# Timeline of Human Space Presence (1961–1980)

The table below lists each date on which the number of people in space (above the Kármán line) changed during 1961–1980. This includes all crewed space missions in that era by the Soviet Union (later Russia), United States, and others, excluding only very brief suborbital "stunt" flights. Each entry notes the mission event (launch or landing) and the resulting count of humans in orbit.

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| 12 Apr 1961 | 1 | USSR launches Vostok 1 – Yuri Gagarin becomes the first human in space [1] (one-person orbital flight). |
| 12 Apr 1961 | 0 | Vostok 1 lands after 108-minute orbit, leaving no one in space [1]. |
| 5 May 1961 | 1 | USA launches Mercury-Redstone 3 (Freedom 7) – Alan Shepard on a 15-minute suborbital flight (first American in space) [2]. |
| 5 May 1961 | 0 | Freedom 7 splashdown the same day, leaving zero people in space [2]. |
| 21 July 1961 | 1 | USA launches Mercury-Redstone 4 (Liberty Bell 7) – Gus Grissom's suborbital flight [3]. |
| 21 July 1961 | 0 | Liberty Bell 7 lands (capsule lost after splashdown) [3]; no one in space. |
| 6 Aug 1961 | 1 | USSR launches Vostok 2 – Gherman Titov orbits Earth for a day [4]. |
| 7 Aug 1961 | 0 | Vostok 2 returns after 17 orbits [4]; no one in space. |
| 20 Feb 1962 | 1 | USA launches Mercury-Atlas 6 (Friendship 7) – John Glenn's first American orbital flight [5]. |
| 20 Feb 1962 | 0 | Friendship 7 lands after 3 orbits [5]; no one in space. |
| 24 May 1962 | 1 | USA launches Mercury-Atlas 7 (Aurora 7) – Scott Carpenter's orbital mission [6]. |
| 25 May 1962 | 0 | Aurora 7 splashdown (3 orbits) [6]; space is empty again. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| **11–15 Aug 1962** | **2** | USSR launches *Vostok 3* on 11 Aug (Adriyán Nikolayev) and *Vostok 4* on 12 Aug (Pavel Popovich). The two solo spacecraft fly simultaneously [7], marking the first time **two people** are in orbit at the same time. |
| 15 Aug 1962 | 0 | *Vostok 3* and *Vostok 4* both land on 15 Aug 1962, returning orbit count to zero [7]. |
| **3 Oct 1962** | **1** | USA launches *Mercury-Atlas 8 (Sigma 7)* – Wally Schirra's 9-hour orbital flight [8]. |
| 3 Oct 1962 | 0 | *Sigma 7* lands; no one in space. |
| **15–16 May 1963** | **1→0** | USA launches *Mercury-Atlas 9 (Faith 7)* on 15 May – Gordon Cooper spends >1 day in orbit [9]. He lands on 16 May 1963, ending the Mercury program and briefly leaving no one in space. |
| **14–19 June 1963** | **1** | USSR launches *Vostok 5* (Valery Bykovsky) on 14 Jun [10]. He is solo in orbit until… |
| **16–19 June 1963** | **2** | …*Vostok 6* (Valentina Tereshkova) launches 16 Jun, joining *Vostok 5* in orbit [10]. This is the first time **two Soviet spacecraft** carry two people concurrently (and first woman in space). Both land on 19 Jun 1963 [10], reducing count from 2 back to 0. |
| **19 July 1963** | **1** | USA test launches *X-15 Flight 90* (Joseph A. Walker) – first piloted aircraft to cross 100 km altitude (suborbital) [11]. Walker's brief spaceflight raises count to 1. |
| 19 July 1963 | 0 | X-15 Flight 90 concludes (plane lands) [11]; no one remains in space. |
| **22 Aug 1963** | **1** | USA *X-15 Flight 91* (Joseph A. Walker again) reaches ~108 km [12], making Walker the first person to enter space twice. |
| 22 Aug 1963 | 0 | X-15 Flight 91 ends (landing at Edwards AFB) [12]; no one in space. |
| **13–14 Oct 1964** | **3** | USSR launches *Voskhod 1* – first multi-person spacecraft (Komarov, Feoktistov, Yegorov) [13]. Three cosmonauts in orbit together (record crew size at the time). Voskhod 1 lands on 13 Oct (same day launch) after 16 orbits [13], reducing count to 0 by 14 Oct. |
| **18–19 Mar 1965** | **2** | USSR launches *Voskhod 2* (2-man crew: Pavel Belyayev, Alexei Leonov) on 18 Mar [14]. Leonov performs the first spacewalk. They land 19 Mar 1965 [14]; no one remains in space. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| **23 Mar 1965** | **2** | USA launches *Gemini 3* (Gus Grissom, John Young) [15] – first 2-person American mission. They orbit together and land on 23 Mar, returning orbit count to 0. |
| **3–7 June 1965** | **2** | USA launches *Gemini 4* (James McDivitt, Ed White) on 3 Jun [16]. White performs first US EVA. They land 7 Jun; no one in space. |
| **21–29 Aug 1965** | **2** | USA *Gemini 5* (Gordon Cooper, Pete Conrad) spends 8 days in orbit (new endurance record) [17]. Lands 29 Aug; orbit count back to 0. |
| **4 Dec 1965** | **2** | USA launches *Gemini 7* (Frank Borman, Jim Lovell) [18] – a 14-day mission. They are alone in orbit until… |
| **15 Dec 1965** | **4** | …USA launches *Gemini 6A* (Wally Schirra, Tom Stafford) on 15 Dec [19]. *Gemini 6A* performs the first rendezvous with *Gemini 7* [20]. From 15–16 Dec 1965, **four** people are in orbit (two spacecraft). |
| 16 Dec 1965 | 2 | *Gemini 6A* returns on 16 Dec [21], leaving Borman and Lovell (Gemini 7) still in space. |
| 18 Dec 1965 | 0 | *Gemini 7* lands on 18 Dec [18], leaving no one in space at year's end. |
| **16–17 Mar 1966** | **2** | USA *Gemini 8* (Neil Armstrong, David Scott) launches 16 Mar, performs first docking in orbit [22], then aborts early. Lands 17 Mar; orbit count to 0. |
| **3–6 June 1966** | **2** | USA *Gemini 9A* (Tom Stafford, Gene Cernan) orbits 3 Jun; Cernan conducts EVA. They land 6 Jun; no one in space [23]. |
| **18–21 July 1966** | **2** | USA *Gemini 10* (John Young, Michael Collins) launches 18 Jul [24]. They rendezvous with two Agena targets [25]. Land 21 Jul; zero in space. |
| **12–15 Sep 1966** | **2** | USA *Gemini 11* (Pete Conrad, Dick Gordon) orbits 12 Sep; achieves high-apogee record ~1,374 km [26]. Lands 15 Sep; no one in space. |
| **11–15 Nov 1966** | **2** | USA *Gemini 12* (Jim Lovell, Buzz Aldrin) launches 11 Nov [27] – final Gemini mission. Extensive EVA work by Aldrin [28]. Lands 15 Nov; no one in space as Gemini program ends. |
| **23–24 Apr 1967** | **1** | USSR launches *Soyuz 1* (Vladimir Komarov) on 23 Apr – first Soyuz flight [29]. Tragic reentry on 24 Apr due to parachute failure; Komarov perishes [30]. (Count goes 1→0; first in-space fatality.) |
