

Dragon arrives at space station with 3-D printer

23 September 2014, by Marcia Dunn



In this photo provided by NASA, astronauts Alexander Gerst and Reid Wiseman watch the approach of the SpaceX Dragon from the International Space Station, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2014. Two days after blasting off from Cape Canaveral, Fla., Dragon arrived at the space station containing the first 3-D printer ever launched into orbit. (AP Photo/NASA)

The International Space Station accepted another SpaceX shipment Tuesday, this one containing the first 3-D printer ever launched into orbit.

Two days after blasting off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, the SpaceX cargo ship, Dragon, arrived at the space station. German astronaut Alexander Gerst used the robot arm to grab the capsule.

"Well done capturing that Dragon," Mission Control radioed. Two hours later, the capsule was bolted into place.

The Dragon is delivering more than 5,000 pounds (2,270 kilograms) of supplies. The 3-D printer—an experimental model—is the headliner payload. Also on board: mice and flies for biological research, fresh spacesuit batteries so NASA can resume routine spacewalks, and a \$30 million instrument to measure ocean wind, along with the usual assortment of food and clothes.

NASA is paying SpaceX to stock the space station. Last week, the California-based company won the right to transport astronauts, too. That's still a few years off.

The Dragon will remain at the orbiting outpost for about a month. It will be filled with science experiments for return to Earth. The Dragon is the only unmanned cargo capsule capable of returning items.

This was the fifth Dragon to visit the space station.

"We're happy to have a new vehicle on board," Gerst said.

Another spacecraft is due to arrive in a couple days. Russia is poised to launch a Soyuz spacecraft from Kazakhstan on Thursday with a three-person crew. That will bring the number of astronauts at the space station to the usual six.



In this photo provided by NASA, the SpaceX Dragon private space freighter approaches the International Space Station, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2014. Two days after blasting off from Cape Canaveral, Fla., Dragon arrived at the space station containing the first 3-D printer ever launched into orbit. (AP Photo/NASA)

More information: SpaceX: www.spacex.com/

NASA: www.nasa.gov

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