

Astronauts board Soyuz to return to Earth (Update)

March 11 2015



This March 11, 2015 NASA TV image shows Expedition 42 Commander Barry Wilmore (Front-R) handing over control of the ISS to Terry Virts (Front-L) in a change of command ceremony

Two Russian cosmonauts and an American astronaut on Wednesday boarded a Soyuz space capsule in preparation for their return to Earth after spending six months at the International Space Station.

Yelena Serova, Alexander Samokutyaev and Barry Wilmore said farewell to their three crewmates who are staying at the orbiting lab, and floated into the Soyuz, closing the hatch behind them at 3:36 pm Eastern

time (1936 GMT).

The Soyuz undocked from the space station at 6:44 pm (2244 GMT), according to a live broadcast of the event on NASA television.

"Expedition 42 is over," said NASA commentator Rob Navias.

"Wilmore, Serova and Samokutyaev begin the journey home."

The trio left Earth on September 26. They spent 167 days in space and traveled more than 70 million miles (112 million kilometers) during that time, NASA said.

A de-orbit burn is planned for 9:16 pm (0116 GMT Thursday). Then, aided by a parachute, the Soyuz spacecraft is expected to land on a snow-covered steppe in Kazakhstan at 10:08 pm (0208 GMT Thursday).

The next crew launches from Baikonur, Kazakhstan on March 28.

The men on board will be US astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonauts Mikhail Kornienko and Gennady Padalka.

Kelly and Kornienko will stay at the research outpost for an entire year instead of the usual six months, "collecting valuable biomedical data that will inform future deep space, long-duration missions," NASA said.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Astronauts board Soyuz to return to Earth (Update) (2015, March 11) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-astronauts-board-soyuz-earth.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is

provided for information purposes only.