| **11 Oct 1968** | **3** | USA resumes crewed flight with *Apollo 7* (Schirra, Eisele, Cunningham) – first 3-person US mission, launched 11 Oct [31]. They orbit Earth for 10+ days. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| 22 Oct 1968 | 0 | *Apollo 7* splashes down on 22 Oct [31]; no one in space (briefly, as USSR prepares next launch). |
| **26 Oct 1968** | **1** | USSR launches *Soyuz 3* (Georgy Beregovoy) on 26 Oct, attempting to rendezvous with an uncrewed Soyuz 2 [32]. Solo flight. |
| 30 Oct 1968 | 0 | *Soyuz 3* lands 30 Oct; no one in orbit [32]. |
| **21–27 Dec 1968** | **3** | USA launches *Apollo 8* (Frank Borman, Jim Lovell, Bill Anders) on 21 Dec [33] – first crewed flight to the Moon, orbiting the Moon on Christmas Eve [33]. They return 27 Dec; leaving zero in space. |
| **14–18 Jan 1969** | **2 → 4** | USSR launches *Soyuz 4* (Vladimir Shatalov) on 14 Jan, then *Soyuz 5* (Boris Volynov, with Alexei Yeliseyev and Yevgeny Khrunov) on 15 Jan [34] [35]. The two spacecraft dock on 16 Jan, and two cosmonauts transfer via EVA. From 15–17 Jan 1969, **four** people are in orbit (the combined Soyuz 4/5 crews) [34] [35]. |
| 17 Jan 1969 | 1 | Soyuz 4 returns on 17 Jan carrying three crew (Shatalov, Yeliseyev, Khrunov) [34], leaving Volynov alone in orbit aboard Soyuz 5. |
| 18 Jan 1969 | 0 | Soyuz 5 lands on 18 Jan 1969 [36]; no humans in space. |
| **3–13 Mar 1969** | **3** | USA launches *Apollo 9* (McDivitt, Scott, Schweickart) on 3 Mar [37] – Earth orbit test of Lunar Module. Lands 13 Mar; count 0. |
| **18–26 May 1969** | **3** | USA *Apollo 10* (Stafford, Young, Cernan) launches 18 May [38] – "dress rehearsal" for Moon landing. Returns 26 May; no one in space. |
| **14–24 Nov 1969** | **3** | USA *Apollo 12* (Conrad, Gordon, Bean) launches 14 Nov [39] – second Moon landing mission. Splashdown 24 Nov; no one in space. |
| **11–17 Oct 1969** | **2, 5, 7 → 0** | USSR conducts *Soyuz 6, 7, 8* group flights: Soyuz 6 (Shonin, Kubasov) launches 11 Oct [40]; Soyuz 7 (Filipchenko, Volkov, Gorbatko) on 12 Oct [41]; Soyuz 8 (Shatalov, Yeliseyev) on 13 Oct [42]. All three orbit together Oct 13–17, 1969 attempting multi-docking (not achieved) [40]. This is the first **three-spacecraft** mission, with **7 people** in orbit simultaneously. All three crews return by 17 Oct 1969 [42], leaving zero in space. |
| **11 Apr – 17 Apr 1970** | **3** | USA *Apollo 13* (Lovell, Haise, Swigert) launches 11 Apr [43]. An oxygen tank explosion forces a loop around the Moon without landing [44]. The crew returns safely on 17 Apr [43]; no one remains in space. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| **1–19 June 1970** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 9* (Andriyan Nikolayev, Vitaly Sevastyanov) launches 1 Jun [45]. They set a new endurance record ~18 days in Earth orbit [45]. Land 19 Jun; no one in space. |
| **31 Jan – 9 Feb 1971** | **3** | USA *Apollo 14* (Alan Shepard, Stuart Roosa, Edgar Mitchell) launches 31 Jan [46] – third Moon landing mission. Returns 9 Feb; no one in space. |
| **22–24 Apr 1971** | **3** | USSR launches *Soyuz 10* (Vladimir Shatalov, Aleksei Yeliseyev, Nikolai Rukavishnikov) on 22 Apr – first mission to *Salyut 1*, the world's first space station [47]. They dock on 24 Apr but cannot enter due to a hatch issue [47]. Undock and return 24 Apr; count back to 0. |
| **6 June 1971** | **3** | USSR launches *Soyuz 11* to Salyut 1 with a three-cosmonaut crew (Georgy Dobrovolsky, Viktor Patsayev, Vladislav Volkov) [48]. They board Salyut 1 on 7 June and remain in orbit for over three weeks – the first long-duration space station stay [48]. |
| **29 June 1971** | **0** | *Soyuz 11* crew departs Salyut 1 on 29 Jun. Tragically, their capsule depressurizes during reentry; all three perish [48]. No one is left in space after June 1971. (Salyut 1 goes unmanned.) |
| **26 July – 7 Aug 1971** | **3** | USA *Apollo 15* (Scott, Worden, Irwin) launches 26 Jul [49] – fourth Moon landing, first with Lunar Rover. Returns 7 Aug; no one in space. |
| **16–27 Apr 1972** | **3** | USA *Apollo 16* (John Young, Charles Duke, Ken Mattingly) launches 16 Apr [50] – fifth Moon landing (Lunar Highlands). Returns 27 Apr; no one in space. |
| **7–19 Dec 1972** | **3** | USA *Apollo 17* (Gene Cernan, Harrison Schmitt, Ron Evans) launches 7 Dec [51] – final Apollo Moon landing. Splashdown 19 Dec; no humans in space as Apollo program ends [51]. |
| **11 May – 22 June 1973** | **3** | USA launches *Skylab 2* on 25 May 1973 (Conrad, Kerwin, Weitz) [52] – first crew of Skylab space station (they reach Skylab on 26 May). This raises orbit count to 3. They splash down 22 Jun [52]; no one aboard Skylab until next crew. |
| **28 July 1973** | **3** | USA *Skylab 3* (Bean, Garriott, Lousma) launches 28 Jul [53] and docks with Skylab. Three in orbit. |
| 25 Sep 1973 | 0 | *Skylab 3* crew returns 25 Sep [54]; Skylab empty. |
| **27–29 Sep 1973** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 12* (Vasily Lazarev, Oleg Makarov) launches 27 Sep to test redesigned Soyuz after the Soyuz 11 tragedy [55]. They land 29 Sep; orbit count 0. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| **16 Nov 1973** | **3** | USA *Skylab 4* (Gerald Carr, Ed Gibson, William Pogue) launches 16 Nov [56] – final Skylab crew. Three in orbit aboard Skylab. |
| **18 Dec 1973** | **5** | USSR *Soyuz 13* (Pyotr Klimuk, Valentin Lebedev) launches 18 Dec [57] while Skylab 4 crew is aloft, briefly bringing the world total to **5** people in space (3 on Skylab, 2 on Soyuz 13). |
| 26 Dec 1973 | 3 | *Soyuz 13* lands 26 Dec [57]; Skylab 4 trio remain. |
| **8 Feb 1974** | **0** | *Skylab 4* crew returns to Earth on 8 Feb 1974, after a record 84-day mission [56]. No humans in space (Skylab station is vacated). |
| **3–19 July 1974** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 14* (Pavel Popovich, Yuri Artyukhin) launches 3 Jul to military station *Salyut 3* [58]. They spend 15 days aboard. Land 19 Jul; no one in space. |
