

Japanese tycoon planning space station visit, then moon trip

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In this Nov. 20, 2018, file photo, Zozo Chief Executive Yusaku Maezawa speaks during a press conference on the PGA Tour in Tokyo. The Japanese fashion tycoon who's booked a SpaceX ride to the moon is going to try out the International Space Station first. Maezawa announced Thursday, May 13, 2021, that he's bought two seats on a Russian Soyuz capsule. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara, File)

The Japanese fashion tycoon who's booked a SpaceX ride to the moon is going to try out the International Space Station first.

"Going to the ISS before the Moon," Yusaku Maezawa [announced](#) Thursday via Twitter.

Maezawa has bought two seats on a Russian Soyuz capsule. He'll blast off in December on the 12-day mission with his production assistant and a professional cosmonaut.

"I'm so curious, 'What's life like in [space](#)?' So, I am planning to find out on my own and share with the world," Maezawa said in a statement.

He'll be the first person to pay his own way to the [space station](#) in more than a decade, according to Virginia-based Space Adventures, which brokered the deal. A Space Adventures spokeswoman declined to divulge the cost. The company has sent seven other tourists to the space station, from 2001 to 2009.

Maezawa's trip to the moon aboard Elon Musk's Starship is tentatively scheduled for 2023. He'll fly around the moon—not land—with eight contest winners.

Maezawa, 45, who founded an online retail clothing business, will be joined by photographer and assistant Yozo Hirano. They will be escorted by Russian cosmonaut Alexander Misurkin, who's spent nearly a year aboard the space station on two separate missions. The launch is scheduled for Dec. 8 from Kazakhstan.

Thursday's announcement comes amid a flurry of private space initiatives.

The Russian Space Agency announced Thursday that a Russian actress

and movie director will launch to the space station in October for filming. The movie is tentatively titled "Challenge."

In January, the first private mission to the space station from the U.S. will bring three businessmen—from the U.S., Canada and Israel—who are paying about \$55 million apiece. They will launch aboard a SpaceX Dragon capsule from Kennedy Space Center and will be accompanied by a former NASA astronaut who now works for Houston-based Axiom Space, which arranged the deal. The company plans about two private missions to the space station a year.

Before the space [station](#) visits, SpaceX will launch its first private spaceflight with four people on board, including tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman, who purchased the mission. They will spend three days orbiting Earth in September.

"This truly is a renaissance in U.S. human spaceflight," NASA's director of commercial spaceflight, Phil McAlister, told reporters Monday. "I think that's the perfect word for what we're experiencing."

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