

SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket poised for first commercial launch

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A visitor on a beach just north of the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, looking for a good vantage point to capture the launch of SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket

SpaceX's Falcon Heavy rocket is poised for its first commercial space launch Wednesday, carrying a Saudi satellite operated by Arabsat, a year

after sending founder Elon Musk's red Tesla roadster into orbit as a test.

The Falcon Heavy is scheduled to lift off from the Kennedy Space center in Florida at 6:36 pm (2236 GMT) and place the six-ton Arabsat-6A satellite into [geostationary orbit](#) some 22,500 miles (36,000 kilometers) above the Earth.

SpaceX has two operational rockets: the Falcon 9, which with 21 launches in 2018 dominates the US market, and the Falcon Heavy, which as its name suggests is designed to lift much heavier payloads into more distant orbits.

It consists of the equivalent of three Falcon 9 rockets combined, tripling its thrust. SpaceX will attempt to re-land the rocket's three boosters.

In its first launch, in February 2018, a dummy dubbed Starman was placed behind the wheel of Musk's roadster, which is currently orbiting the Sun somewhere between Earth and Mars.

Since then, the US military and private clients have signed contracts for Falcon Heavy launches, and NASA has raised the possibility it may use the [rocket](#) for its planned missions to the Moon.

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