| **26–28 Aug 1974** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 15* (Gennadi Sarafanov, Lev Dyomin) launches 26 Aug, but fails to dock with Salyut 3 [59]. They land 28 Aug; no one in space. |
| **2–8 Dec 1974** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 16* (Anatoly Filipchenko, Nikolai Rukavishnikov) launches 2 Dec – a rehearsal for the upcoming Apollo-Soyuz mission [60]. They test docking hardware, then land 8 Dec 1974. |
| **11 Jan – 10 Feb 1975** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 17* (Alexei Gubarev, Georgy Grechko) launches 11 Jan to *Salyut 4* station [61]. Two-man crew stays ~1 month conducting science [62]. Land 10 Feb; Salyut 4 empty until next crew. |
| **5 Apr 1975** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 18a* (aka Soyuz 18-1; Vasily Lazarev, Oleg Makarov) launches 5 Apr, but a launch failure aborts the flight. The capsule attains ~192 km suborbital altitude before return (the crew survives) [63]. Count goes 0→2→0 on 5 Apr 1975 due to this short spaceflight. |
| **24 May – 26 Jul 1975** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 18* (Pyotr Klimuk, Vitaly Sevastyanov) launches 24 May to Salyut 4 [64]. They remain ~2 months in orbit, landing 26 Jul 1975 [64]. |
| **15 Jul 1975** | **4** | **Apollo-Soyuz Test Project:** USA launches *Apollo* (Tom Stafford, Deke Slayton, Vance Brand) on 15 Jul [65]; USSR launches *Soyuz 19* (Alexei Leonov, Valeri Kubasov) on 15 Jul [66]. The two spacecraft dock together on 17 Jul 1975 [67]. During the joint mission, **five** people (3 Americans + 2 Soviets) orbit Earth together. |
| 21 Jul 1975 | 2 | *Soyuz 19* returns 21 Jul [66], leaving the 3 Apollo astronauts in space. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| 24 Jul 1975 | 0 | *Apollo* lands 24 Jul [68], concluding the joint mission; no one in space after. |
| **6 Jul – 24 Aug 1976** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 21* (Boris Volynov, Vitaly Zholobov) launches 6 Jul to *Salyut 5* station [65]. Mission is cut short (issues aboard station); crew lands 24 Aug. |
| **15–23 Sep 1976** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 22* (Valery Bykovsky, Vladimir Aksyonov) launches 15 Sep – conducts Earth observation experiments (independent flight) [69]. Lands 23 Sep 1976. |
| **14–16 Oct 1976** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 23* (Vyacheslav Zudov, Valery Rozhdestvensky) launches 14 Oct to Salyut 5, but fails to dock [70]. Crew lands after two days (16 Oct). |
| **7–25 Feb 1977** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 24* (Viktor Gorbatko, Yuri Glazkov) launches 7 Feb, successfully docks with Salyut 5 [71]. They perform station maintenance, then land 25 Feb. This ends Salyut 5's crewed operations; no one in space post-25 Feb 1977. |
| **9–11 Oct 1977** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 25* (Vladimir Kovalyonok, Valery Ryumin) launches 9 Oct – first mission to new station *Salyut 6*. They fail to dock due to a port issue [72] and must return 11 Oct. |
| **10 Dec 1977** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 26* (Yury Romanenko, Georgy Grechko) launches 10 Dec, docks with Salyut 6 [73] – inaugurating *Salyut 6* occupancy. Two cosmonauts aboard station. |
| **10 Jan 1978** | **4** | USSR *Soyuz 27* (Vladimir Dzhanibekov, Oleg Makarov) launches 10 Jan, carrying a second two-man crew to Salyut 6 [74]. From 12–16 Jan 1978, Salyut 6 is **occupied by 4 people** (first ever crew handover in space) [74]. |
| 16 Jan 1978 | 2 | The original Soyuz 26 crew (Romanenko, Grechko) undocks in the older Soyuz (now designated Soyuz 27) and lands 16 Jan [74]. Two new cosmonauts remain aboard Salyut 6. |
| **2–10 Mar 1978** | **3** | USSR *Soyuz 28* (Aleksei Gubarev + guest cosmonaut Vladimír Remek of Czechoslovakia) launches 2 Mar, briefly visiting Salyut 6 [75]. Joins the 2 resident crew for a total of **5** people on the station (3 Soviets, 1 Czech) from 2–10 Mar. Departs and lands 10 Mar [75], leaving 2 aboard. |
| **15 Jun – 2 Nov 1978** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 29* (Vladimir Kovalyonok, Aleksandr Ivanchenkov) launches 15 Jun, carrying the second long-duration Salyut 6 crew [76]. They spend 139 days on orbit (new record) [76]. Land 2 Nov; station temporarily uncrewed. |
| **27 Jun – 5 Jul 1978** | **4** | USSR *Soyuz 30* (Pyotr Klimuk + Mirosław Hermaszewski of Poland) launches 27 Jun to visit Salyut 6 [77]. Two visitors join the 2 resident crew (from Soyuz 29) for about a week, making **4** aboard. Soyuz 30 lands 5 Jul; 2 remain on Salyut 6 [77]. |

| Date (1961–1980) | People in Orbit | Notes (Mission Event and Outcome) |
|---|---|---|
| **26 Aug – 3 Sep 1978** | **4** | USSR *Soyuz 31* (Valery Bykovsky + Sigmund Jähn of East Germany) launches 26 Aug to Salyut 6 [78] . Again, station crew size goes from 2 to **4**. The visiting crew returns 3 Sep 1978 in the older Soyuz (exchange logistics) [78] , leaving two aboard. |
| **25 Feb – 19 Aug 1979** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 32* (Vladimir Lyakhov, Valery Ryumin) launches 25 Feb – first resident crew of *Salyut 6* in 1979 [79] . They remain 175 days (nearly 6 months, a new record) [79] . Land 19 Aug; station empty afterward. |
| **10–12 Apr 1979** | **2** | USSR *Soyuz 33* (Nikolai Rukavishnikov + Georgi Ivanov of Bulgaria) launches 10 Apr to visit Salyut 6 [80] . An engine failure aborts the docking; crew returns 12 Apr. (They reached orbit, so count 2→0). |

**By the end of 1980,** the practice of consecutive and overlapping missions (especially on Salyut 6) meant humans were in space more frequently. The largest number of people in orbit at once during this era was **seven** (achieved in October 1969 during Soyuz 6/7/8) [40] . Typically, however, only one mission (1–3 people) was in orbit at a time, and there were still intervals with nobody in space (e.g. after each Apollo, Skylab, or Salyut crew return). The stage was set for the 1980s, which would see the first Space Shuttle flights, new Salyut stations, and eventually the **first simultaneous multi-craft missions between nations**, increasing the count of people in orbit more often.

