

Christmas delivery at space station, courtesy of Japan

December 13 2016, by Marcia Dunn



This photo provided by NASA TV shows a Japanese cargo ship before it arrives with Christmas gifts to the International Space Station on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2016. The capsule—called Kounotori, or white stork—contains nearly 5 tons of food, water, batteries and other supplies. NASA said there also are Christmas presents for the two Americans, three Russians and one Frenchman on board. (NASA TV via AP)

Christmas gifts arrived at the International Space Station on Tuesday, courtesy of Japan.

A Japanese cargo ship pulled up at the orbiting lab four days after launching. The capsule—called Kounotori, or white stork—contains nearly 5 tons of food, water, batteries and other supplies. NASA said there also are Christmas presents for the two Americans, three Russians and one Frenchman on board.

Commander Shane Kimbrough, an American, and France's Thomas Pesquet used the [robot arm](#) to grab the capsule 250 miles above Chile. Flight controllers in Japan and Houston applauded—and some of the Japanese even bowed.

Kimbrough said the crew was "really excited" to accept delivery and radioed thanks to all.

"The vehicle is beautiful, and it performed flawlessly," he said.

Barely two weeks ago, a Russian supply ship was destroyed shortly after liftoff. At the same time, one of NASA's main suppliers, SpaceX, is grounded. So the Japanese delivery is especially welcome.

The astronauts need the six new lithium-ion batteries for next month's spacewalks. They will replace the old nickel-hydrogen batteries that store energy generated by the station's big solar panels.

More information: NASA:

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

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