

ESA astronaut Tim Peake arrives in Baikonur on his last stop before space

December 1 2015



ESA astronaut Tim Peake, NASA astronaut Tim Kopra and Roscosmos commander Yuri Malenchenko arrived at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan ahead of their launch to the International Space Station. Credit: Roscosmos

ESA astronaut Tim Peake, NASA astronaut Tim Kopra and Roscosmos

commander Yuri Malenchenko arrived at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan today ahead of their launch to the International Space Station.

Set for [launch](#) on 15 December, the trio will visit their Soyuz TMA-19M spacecraft for the first time tomorrow.

The run-up to launch includes preparing experiments, numerous medical checkups and physical training, as well as reviewing plans for the six-hour flight to the Space Station.

During this time the astronauts will minimise contact with people to avoid falling ill and bringing unwanted bacteria or viruses to their colleagues in [space](#).

The three will spend almost six months in space working on weightless experiments and maintaining the Station as it circles Earth some 400 km up.

Tim's Principia mission will see him run experiments for researchers from all over our planet, including trying to grow blood vessels and protein crystals, and using a furnace to melt and cool metal alloys as they float in midair.

The two Tims have trained to perform spacewalks and are ready to work together if mission control decides to send them outside.

All Soyuz astronauts enjoy a number of traditions before launch, including planting a tree, visiting a spaceflight museum and signing the door to their room in the Cosmonaut Hotel.



ESA astronaut Alexander Gerst took this image circling Earth on the International Space Station during his six-month Blue Dot mission in 2014. Alexander commented: " History alive: Yuri Gagarin launched into space from this very place 53 years ago. Max Surayev, Reid Wiseman and I just 53 days ago." Credit: ESA/NASA



From left: ESA astronaut Tim Peake, commander-cosmonaut Yuri Malenchenko and NASA astronaut Tim Kopra in front of a Soyuz spacecraft. The trio will leave our planet on 15 December 2015 from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on a Soyuz rocket. A former army helicopter pilot, Tim will travel in the left-hand seat of the capsule and act as co-pilot to Yuri. The crew will arrive at the Space Station with six other astronauts waiting for them. They will share the Station briefly with NASA astronaut Scott Kelly and Russia's Mikhail Kornienko, who will be finishing the last part of their 11-month stay in space. Credit: GCTC

Provided by European Space Agency

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