

Astronauts relish space's international food court

September 5 2009, By SETH BORENSTEIN , AP Science Writer



In this image provided by NASA astronauts John "Danny" Olivas and Nicole Stott (right) participate in the mission's first session of extravehicular activity Tuesday Sept. 1, 2009 as construction and maintenance continues on the International Space Station. During the six-hour, 35-minute spacewalk, Olivas and Stott removed an empty ammonia tank from the station's truss and temporarily stowed it on the station's robotic arm. The blackness of space and Earth's horizon provided a backdrop for this scene. (AP Photo/NASA)

(AP) -- When it comes to grabbing a bite to eat, the international space station is living up to its first name.

It's a veritable food court of international cuisine, observed new resident Nicole Stott, an American astronaut who will stay aboard the space station until November.

Stott said she found that for different meals she could sample foods from various parts of the world: U.S., Canada, Japan, Europe and Russia.

"I think you can find something for anyone," Stott said in a Friday night news conference by the 13 members of the joint crews of the [space shuttle Discovery](#) and space station. Stott is moving into the space station, after getting a ride on the shuttle.

Stott and her fellow astronauts addressed reporters through a video link hours after a piece of [space junk](#) sped safely by the two spacecraft. [NASA](#) had been monitoring the situation but decided it was unlikely to be a problem, and the old rocket part passed Friday morning as the astronauts slept.

In past years, astronauts have complained about the poor taste and variety of food in space. Astronaut Norm Thagard, the first American to fly on the Russian space station Mir, bemoaned jellied perch and borscht in his diet and lost a considerable amount of weight.

Now the international aspect of the space station - those on board are from the U.S., Canada, Sweden, Russia and Germany - is a selling point. Even though there is no Japanese astronaut on board now - one just recently left - there is Japanese food, Stott said.

Discovery astronaut Christer Fugelsang said he wishes he had as much variety on Earth.

"It works for the best for everyone. I wish we could do the same on Earth," said Fugelsang, who is from Sweden.

Astronauts spoke in English, Spanish, French, Norwegian and Swedish during the press conference.

So far astronauts have made two spacewalks to do maintenance and installation on the space station with one more [spacewalk](#) scheduled for late Saturday afternoon.

Discovery astronaut Danny Olivas, who is doing all three spacewalks, said the key is not to get too cocky since the first two went well.

"The challenge is really to not lose the eyes on the goal," Olivas said.

"Two behind us doesn't mean that the third one isn't going to be as much or even more of a challenge."

Astronaut Tim Kopra of the United States has been on board the space station since July and will come home with Discovery when it undocks on Tuesday.

"I'm really going to miss this place," Kopra said. "This place exceeded anything I thought it would be like."

Still, Kopra said he was looking forward to seeing his wife and two children again. And one other thing he's looking forward to back on Earth, despite the fine food amenities in the [international space station](#): "a sip of beer."

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