

Image: Mind the stars

November 5 2021



Credit: ESA/NASA–T. Pesquet

Space can be a cruel mistress, but she is a beautiful one.

As we await the launch of ESA astronaut Matthias Maurer and the return of Thomas Pesquet, let us marvel at the fact that humans live and work in space, an environment so inhospitable to us.

As Thomas nears the end of his six-month mission Alpha on the Space Station, he took this image, noting that living on the International Space Station "really feels like flying on a spaceship into the cosmos... or wait... that's what we do."

While astronauts are often pointing their cameras down to Earth, Thomas looked up for this image. "When you let your eyes adapt to the night, you start seeing millions of stars and it's amazing...there's also a lot of beauty in the cosmos itself, it's just harder to see (and to photograph) at first."

Thanks to collective [human](#) intelligence and cooperation, the International Space Station has been a reality for over 20 years, hosting astronauts who run experiments and monitor our planet from above. While launches are quite routine these days, delays happen but that's the space business.

In that same spirit of partnership, humans are soon returning to the Moon on the Artemis missions, powered by the European Service Module, and preparing to build an outpost in [lunar orbit](#). The Gateway will be a home far away from home and a stepping-stone to our next goal in space, humans on Mars.

Until then, make sure to look up and, like Thomas, savor the view. You're almost home.

Provided by European Space Agency

Citation: Image: Mind the stars (2021, November 5) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-image-mind-stars.html>

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