

Candy, cheese soar to space station to satisfy crew cravings

February 16 2020, by Marcia Dunn



The Northrop Grumman Antares rocket with Cygnus resupply spacecraft onboard, launches at NASA's Wallops Flight Facility on Saturday, Feb. 15, 2020 in Wallops Island, Va. The cargo ship is rocketing toward the International Space Station, carrying the usual experiments and gear but also candy and cheese to satisfy the crew's cravings. The nearly 4-ton shipment should arrive at the

orbiting lab Tuesday. (Aubrey Gemignani/NASA via AP)

A cargo ship rocketed toward the International Space Station on Saturday, carrying candy and cheese to satisfy the astronauts' cravings.

Northrop Grumman launched its Cygnus capsule from the Virginia seashore. The nearly 4-ton shipment should arrive at the orbiting lab Tuesday. It took three tries over the past week to get the Antares rocket off the pad, with it finally taking flight at 3:21 p.m.—an auspicious 3-2-1.

"Awesome launch," Joel Montalbano, NASA's deputy space station program manager, said once the capsule reached orbit.

Besides the usual experiments and gear, the capsule holds cheddar and manchego cheeses, [fresh fruit](#) and vegetables, chocolate and three kinds of gummy candy expressly requested by the three station astronauts: Skittles, Hot Tamales, and Mike and Ike's.

Periodic supply runs by Russia, Japan and NASA's two private shippers, Northrop Grumman and SpaceX, usually provide more than experiments, equipment, clothes and freeze-dried meals. The capsules also bring family care packages, as well as fresh food to offset the run-of-the-mill station grub.

This latest delivery should have arrived well before Valentine's Day. But last-minute equipment concerns at the Wallops Island launch pad halted last Sunday's countdown for the Antares rocket, then bad weather moved in. Dangerously [high wind](#) scuttled Friday's attempt.

This was the company's 13th space station delivery for NASA. The

Cygnus capsules get their name from the Swan Constellation.

This particular Cygnus has been christened the SS Robert H. Lawrence in honor of America's first black astronaut. Lawrence, an Air Force major, was chosen in 1967 as an astronaut for a classified military space program known as the Manned Orbiting Laboratory. He was killed five months later in a [plane crash](#) and never flew in space.

The space station is now home for Americans Jessica Meir and Andrew Morgan and Russian Oleg Skripochka. Morgan has been up there since July and the two others since September; they'll remain on board until April. Three other astronauts returned to Earth earlier this month.

Until astronaut launches resume from Florida—possibly by SpaceX this spring—the [station](#) crew will be limited in size to three. NASA [astronauts](#) now launch on Russian rockets from Kazakhstan.

Boeing, NASA's other commercial crew provider, is struggling with software problems in its astronaut capsule. A December test flight was marred by coding errors.

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