

Image: Fiery south Atlantic sunset

30 November 2016, by M. Justin Wilkinson



Facility and the Earth Science and Remote Sensing Unit, Johnson Space Center. The image was taken by a member of the Expedition 49 crew. The image has been cropped and enhanced to improve contrast, and lens artifacts have been removed.

Provided by NASA

Credit: NASA

An astronaut aboard the International Space Station photographed a sunset that looks like a vast sheet of flame. With Earth's surface already in darkness, the setting sun, the cloud masses, and the sideways viewing angle make a powerful image of the kind that astronauts use to commemorate their flights.

Thin layers of lighter and darker blues reveal the many layers of the [atmosphere](#). The lowest layer—the orange-brown line with clouds and dust and smoke—is known to scientists as the troposphere, the layer of weather as we experience it. It is the smoke and particles of dust in the atmosphere that give the strong red color to sunsets.

Astronauts see the atmosphere like this roughly every 90 minutes, as they view sixteen sunrises and sixteen sunsets every day. Astronauts often comment on how thin and fragile Earth's atmosphere seems.

Astronaut photograph [ISS049-E-49442](#) was acquired on October 27, 2016, with a Nikon D4 digital camera using a 240 millimeter lens, and is provided by the ISS Crew Earth Observations

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