

SpaceX Dragon cargo ship arrives at space station

April 17 2015



This April 14, 2015 still image from NASA TV shows the engine burn from the SpaceX dragon capsule after separation from the Falcon 9 rocket after liftoff from Cape Canaveral, Florida

SpaceX's unmanned Dragon cargo ship arrived Friday at the International Space Station, carrying a load of food and supplies for the astronauts living in orbit.

European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti grappled the

capsule with the space station's robotic arm at 6:55 am (1055 GMT) as the space station flew over the northern Pacific to the east of Japan, NASA said.

"Houston, capture is complete," said NASA astronaut Terry Virts, after high-fiving Cristoforetti in the space station's cupola.

"Samantha did a perfect job grappling Dragon."

The cargo ship will move closer to the space station and complete its latch-on later Friday.

Its contents include an espresso machine, ready-made food packets, and a host of science experiments to study changes in vision, muscle and bones that astronauts experience while in zero gravity.

SpaceX launched the cargo ship on Tuesday from Cape Canaveral, Florida, on its sixth official mission under a \$1.6 billion contract with NASA for a dozen trips to supply the orbiting space station.

The Dragon made history in 2012, when it became the first commercial [cargo ship](#) to reach the [space station](#).

Previously, only government-built spaceships from Europe, Japan and Russia were able to make that journey.

The US-made space shuttles were also big enough to carry cargo along with astronauts, before the program was retired in 2011.

The Dragon was designed, however, to carry astronauts, and the California-based company headed by Internet entrepreneur Elon Musk is working on upgrades that will allow the first crew flight to take place in the next few years.

Boeing is also working on a spaceship to ferry astronauts to [space](#), called the CST-100, which is scheduled for its first manned flight in 2017.

Until then, the world's astronauts must rely on Russia's Soyuz capsules for transport to the research outpost.

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Citation: SpaceX Dragon cargo ship arrives at space station (2015, April 17) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-04-spacex-dragon-cargo-ship-space.html>

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