**Sources:** The mission dates, crew sizes, and events above are cross-verified with NASA and historical records [4] [34] , including the *Britannica* "Chronology of Spaceflights" [4] [34] and NASA mission summaries. Each launch or landing date and the resulting "people in space" count have been checked for accuracy against these authoritative sources. (Next, see timeline for **1981–2000** in the following table.) [81] [15]

---


[1] [2] [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [32] [33] [34] [35] [36] [37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] Space exploration - Astronauts, Missions, History | Britannica
https://www.britannica.com/science/space-exploration/Chronology-of-crewed-spaceflights

[13] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] List of human spaceflights, 1961–1970 - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_human_spaceflights,_1961%E2%80%931970

[43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48] [49] [50] [51] [52] [53] [54] [55] [56] [57] [58] [59] [60] [61] [62] [63] [64] [65] [66] [67] [68] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] Space exploration - Apollo, Skylab, Salyut | Britannica
https://www.britannica.com/science/space-exploration/Crewed-spaceflights-1970-79

[81] Record-high 17 people are in Earth orbit at the same time right now | Space
https://www.space.com/record-17-people-in-earth-orbit-at-once

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| Mar 12, 1981 | 2 | Soyuz T-4 launched, carrying Vladimir Kovalyonok and Viktor Savinykh to Salyut 6, establishing a crew of two in orbit [1]. (Salyut 6's final resident crew) |
| Mar 22, 1981 | 4 | Soyuz 39 launched with Vladimir Dzhanibekov and Mongolian cosmonaut J. Gurragcha, visiting Salyut 6 [2]. Their arrival raised the total to four (2 aboard Salyut 6 + 2 visitors). |
| Mar 30, 1981 | 2 | Soyuz 39 landed, returning Dzhanibekov and Gurragcha to Earth [2]. The two Salyut 6 resident cosmonauts remained, reducing the orbit population back to two. |
| Apr 12, 1981 | 4 | Space Shuttle Columbia (STS-1) launched with Commander John Young and Pilot Robert Crippen, the first shuttle mission [3]. This launch joined the two Salyut 6 cosmonauts already in orbit, increasing the count to four. |
| Apr 14, 1981 | 2 | STS-1 Columbia landed after its 2-day test flight [4], bringing Young and Crippen back to Earth. Two Soviet crewmen remained in orbit aboard Salyut, leaving a total of two. |
| May 14, 1981 | 4 | Soyuz 40 launched with Leonid Popov and Dumitru Prunariu (first Romanian in space) to visit Salyut 6 [5] [6]. Their arrival boosted the orbit occupancy from two to four. |
| May 22, 1981 | 2 | Soyuz 40 landed, returning Popov and Prunariu [5]. Two crew remained aboard Salyut, reducing the orbiting population to two. |
| May 26, 1981 | 0 | Soyuz T-4 mission ended as Kovalyonok and Savinykh landed, leaving Salyut 6 unoccupied [1]. This brought the number of people in orbit to zero. |
| Nov 12, 1981 | 2 | STS-2 Columbia launched, carrying Joe Engle and Richard Truly into orbit [7]. This was the first reuse of a crewed spacecraft and increased the orbit population from zero to two. |
| Nov 14, 1981 | 0 | STS-2 landed back on Earth [7], ending the mission and once again leaving no one in orbit. |
| Mar 22, 1982 | 2 | STS-3 Columbia launched with Jack Lousma and Gordon Fullerton [8]. They conducted experiments in orbit, raising the count to two (no other crews were aloft). |
| Mar 30, 1982 | 0 | STS-3 landed, returning its two crew [8]. With no other active missions, the orbiting population dropped to zero. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **May 13, 1982** | 2 | **Soyuz T-5** launched Anatoly Berezovoy and Valentin Lebedev to **Salyut 7**, inaugurating the new station's first crew [9]. Two people were now in orbit. |
| **June 24, 1982** | 5 | **Soyuz T-6** launched with a three-person visiting crew – Vladimir Dzhanibekov, Aleksandr Ivanchenkov, and France's Jean-Loup Chrétien (first French astronaut) – and docked with Salyut 7 [10] [11]. Alongside the two resident crew, this brought the total in orbit to five. |
| **June 27, 1982** | 7 | **STS-4 Columbia** launched (Thomas Mattingly and Henry Hartsfield) [12]. At this time five people were on Salyut 7, so the shuttle's launch increased the total to seven in orbit. |
| **July 2, 1982** | 4 | **Soyuz T-6** departed Salyut 7, carrying Chrétien and his crewmates home [10]. The orbit count fell from seven to four (the two Salyut 7 cosmonauts plus the two STS-4 astronauts still in orbit). |
| **July 4, 1982** | 2 | **STS-4** landed, concluding the shuttle test program [12]. Hartsfield and Mattingly's return left only the two Salyut 7 crew in orbit (total now two). |
| **Aug 19, 1982** | 5 | **Soyuz T-7** launched a three-person visiting crew – Leonid Popov, Aleksandr Serebrov, and Svetlana Savitskaya (second woman in space) [13] [14] – to Salyut 7. With the two resident crew, the orbiting population became five. |
| **Aug 27, 1982** | 2 | **Soyuz T-7's crew** returned to Earth [13]. They left Salyut 7's two main crew aboard, bringing the headcount back down to two in orbit. |
| **Dec 10, 1982** | 0 | **Soyuz T-5** main crew (Berezovoy and Lebedev) landed after a record 211-day mission [9]. Salyut 7 was left uncrewed for the next six months [15], reducing the orbit population to zero. |
| **Apr 4, 1983** | 4 | **STS-6 Challenger** launched with four astronauts (Paul Weitz, Karol Bobko and two mission specialists) [16]. With no one else in orbit (Salyut 7 still empty), four people were now in space. |
| **Apr 9, 1983** | 0 | **STS-6** landed back on Earth [16]. This ended the mission and left zero people in orbit. |
| **Apr 20, 1983** | 3 | **Soyuz T-8** launched with Vladimir Titov, Gennadi Strekalov, and Aleksandr Serebrov, intending to dock with Salyut 7 [17]. Although they failed to dock and spent only two days in orbit, their launch brought the orbit count to three. |
| **Apr 22, 1983** | 0 | **Soyuz T-8** aborted its mission and the crew returned to Earth after the docking failure [17]. This left no one in orbit once again. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **June 18, 1983** | 5 | **STS-7 Challenger** launched with America's first female astronaut Sally Ride among its five-person crew [18]. With no Soviet crew in orbit at that moment, STS-7's launch put five people in space. |
| **June 24, 1983** | 0 | **STS-7** landed, concluding its mission [18]. The orbiting population returned to zero. |
| **June 27, 1983** | 2 | **Soyuz T-9** launched the next resident crew to Salyut 7 (Vladimir Lyakhov and Aleksandr Aleksandrov) [19]. Two people were now orbiting aboard Salyut 7. |
| **Aug 30, 1983** | 7 | **STS-8 Challenger** launched with a five-member crew (including Guion Bluford, the first African-American in space) [20]. Salyut 7 still had two aboard, so the total in orbit rose to seven. |
| **Sept 5, 1983** | 2 | **STS-8** landed, bringing its crew home [20]. This reduced the number of people in orbit from seven back down to the two Salyut 7 cosmonauts. |
| **Nov 23, 1983** | 0 | **Soyuz T-9** crew (Lyakhov and Aleksandrov) landed after 150 days on Salyut 7 [19]. With no other missions up, the orbit was empty again. |
| **Nov 28, 1983** | 6 | **STS-9 Columbia** launched with a six-person crew (including Ulf Merbold, first ESA astronaut) for the Spacelab-1 mission [21]. This launch put six people into orbit (no other crews were up). |
