

Russia's only female cosmonaut to travel to space in September

January 20 2022



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Russia's sole active female cosmonaut, Anna Kikina, is due to travel to the International Space Station in September on a Soyuz rocket, the national space agency said Thursday.

Kikina, a 37-year-old engineer, will be only the fifth professional woman cosmonaut from Russia or the Soviet Union to fly to space.

Last year, the Russian [space agency](#) Roscosmos said "our beauty" Kikina would fly aboard SpaceX's Crew Dragon as part of a cross-flights deal between Roscosmos and NASA.

On Thursday, Roscosmos said that if the two countries finalise the deal, Kikina will fly to space with the Americans in August, while NASA's Francisco Rubio will travel on a Soyuz.

But if the deal does not work out, she will travel to the ISS on a Soyuz rocket in September.

The last Russian woman to fly to space was Elena Serova, who spent 167 days aboard the ISS from September, 2014 to March, 2015.

Soviet [cosmonaut](#) Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in space when she travelled into orbit on June 16, 1963.

Svetlana Savitskaya was the second woman in space, and the first woman to perform a spacewalk in July, 1984.

In October, Russia also sent to space an actress, Yulia Peresild, who spent 12 days on the ISS shooting scenes for a movie.

By comparison, more than 50 American women have travelled to space.

Roscosmos also said Thursday that three Russian cosmonauts—Oleg Artemyev, Denis Matveyev and Sergei Korsakov—will fly to the ISS in March.

"For the first time in the history of the ISS, the Soyuz crew will include

three Russian professional cosmonauts," the [space](#) agency said.

A Roscosmos official said this was because a contract with NASA on joint flights was nearing its end.

"Talks are currently underway to extend the contract," the representative told AFP.

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Citation: Russia's only female cosmonaut to travel to space in September (2022, January 20) retrieved 11 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-01-russia-female-cosmonaut-space-september.html>

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