

# NASA's moonbound Artemis astronauts take new ride to launch pad in practice run

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The four astronauts headed to the moon next year on the Artemis II mission suited up and took a practice run to the launch pad in the new crew transport vehicles at Kennedy Space Center on Wednesday.

NASA [astronauts](#) Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover and Christina Koch

along with Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen donned orange spacesuits and climbed into the curvy electric vehicles officially referred to as CTVs, as in crew transportation vehicles, and took the 9-mile ride from the Neil A. Armstrong Operations and Checkout Building to Launch Pad 39-B.

The dry run is to demonstrate normal launch day procedures as they gear up for the mission that could fly as early as November 2024, taking the first crewed flight on NASA's powerful Space Launch System rocket riding in the Orion space capsule on what is planned to be a 10-day mission that will take them out and around the moon, but not land.

NASA's Artemis III mission is still planned to be the one to take humans back to the [lunar surface](#) for the first time since the end of the Apollo program in 1972. That mission is reliant, though, on SpaceX to fully develop its Starship spacecraft to act as the human landing system, but for now it's on NASA's roadmap for as early as December 2025.

The Artemis II mission would come about two years after the successful test flight of Artemis I, which was an uncrewed [mission](#) that pushed the limits of what the Orion spacecraft could handle making sure it can keep human passengers safe.

It launched Nov. 16, 2022 atop the SLS rocket with its 8.8 million pounds of thrust making it the most powerful rocket to ever make orbit. The Orion capsule spent more than 25 days flying 1.4 million miles including a special orbit of the moon before its return to Earth on Dec. 11, 2022 hitting 24,581 mph on return generating heat of up to 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

## **Moonbound astronauts check out their ride at Kennedy Space Center**

The Orion capsule and the European service module for Artemis II are already on site at KSC, but won't be ready until April while the core stage booster is awaiting transport from NASA's Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans and its two solid rocket boosters to arrive by train from Utah.

NASA technicians earlier this month began connecting the four RS-25 engines, which were converted from the Space Shuttle Program, to the base of the core stage.

NASA expects to get the core stage on site in November and begin stacking the SLS at KSC's Vehicle Assembly Building in February 2024.

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