

SpaceX ferries astronauts back to Earth after half-year away

October 15 2022



In this photo provided by NASA, the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom capsule splashes down in the Atlantic Ocean off Florida in a return trip from the International Space Station on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP

Four astronauts returned to Earth in a SpaceX capsule Friday, ending

their nearly six-month space station mission with a splashdown in the Atlantic off Florida.

Wet and windy weather across Florida delayed their homecoming. SpaceX and NASA finally gave the all-clear on Friday, and the three Americans and one Italian departed the International Space Station, [their residence since April](#).

The capsule parachuted into the ocean, just off Jacksonville, Florida, about five hours later. It carried NASA astronauts Kjell Lindgren, Bob Hines and Jessica Watkins, the first Black woman to complete a long-term spaceflight, and the European Space Agency's Samantha Cristoforetti. [SpaceX delivered their replacements last week](#).

Before checking out, the astronauts said they couldn't wait to have a cold drink with ice, eat some pizza and ice cream, take a shower, revel in nature and, of course, reunite with their families. NASA planned to hustle them to Houston once they were off SpaceX's recovery ship and back on solid ground.

"Getting the first few hugs when we get back is really going to be awesome," Hines told reporters earlier in the week.

Remaining aboard the [space station](#) are three Americans, three Russians and one Japanese.



In this image provided by NASA, NASA astronauts, from left, Jessica Watkins, Robert Hines, Kjell Lindgren, and ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, right, sit inside the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship Megan shortly after having landed in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla., Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Lindgren, Hines, Watkins, and Cristoforetti are returning after 170 days in space as part of Expeditions 67 and 68 aboard the International Space Station. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins is helped out of the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship Megan after she, NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren, NASA astronaut Robert Hines, and European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, landed in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla., on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Lindgren, Hines, Watkins, and Cristoforetti are returning after 170 days in space as part of Expeditions 67 and 68 aboard the International Space Station. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti is helped out of the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship Megan after she, and NASA astronauts Kjell Lindgren, Robert Hines, and Jessica Watkins, landed in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla., on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Lindgren, Hines, Watkins, and Cristoforetti are returning after 170 days in space as part of Expeditions 67 and 68 aboard the International Space Station. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



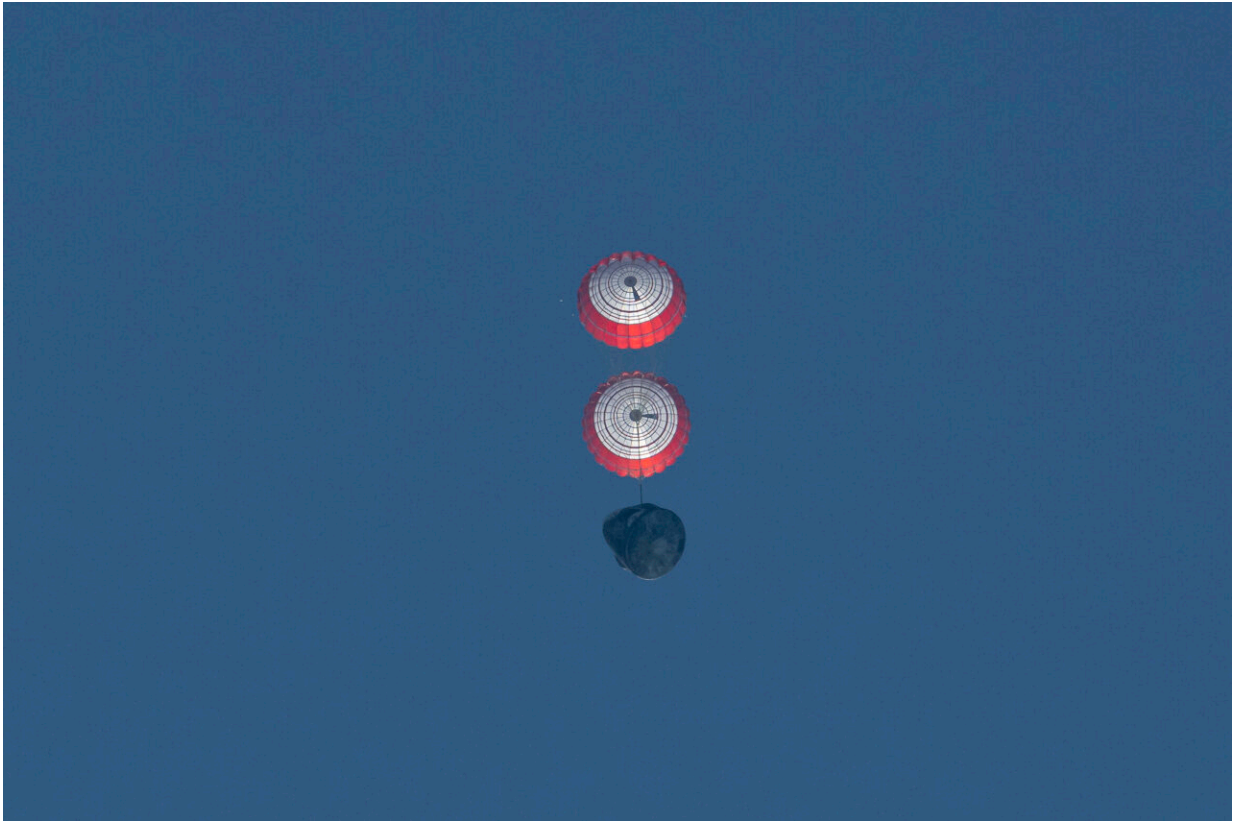
NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren is helped out of the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship Megan after he, NASA astronaut Robert Hines, NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins and European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, landed in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla., on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Lindgren, Hines, Watkins, and Cristoforetti are returning after 170 days in space as part of Expeditions 67 and 68 aboard the International Space Station. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



NASA astronaut Robert Hines is helped out of the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom spacecraft onboard the SpaceX recovery ship Megan after he, NASA astronaut Kjell Lindgren, NASA astronaut Jessica Watkins and ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti, landed in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Jacksonville, Fla., on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022. Lindgren, Hines, Watkins, and Cristoforetti are returning after 170 days in space as part of Expeditions 67 and 68 aboard the International Space Station. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



In this photo provided by NASA, the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom capsule approaches the surface of the Atlantic Ocean off Florida for splashdown in a return trip from the International Space Station on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, carrying astronauts Kjell Lindgren, Robert Hines, Jessica Watkins, and ESA (European Space Agency) astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP



In this photo provided by NASA, the SpaceX Crew Dragon Freedom capsule approaches the surface of the Atlantic Ocean off Florida for splashdown in a return trip from the International Space Station on Friday, Oct. 14, 2022, carrying astronauts Kjell Lindgren, Robert Hines, Jessica Watkins, and European Space Agency astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti. Credit: Bill Ingalls/NASA via AP

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