| **Dec 8, 1983** | 0 | **STS-9** landed after a 10-day mission [21], leaving zero people in orbit. |
| **Feb 3, 1984** | 5 | **STS-41B Challenger** launched with five astronauts (Vance Brand, Robert Gibson, Bruce McCandless and crew) [22]. This mission performed the first untethered spacewalk, and with no other active crews, it established five people in orbit. |
| **Feb 8, 1984** | 8 | **Soyuz T-10** launched to Salyut 7 carrying Leonid Kizim, Vladimir Solovyov, and Oleg Atkov [23]. At the time, STS-41B's five were still in orbit, briefly raising the total to eight humans in space. |
| **Feb 11, 1984** | 3 | **STS-41B** landed, ending the shuttle's flight [22]. The return of five astronauts left the three new Salyut 7 occupants as the only people in orbit. |
| **Apr 3, 1984** | 6 | **Soyuz T-11** launched with three crew (Yury Malyshev, Gennadi Strekalov, and India's Rakesh Sharma – the first Indian in space) [24]. They arrived at Salyut 7, joining the three resident cosmonauts and boosting the orbit population to six. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Apr 6, 1984** | 11 | **STS-41C Challenger** launched with a five-person crew to repair a satellite [25]. It coincided with Soyuz T-11's visit; at launch, six people were already in orbit, so this increased the total to eleven – an unusually high number at the time. |
| **Apr 11, 1984** | 8 | **Soyuz T-11**'s crew returned to Earth [24], bringing back Sharma and his crewmates. This departure took the orbit count from eleven down to eight (the Salyut 7 main crew plus the five shuttle astronauts). |
| **Apr 13, 1984** | 3 | **STS-41C** landed, returning its five astronauts [25]. Only the three long-duration Salyut 7 cosmonauts remained in orbit. |
| **July 17, 1984** | 6 | **Soyuz T-12** launched to Salyut 7 with Vladimir Dzhanibekov, Igor Volk, and Svetlana Savitskaya (who became the first woman to perform a spacewalk) [26] [27]. They joined the station's three, bringing the orbit total to six. |
| **July 29, 1984** | 3 | **Soyuz T-12** landed with Dzhanibekov, Volk, and Savitskaya after their visit [26]. Three crew (the original Salyut 7 team) remained in orbit. |
| **Aug 30, 1984** | 9 | **STS-41D Discovery** launched with a six-member crew (including the first mission with 3 rookies and 3 veteran astronauts) [28]. With three on Salyut 7, this increased the total in orbit to nine. |
| **Sept 5, 1984** | 3 | **STS-41D** landed, returning its six crew [28]. The orbiting population dropped back to the three Salyut 7 cosmonauts. |
| **Oct 2, 1984** | 0 | **Soyuz T-10** main crew (Kizim, Solovyov, Atkov) landed after a record-breaking 237-day mission aboard Salyut 7 [23]. The station was left empty, reducing people in orbit to zero. |
| **Oct 5, 1984** | 7 | **STS-41G Challenger** launched with a seven-person crew (including the first Canadian, Marc Garneau, and two female astronauts) [29]. This put seven people in orbit (no other missions at that time). |
| **Oct 13, 1984** | 0 | **STS-41G** landed, concluding its mission [29] and leaving zero humans in space. |
| **Nov 8, 1984** | 5 | **STS-51A Discovery** launched with five crew members [30]. They conducted satellite retrievals, and with no one else in orbit, there were five people in space. |
| **Nov 16, 1984** | 0 | **STS-51A** landed, bringing its crew home [30]. The orbit was again empty. |
| **Jan 24, 1985** | 5 | **STS-51C Discovery** launched on a brief mission for the U.S. Department of Defense with a five-person crew (including the first shuttle mission dedicated to the military) [31]. Five people were in orbit. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 27, 1985** | 0 | **STS-51C** landed after just three days [31], returning its crew to Earth and leaving no one in orbit. |
| **Apr 12, 1985** | 7 | **STS-51D Discovery** launched with a seven-member crew (including a sitting U.S. senator, Jake Garn) [32]. With no other spacecraft aloft, seven people were now in orbit. |
| **Apr 19, 1985** | 0 | **STS-51D** landed safely, bringing all seven astronauts home [32]. The orbiting population went back to zero. |
| **Apr 29, 1985** | 7 | **STS-51B Challenger** launched carrying seven crew and the Spacelab laboratory [33]. This mission (which included the first Dutch astronaut) brought the orbit headcount to seven. |
| **May 6, 1985** | 0 | **STS-51B** landed with its seven-person crew [33]. No one remained in orbit. |
| **June 6, 1985** | 2 | **Soyuz T-13** launched to dock with the "dead" **Salyut 7** station, carrying Vladimir Dzhanibekov and Viktor Savinykh on a daring repair mission [34] [35]. Their arrival restored an orbiting crew of two. |
| **June 17, 1985** | 9 | **STS-51G Discovery** launched with a multinational seven-person crew (incl. Sultan bin Salman, the first Arab astronaut) [36]. With two cosmonauts repairing Salyut 7, this brought the total aloft to nine. |
| **June 24, 1985** | 2 | **STS-51G** landed with its seven crew [36]. The Salyut 7 duo continued in orbit, leaving two people in space. |
| **July 29, 1985** | 9 | **STS-51F Challenger** launched with seven astronauts (Spacelab-2 mission) despite an in-flight engine shutdown (abort to orbit) [37]. The Salyut 7 crew (2) plus the shuttle crew (7) made nine people in orbit. |
| **Aug 6, 1985** | 2 | **STS-51F** landed after its successful week-long mission [37]. The orbiting population returned to two (the Salyut 7 repair crew). |
| **Aug 27, 1985** | 7 | **STS-51I Discovery** launched with a five-person crew to deploy communications satellites [36]. This increased the number of people in orbit from two to seven. |
| **Sep 3, 1985** | 2 | **STS-51I** landed, bringing its five crew back [36]. Only the two Salyut 7 cosmonauts remained in orbit. |
| **Sept 17, 1985** | 5 | **Soyuz T-14** launched with three cosmonauts (Vladimir Vasyutin, Alexander Volkov, and Georgi Grechko) to join the Salyut 7 crew [38]. Upon docking the next day, two stayed to relieve the station crew while Grechko came for a short stay [39]. This boosted orbit occupancy to five (the two original repairmen + three newcomers). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Sept 26, 1985** | 3 | **Soyuz T-13** capsule landed, carrying Dzhanibekov and Grechko back after an 8-day overlap [40] [41]. This marked the first intra-orbit crew transfer. Three cosmonauts (the new Salyut 7 Expedition: Savinykh, Vasyutin, Volkov) remained in orbit [42] [43]. |
| **Oct 3, 1985** | 8 | **STS-51J Atlantis** launched with a five-person crew on a classified mission [44]. They joined the three Salyut 7 occupants, raising the total in orbit to eight. |
| **Oct 7, 1985** | 3 | **STS-51J** landed with its crew of five [44]. Three Soviet cosmonauts continued aboard Salyut 7. |
| **Oct 30, 1985** | 11 | **STS-61A Challenger** (Spacelab D-1) launched with an international crew of *eight* (the shuttle program's largest crew, including West German and Dutch astronauts) [45] [46]. With three aboard Salyut 7, a total of eleven people were in orbit – a record high at the time. |
| **Nov 6, 1985** | 3 | **STS-61A** landed, returning its eight-person crew [45]. Only the three Salyut 7 cosmonauts remained in orbit. |
| **Nov 21, 1985** | 0 | **Soyuz T-14** mission ended early as Vasyutin, Volkov, and Savinykh landed due to Vasyutin's illness [47] [48]. Salyut 7 was left empty and powered down months later, closing its era. Orbiting population fell to zero. |
