

Chocolate coming on next space station delivery (Update)

September 16 2013, by Marcia Dunn



An unmanned Antares rocket sits on the launch pad at Wallops Island, Va. in an undated photo provided by NASA. It's due to lift off Wednesday, Sept. 17, 2013 on a test flight of a new cargo ship, called Cygnus, and will deliver goods to the International Space Station. NASA hired Orbital Sciences Corp., the maker of this rocket and cargo ship, to help keep the space station stockpiled. The other company in this new commercial arena is SpaceX. (AP Photo/NASA)

A U.S. company makes its debut this week as a space station delivery service, and the lone American aboard the orbiting lab is counting on a fresh stash of chocolate.

In an interview Monday with The Associated Press, NASA astronaut Karen Nyberg said she can't wait for this weekend's arrival of a new cargo ship named Cygnus. It will be the first shipment by Orbital Sciences Corp. to the International Space Station.

"You know that there's something packed away in that vehicle, something special for you ... We're human beings and we get very excited about the packages from home and some of the treats that we might get," said Nyberg.

Orbital Sciences is scheduled to launch an unmanned Antares rocket containing Cygnus on Wednesday morning

NASA is paying Orbital Sciences and the California-based SpaceX company to keep the space station well stocked now that the space shuttle era has ended.

Orbital Sciences conducted a practice Antares launch in April with a mock payload. This will be its first space station run, coming more than a year after the initial SpaceX delivery.

Because this is considered a test flight, the Cygnus will carry up mostly food and other nonessential items. That suits Nyberg and her two male crewmates—an Italian and a Russian. They have been in orbit since the end of May, with two more months to go. Three more residents arrive later next week.

Given a Wednesday launch, the Cygnus should arrive at the space station on Sunday. Unlike the SpaceX Earth-returning Dragon, it will be filled with trash and, once cut loose, burn up during descent.

Russia, Europe and Japan also send up supplies.

More information: NASA:

www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/index.html

Orbital Sciences Corp.: www.orbital.com/

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