel Vinogradov, who have been aboard the space station since late March.



In a photo provided by NASA Expedition 36/37 Soyuz Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin of the Russian Federal Space Agency, top, Flight Engineers Luca Parmitano of the European Space Agency, center, and Karen Nyberg of NASA, wave as they board the Soyuz rocket ahead of their launch to the International

Space Station, early Wednesday, May 29, 2013, in Baikonur, Kazakhstan. Yurchikhin, Nyberg, and, Parmitano, will remain aboard the station until mid-November. (AP Photo/NASA, Bill Ingalls)

"It was a pretty cool ride," Nyberg said upon arrival.

Cassidy had shaved his head clean to match Parmitano's look and got a thumbs-up from the Italian.

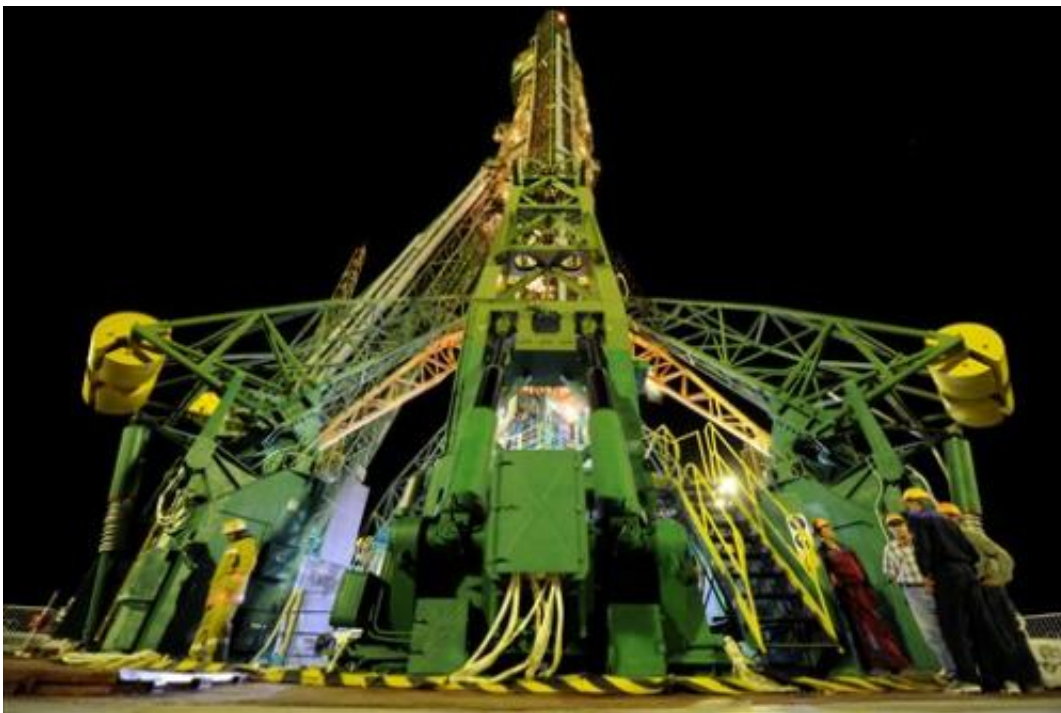


In this image taken from video provided by NASA, the Soyuz TMA-09M carrying three new Expedition 36 crew members, top, approaches the International Space Station Wednesday, May 29, 2013. The cramped capsule carrying NASA's Karen Nyberg, Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin and Italy's Luca Parmitano orbited the Earth four times before docking with the

space station. (AP Photo/NASA-TV)

Yurchikhin, 54, is a veteran of three previous spaceflights, while the 36-year-old Parmitano, a former [test pilot](#), is making his first trip into space. Nyberg, 43, spent two weeks in space in 2008 as part of a U.S. space shuttle crew.

Shortly after their arrival, the incoming team spoke via video link with their relatives and officials back in Baikonur. Parmitano's mother wept throughout the chat with her son.



The Soyuz-FG rocket booster with Soyuz TMA-09M space ship with a new crew to the International Space Station, ISS, stands at the launch pad of the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan, Wednesday, May 29, 2013. The Russian rocket will carries U.S. astronaut Karen Nyberg, Russian cosmonaut Fyodor Yurchikhin, and European Space Agency astronaut Luca Parmitano. (AP

Photo/ Kiril Kudryavtsev, Pool)

Four spacewalks are planned during the expedition, including what NASA said would be the first by an Italian.

The [International Space Station](#) is the biggest orbiting outpost ever built and can sometimes be seen from Earth with the naked eye. It consists of more than a dozen modules built by the United States, Russia, Canada, Japan and the European Space Agency.

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