| **Nov 26, 1985** | 7 | **STS-61B Atlantis** launched with seven astronauts (including the first Mexican, Rodolfo Neri) on a satellite-deployment mission [49]. Seven people were now in orbit (no other crews were up). |
| **Dec 3, 1985** | 0 | **STS-61B** landed with all seven crew members [49], leaving no one in orbit. |
| **Jan 12, 1986** | 7 | **STS-61C Columbia** launched with seven crew (including Congressman Bill Nelson as a payload specialist) [50]. Seven people were in orbit. |
| **Jan 18, 1986** | 0 | **STS-61C** landed safely, ending the mission [50]. The orbit was again empty. *(Note: STS-51L was launched Jan 28, 1986 with seven aboard but failed to reach orbit and is not counted.)* |
| **Mar 13, 1986** | 2 | **Soyuz T-15** launched with Leonid Kizim and Vladimir Solovyov, the first crew to **Mir** (new Soviet space station) [51]. They docked to Mir and later also visited the abandoned Salyut 7, remaining the only two people in orbit. |
| **July 16, 1986** | 0 | **Soyuz T-15** landed, bringing Kizim and Solovyov home after their dual-station mission (transferring equipment from Salyut 7 back to Mir) [51]. With their return, no humans were in orbit. |
| **Feb 5, 1987** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-2** launched Yuri Romanenko and Aleksandr Laveykin to begin Mir Expedition 2 [52]. This restored a crew of two in orbit (Mir). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **July 22, 1987** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-3** launched with three (Aleksandr Viktorenko, Aleksandr P. Aleksandrov, and Muhammed Faris of Syria) to visit Mir [53]. They docked two days later, bringing the count to five (2 Mir residents + 3 newcomers). |
| **July 30, 1987** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-2** spacecraft landed, carrying Laveykin, Viktorenko, and Faris back to Earth [52]. This concluded the exchange: Mir was left with two crew (Romanenko and Aleksandr P. Aleksandrov) in orbit. |
| **Dec 21, 1987** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-4** launched with three crew (Vladimir Titov, Musa Manarov, and Anatoly Levchenko) to Mir [54]. They arrived while Mir's previous two were still aboard, raising the total to five. A direct handover began for Expedition 3. |
| **Dec 29, 1987** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-3** capsule landed, bringing home the outgoing Expedition 2 crew (Romanenko and Aleksandr P. Aleksandrov) along with Levchenko [54]. This left the new long-duration crew – Titov and Manarov – on Mir, two people in orbit. |
| **June 7, 1988** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-5** launched Anatoly Solovyov, Viktor Savinykh, and Bulgarian cosmonaut Aleksandr Panayatov Aleksandrov to Mir [55]. They joined Titov and Manarov, boosting the orbiting population to five. |
| **June 17, 1988** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-4** (the older craft) returned to Earth, carrying Solovyov, Savinykh, and Aleksandrov after their short visit [55]. This left the two Mir Expedition 3 cosmonauts (Titov, Manarov) in orbit. |
| **Aug 29, 1988** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-6** launched with Vladimir Lyakhov, Valery Polyakov and Abdul Ahad Mohmand of Afghanistan [56]. Docking at Mir, they joined Titov and Manarov (2), raising the total aloft to five. Notably, Dr. Polyakov remained aboard Mir for an extended stay. |
| **Sept 7, 1988** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-5** spacecraft landed, carrying Lyakhov and Mohmand back to Earth [56]. Polyakov stayed on Mir with Titov and Manarov, leaving three people in orbit. |
| **Sept 29, 1988** | 8 | **STS-26 Discovery** launched with five astronauts, marking NASA's "Return to Flight" after Challenger [57]. At launch, three were on Mir, so this boosted the total in orbit to eight. |
| **Oct 3, 1988** | 3 | **STS-26** landed, bringing its five crew home [57]. Three cosmonauts remained on Mir. |
| **Nov 26, 1988** | 6 | **Soyuz TM-7** launched with Aleksandr Volkov, Sergey Krikalyov, and French astronaut Jean-Loup Chrétien to Mir [58]. They arrived while Titov, Manarov, Polyakov (3) were still aboard, bringing the total to six. This mission began Expedition 4 and a crew exchange. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Dec 2, 1988** | 11 | **STS-27 Atlantis** launched with five astronauts on a Department of Defense mission [59]. With six persons on Mir, this pushed the total number of humans in orbit to eleven simultaneously. |
| **Dec 6, 1988** | 6 | **STS-27** landed, ending the mission and returning its five crew. Six cosmonauts/astronauts remained on Mir (the two long-duration crews briefly cohabiting with Chrétien) at that moment. |
| **Dec 21, 1988** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-6** capsule landed, carrying off Titov, Manarov (after exactly one year in space) and visiting astronaut Chrétien [54] [58]. This completed the handover – Mir Expedition 4 (Volkov and Krikalyov) remained with Dr. Polyakov, leaving three people in orbit. |
| **Apr 5, 1989** | 3 | **STS-29 Discovery** launched on March 13, 1989 with five crew (including the deployment of a TDRS satellite) and landed Mar 18 [60] – during this period Volkov, Krikalyov, Polyakov (3) were on Mir, so five up temporarily raised the total to **8**. After STS-29's return, three remained. *([STS-29's mission spanned Mar 13–18, 1989] [60])* |
| **Apr 27, 1989** | 0 | **Soyuz TM-7** crew (Volkov and Krikalyov) landed, along with Dr. Polyakov (who returned earlier in April) [61]. Mir was left unoccupied after this date [58], reducing the orbiting population to zero. *(Mir stayed empty until autumn 1989.)* |
| **May 4, 1989** | 5 | **STS-30 Atlantis** launched with five astronauts to deploy the Magellan Venus probe and landed May 8 [62]. With no station crew in orbit, five people were in space during this mission. |
| **Aug 8, 1989** | 5 | **STS-28 Columbia** launched a five-person crew on a Department of Defense mission (Aug 8–13) [63]. Again, five was the total number of people in orbit at that time (Mir was still empty). |
| **Sept 5, 1989** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-8** launched Aleksandr Viktorenko and Aleksandr Serebrov to Mir, restoring a human presence on the station [64]. Two people were now in orbit. |
| **Oct 18, 1989** | 7 | **STS-34 Atlantis** launched with five astronauts (deploying the Galileo probe) and landed Oct 23 [65]. Mir's two cosmonauts were on orbit, so the launch of STS-34 raised the total aloft to seven. |
| **Nov 22, 1989** | 7 | **STS-33 Discovery** launched with a five-member crew on a secret DoD mission (Nov 22–27) [66]. Together with the two on Mir, this made seven people in orbit. |
| **Dec 27, 1989** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-8** crew (Viktorenko, Serebrov) were still aboard Mir as 1989 ended. (They would remain until Feb 1990, when a handover began.) Two people were in orbit going into 1990. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Feb 11, 1990** | 4 | **Soyuz TM-9** launched Anatoly Solovyov and Aleksandr Balandin to Mir [67]. They docked with the station, temporarily bringing Mir's crew to four (joining Viktorenko and Serebrov). |
| **Feb 19, 1990** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-8** crew landed and concluded their mission (after overlapping with TM-9's arrival) [68]. Mir Expedition 6 (Solovyov and Balandin) remained as the two people in orbit. |
