

SpaceX capsules parked side-by-side at station for 1st time

December 7 2020, by Marcia Dunn



In this image taken from NASA TV the Dragon cargo capsule docks at the International Space Station, Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, alongside a Dragon crew capsule that carried up astronauts three weeks ago. (NASA via AP)

A SpaceX supply ship bearing Christmas goodies arrived at the International Space Station on Monday, parking alongside another Dragon capsule that carried up astronauts three weeks ago.

It's the first time Elon Musk's company has two Dragons at the orbiting lab, filling both available slots.

Unlike SpaceX's previous cargo carriers, which had to be plucked from orbit by the space station's robot arm, this larger and updated model docked all by itself a day after rocketing into orbit from NASA's Kennedy Space Center. This unusually large shipment—exceeding 6,400 pounds (2,900 kilograms)—includes experiments, equipment, Christmas presents and the makings for a holiday feast for the seven station astronauts.

The crew monitored all the action as the capsule pulled up and docked at the station more than 260 miles (420 kilometers) above the Indian Ocean. The two Dragon parking spots are just 15 feet (4.5 meters) or so apart.

NASA astronaut Kate Rubins offered "a huge congratulations" to SpaceX and everyone else involved.

"It's pretty amazing to think that less than a month ago you docked four [crew members](#)," radioed Rubins, a microbiologist and one of four Americans on board. "And now you're bringing a vehicle full of world class science for us to execute."

The crew also includes two Russians and one Japanese.

SpaceX redesigned its [cargo ships](#) to be as big as its spacious crew capsules in order to pack more in.

The cargo Dragon will remain at the [space station](#) for a month, before parachuting into the Atlantic with science samples and discarded gear. The crew Dragon will stay up until spring.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: SpaceX capsules parked side-by-side at station for 1st time (2020, December 7)
retrieved 9 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2020-12-spacex-capsules-side-by-side-station-1st.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--