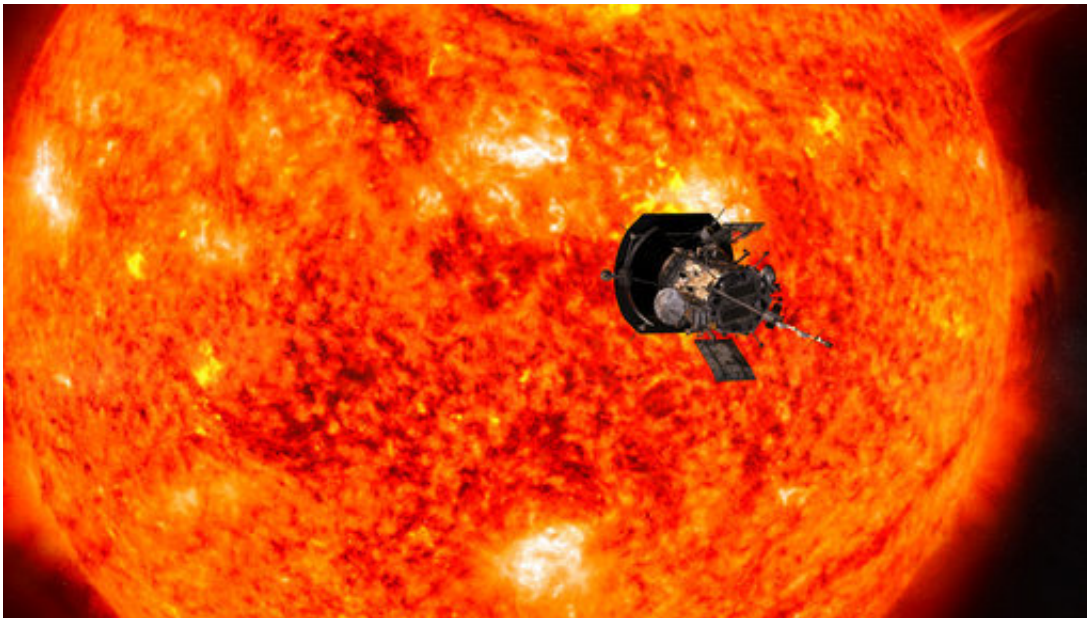


# NASA's Parker Solar Probe swinging by Venus on way to sun

October 2 2018, by Marcia Dunn

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This illustration from NASA shows the Parker Solar Probe spacecraft approaching the sun. Launched in August 2018, the spacecraft will get a gravity assist Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2018, as it passes within 1,500 miles of Venus. The flyby is the first of seven that will draw Parker ever closer to the sun. (Steve Gribben/Johns Hopkins APL/NASA via AP)

NASA's Parker Solar Probe is swinging by Venus on its unprecedented journey to the sun.

Launched in August, the spacecraft gets a gravity assist Wednesday as it passes within 1,500 miles (2,400 kilometers) of Venus. The flyby is the

first of seven that will draw Parker ever closer to the sun.

By the end of October, Parker will shatter the current record for close solar encounters, set by a NASA spacecraft in 1976 from 27 million miles (43 million kilometers) out. Parker will get within 15 million miles (25 million kilometers) of the sun's surface in November. Twenty-four such orbits—dipping into the sun's [upper atmosphere](#), or corona—are planned over the next seven years. The gap will eventually shrink to 3.8 million miles (6 million kilometers).

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