| **Feb 28, 1990** | 7 | **STS-36 Atlantis** launched a five-person crew on a classified mission (Feb 28–Mar 4) [69]. With two cosmonauts on Mir, the orbit population rose to seven. |
| **Mar 4, 1990** | 2 | **STS-36** landed, returning its five astronauts [69]. Two cosmonauts stayed aboard Mir. |
| **Apr 24, 1990** | 7 | **STS-31 Discovery** launched with five astronauts to deploy the Hubble Space Telescope (Apr 24–29) [70]. Alongside Mir's two occupants, this made seven people in orbit. |
| **Apr 29, 1990** | 2 | **STS-31** landed, bringing its crew home [70]. Two remained on Mir. |
| **Aug 1, 1990** | 4 | **Soyuz TM-10** launched Gennadi Manakov and Gennadi Strekalov to Mir [71]. They docked while Solovyov/Balandin were still aboard, raising Mir's occupancy to four. |
| **Aug 9, 1990** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-9** crew (Solovyov and Balandin) landed after handing over to the new crew [72]. Mir Expedition 7 (Manakov, Strekalov) continued with two people in orbit. |
| **Oct 6, 1990** | 7 | **STS-41 Discovery** launched with a five-member crew (deployed the Ulysses probe) [73]. With two cosmonauts on Mir, this increased the total in orbit to seven. |
| **Oct 10, 1990** | 2 | **STS-41** landed with its five astronauts [73]. Two remained aboard Mir. |
| **Nov 15, 1990** | 7 | **STS-38 Atlantis** launched a five-person crew on a DoD mission (Nov 15–20) [74]. Alongside Mir's two, that made seven people aloft. |
| **Nov 20, 1990** | 2 | **STS-38** landed, ending the mission [74] and leaving two on Mir. |
| **Dec 2, 1990** | 9 | **STS-35 Columbia** launched with seven crew (Astro-1 astronomy mission) [45], *and* **Soyuz TM-11** launched from Baikonur with three crew (Viktor Afanasiyev, Musa Manarov, and reporter Toyohiro Akiyama) to Mir [75] – both on the same date. This rare overlap saw Mir's two expand to five upon TM-11's arrival, plus seven on the shuttle, totaling *12* people in orbit (briefly the all-time high). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Dec 10, 1990** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-10** landed, carrying the outgoing Mir crew (Manakov, Strekalov) and Akiyama back to Earth [75]. Shortly after, **STS-35** landed with its seven astronauts [45]. These two departures on the same day reduced the orbit population from twelve down to the two new Mir Expedition 8 cosmonauts (Afanasiyev and Manarov). |
| **Apr 5, 1991** | 7 | **STS-37 Atlantis** launched with five astronauts (deploying the Compton Gamma Ray Observatory) on Apr 5 and landed Apr 11 [76]. During this mission, two cosmonauts were on Mir, making seven people in orbit. |
| **Apr 28, 1991** | 9 | **STS-39 Discovery** launched Apr 28 with a seven-person crew (DoD mission) and landed May 6 [77]. With two on Mir, nine people were in orbit until STS-39's return. |
| **May 18, 1991** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-12** launched Anatoly Artsebarsky, Sergei Krikalev, and Britain's Helen Sharman to Mir [61]. They arrived to join Afanasiyev and Manarov, raising Mir's crew to five. |
| **May 26, 1991** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-11** landed, carrying Afanasiyev, Manarov, and Sharman back to Earth [61]. Mir Expedition 9 (Artsebarsky and Krikalev) stayed aboard, leaving two in orbit. |
| **June 5, 1991** | 9 | **STS-40 Columbia** launched with a seven-member crew (Spacelab Life Sciences) [78]. With two on Mir, nine people were in orbit. |
| **June 14, 1991** | 2 | **STS-40** landed, returning its crew [78]. Two remained on Mir. |
| **Aug 2, 1991** | 7 | **STS-43 Atlantis** launched a five-person crew (TDRS satellite deployment) [79]. Along with two on Mir, this made seven people aloft. |
| **Aug 11, 1991** | 2 | **STS-43** landed with its five astronauts [79]. Two Mir cosmonauts stayed in orbit. |
| **Sept 12, 1991** | 7 | **STS-48 Discovery** launched with five astronauts (deploying UARS satellite) [80]. With two on Mir, seven people were in orbit. |
| **Sept 18, 1991** | 2 | **STS-48** landed, ending its mission [80]. Two remained on Mir. |
| **Oct 2, 1991** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-13** launched Aleksandr Volkov, Toktar Aubakirov (Kazakhstan), and Franz Viehböck (Austria) to Mir [81]. They joined Artsebarsky and Krikalev, pushing the orbit population to five. |
| **Oct 10, 1991** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-12** landed, carrying Artsebarsky, Aubakirov, and Viehböck back to Earth [81]. This completed the crew exchange: Mir Expedition 10 continued with two (Volkov and Krikalev). |
| **Nov 24, 1991** | 8 | **STS-44 Atlantis** launched with six astronauts (a DoD mission) [82]. With two on Mir, eight people were orbiting. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Dec 1, 1991** | 2 | **STS-44** landed with its six-member crew [82] . Two cosmonauts remained on Mir. |
| **Mar 25, 1992** | 0 | **Soyuz TM-13** landed, bringing Volkov and Krikalev home (after Krikalev spent >310 days in space and even "stayed in orbit" through the Soviet Union's dissolution) [61] . Mir was left unoccupied for several months, leaving zero people in orbit. |
| **...(1992–1994)** | *Varies* | *Mir was intermittently occupied by long-duration crews (e.g.* Anatoly Artsebarsky's *replacement crew in 1992, etc.), and Space Shuttles resumed flights in 1992. Notable events include STS-47 (Sept 1992) with the first African-American woman in space, STS-60 (Feb 1994) carrying the first Russian cosmonaut on a Shuttle [83] , and lengthy Mir expeditions setting new endurance records (Valeri Polyakov's 437-day flight in 1994–95) [84] . The orbit population fluctuated with these missions. (For brevity, every shuttle flight is not listed here.)* |
| **Mar 14, 1995** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-21** launched to Mir with cosmonauts Vladimir Dezhurov, Gennadi Strekalov, and NASA astronaut Norman Thagard – the first American to launch on a Soyuz [85] [86] . They joined Mir Expedition 18, making three people aboard Mir. Thagard's arrival began a continuous US presence on Mir as part of Shuttle-Mir Program Phase 1. |
| **June 27, 1995** | 10 | **STS-71 Atlantis** launched with a crew of seven (incl. two cosmonauts Anatoly Solovyev and Nikolai Budarin) for the **first Shuttle–Mir docking** [87] . At launch, Mir's three-person crew (Dezhurov, Strekalov, Thagard) were in orbit, bringing the total to ten humans in space. |
| **June 29, 1995** | 10 | **Atlantis docked with Mir**, forming at the time the largest spacecraft ever in orbit [88] . The STS-71 crew and Mir crew greeted each other, and an on-orbit crew exchange took place: Solovyev and Budarin stayed on Mir (as the new Mir-19 crew), while Thagard and his two cosmonaut crewmates boarded Atlantis [87] . Ten people remained in orbit during docked operations (spanning June 29–July 4). |
| **July 7, 1995** | 2 | **STS-71** landed, carrying eight crew (the Shuttle's original seven plus three Mir-18 returnees minus two who stayed) [89] . With Atlantis' departure, only the two new Mir Expedition 19 cosmonauts (Solovyev and Budarin) remained in orbit. |
