

# Cargo ship reaches space station on resupply run

March 26 2016

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This NASA photo shows a United Launch Alliance Atlas V rocket carrying Orbital ATK's Cygnus spacecraft on a resupply mission to the International Space Station lifting off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on March 22, 2016

An unmanned cargo ship packed with science experiment materials plus food, water and clothes successfully docked at the International Space Station on Saturday, NASA partner Orbital ATK said.

The cargo ship, Cygnus, which blasted off Tuesday on the resupply run, was carrying 7,900 pounds (3.6 metric tons) of supplies to the station for the ISS crew of six astronauts, as well as components to support dozens of science and research probes.

Cygnus was captured by the [space](#) station's robotic arm, operated by crew members, and guided into its berthing port. The operation was over by 1452 GMT.

"Our flexible Cygnus spacecraft has a lot of work left to do. Following its stay at the ISS, and for the first time, we will undertake three experiments onboard the [unmanned spacecraft](#)," said Frank Culbertson, president of Orbital ATK's Space Systems Group.

The pressurized vessel will stay at the ISS until May. After loading it with trash and once it is at a safe distance from the station, NASA engineers will then set off a blaze inside the capsule to see how large flames behave in space.

NASA has set off tiny controlled fires in space in the past, but never tested how large flames react inside an orbiting space capsule.

Cygnus' cargo also includes an instrument that, for the first time, will allow experts to evaluate, from space, the chemical composition of meteors entering Earth's atmosphere.

It was also carrying a new 3D printer and another scientific highlight includes a so-called Gecko Gripper, a mechanism similar to the tiny hairs on the feet of geckos that makes it possible for them to stick to surfaces.

This technology could one day be used on the hands and feet of robots that would move along the exterior of spacecraft to carry out inspections

and repairs.

It is Orbital's fifth supply mission to the ISS, as part of a \$1.9 billion contract with NASA to deliver necessities to the astronauts living in space.

**More information:** NASA:

[www.nasa.gov/mission\\_pages/station/main/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/main/index.html)

Orbital ATK: [www.orbitalatk.com/](http://www.orbitalatk.com/)

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