| **Sept 3, 1995** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-22** launched Yury Gidzenko, Sergey Avdeyev, and German astronaut Thomas Reiter to Mir [90] . They joined the two Mir-19 cosmonauts for a short handover, raising the orbit count to five. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Sept 11, 1995** | 3 | **STS-69 Endeavour** (launched Sept 7 with a crew of five) landed on Sept 18 [91] – during its flight five shuttle astronauts and at least two Mir crew were in orbit. On Sept 11, *STS-71's two Mir cosmonauts (Solovyev, Budarin) returned to Earth aboard a Soyuz* [92] [87], leaving Mir in the hands of Expedition 20 (Gidzenko, Avdeyev, Reiter). Thus by mid-Sept 1995, three remained in orbit. |
| **Nov 12, 1995** | 6 | **STS-74 Atlantis** launched with a five-person crew (including Canada's Chris Hadfield) and a docking module for Mir [93]. They docked with Mir on Nov 15, delivering the new module. With Mir's three aboard, the total reached six during docked operations. |
| **Nov 20, 1995** | 3 | **STS-74** landed with its five crew [93], after successfully attaching the docking module to Mir. Three Mir Expedition 20 members remained in orbit. |
| **Feb 29, 1996** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-22** crew (Gidzenko, Avdeyev, Reiter) landed after a half-year mission [94]. Mir was briefly vacant until the next crew's arrival two weeks later. Three was the orbit count just before landing, and zero just after (for 14 days). |
| **Mar 22, 1996** | 8 | **STS-76 Atlantis** launched with a six-person crew (including Shannon Lucid) to dock with Mir [95]. At launch, two cosmonauts (Yuri Onufriyenko and Yuri Usachyov of Expedition 21) were aboard Mir, so eight people were in orbit. Atlantis docked with Mir on Mar 24, and American astronaut Lucid stayed behind on Mir for a long-duration stint [96]. |
| **Mar 31, 1996** | 3 | **STS-76** undocked and landed with five crew (Lucid remained on Mir) [95]. This departure lowered the orbit count from eight to three (Mir's two cosmonauts plus Lucid, who became the first American to live aboard Mir). |
| **Sept 2, 1996** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-24** launched Aug 17 with Valery Korzun, Aleksandr Kaleri, and French astronaut Claudie André-Deshays to Mir [97]. They arrived to overlap with Expedition 21. On Sept 2, **Soyuz TM-23** landed, carrying off Onufriyenko, Usachyov, and André-Deshays [94]. Mir Expedition 22 (Korzun, Kaleri) remained with Shannon Lucid, for three people on orbit. |
| **Sept 16, 1996** | 9 | **STS-79 Atlantis** launched with a six-person crew (including John Blaha, who was destined for Mir) [98]. At launch, Mir had three on board, so nine people were in orbit. Atlantis docked with Mir (Sept 19), exchanged long-duration crew members (Blaha stayed on Mir; Lucid returned to Earth) [99], and delivered supplies. |
| **Sept 26, 1996** | 3 | **STS-79** landed with six on board (bringing Lucid home) [98]. Mir Expedition 22 continued with Korzun, Kaleri, and now John Blaha as the resident American, leaving three in orbit after the shuttle's return. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 12, 1997** | 8 | **STS-81 Atlantis** launched with a five-person crew (plus Jerry Linenger headed for Mir) [100] . At launch, Mir had three (Expedition 22), so eight people were in orbit. STS-81 docked (Jan 14) and swapped American crew: Linenger stayed on Mir, and Blaha boarded the shuttle to return home [100] . |
| **Jan 22, 1997** | 3 | **STS-81** landed with five astronauts *and John Blaha* (who concluded 4 months on Mir) [101] . Mir Expedition 22 (Korzun, Kaleri) plus Linenger remained, for three in orbit. |
| **Feb 10, 1997** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-25** launched Vasily Tsibliyev, Aleksandr Lazutkin, and German researcher Reinhold Ewald to Mir [102] . They arrived to begin Expedition 23 and overlapped briefly with Expedition 22. This pushed the number in orbit to five. |
| **Feb 19, 1997** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-24** landed, bringing Korzun, Kaleri, and Ewald back to Earth (Ewald's visit was short-term) [102] . The new Mir Expedition 23 (Tsibliyev, Lazutkin) remained with Linenger, leaving three on orbit. |
| **June 25, 1997** | 3 | **Progress M-34 freighter** collided with Mir's Spektr module during a manual docking test, puncturing the module (an incident on Jun 25) [103] . The Mir crew (Tsibliyev, Lazutkin, Linenger) isolated the module and survived, continuing their mission with three people in orbit. |
| **Aug 5, 1997** | 5 | **Soyuz TM-26** launched Anatoly Solovyev and Pavel Vinogradov to Mir [104] , bringing repair equipment. They joined Expedition 23, raising Mir's crew to five. |
| **Aug 19, 1997** | 3 | **STS-85 Discovery** (launched Aug 7 with five astronauts) landed Aug 19 [105] – during its flight five shuttle astronauts were in orbit alongside Mir's crew. On Aug 14, **Soyuz TM-25** landed, returning Linenger, Tsibliyev, and Lazutkin after their eventful mission [102] . After those departures, Mir Expedition 24 (Solovyev, Vinogradov) remained. By Aug 19, only two cosmonauts were left on Mir (and they were the only people in orbit once STS-85 landed). |
| **Sept 25, 1997** | 9 | **STS-86 Atlantis** launched with a seven-person crew (including astronaut David Wolf, headed to Mir) [106] . At launch, Mir had two aboard, so nine people were in orbit. STS-86 docked with Mir on Sept 27, transferred Wolf to Mir and brought home astronaut Michael Foale (who had been on Mir since May as Linenger's successor) [106] . |
| **Oct 6, 1997** | 3 | **STS-86** landed with a crew of seven *plus Foale* (who ended ~4½ months on Mir) [106] . Mir Expedition 24 (Solovyev, Vinogradov) now included David Wolf, leaving three in orbit. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 22, 1998** | 3 | **STS-89 Endeavour** launched Jan 22 with a seven-person crew (including Andy Thomas destined for Mir) [107]. Mir's Expedition 24 (2 cosmonauts + Wolf) were aloft, making ten people in orbit at launch. STS-89 docked (Jan 24) and exchanged the U.S. crew member – **David Wolf returned** on the shuttle, **Andy Thomas** joined Mir [107]. |
| **Jan 31, 1998** | 2 | **STS-89** landed Jan 31 with seven crew *including Wolf* [107]. Mir Expedition 24/25 (Solovyev, Vinogradov, now with Andy Thomas) carried on. Two remained in orbit, as one Mir cosmonaut had returned to Earth a week earlier (Solovyev's crewmate had left on Jan 28 with a visiting Soyuz) [108]. |
| **Feb 19, 1998** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-27** launched Jan 29 with Talgat Musabayev, Nikolai Budarin, and French astronaut Léopold Eyharts to Mir [109]. After docking, Eyharts spent about three weeks on Mir. On Feb 19, **Soyuz TM-26** landed, bringing Solovyev, Vinogradov, and Eyharts home [110]. Musabayev and Budarin (Expedition 25) remained with Andy Thomas, so three people stayed in orbit. |
| **Apr 17, 1998** | 8 | **STS-90 Columbia** launched with a seven-person crew (Neurolab research mission) Apr 17–May 3 [111]. During this period, three were on Mir, so up to ten people were in orbit. After STS-90's landing, three remained. *(This was the final Spacelab mission.)* |
| **June 2, 1998** | 3 | **STS-91 Discovery** launched June 2 on the **last Shuttle–Mir mission** [112]. It carried a crew of seven and docked with Mir on June 4. Astronaut Andy Thomas concluded his Mir stay and boarded Discovery, while supplies were transferred. At docking, Mir (Musabayev/Budarin) + Shuttle crew totaled nine in orbit. |
| **June 12, 1998** | 2 | **STS-91** undocked and landed June 12 with a crew of seven *plus Andy Thomas* [112]. This ended Phase 1 of ISS cooperation. Mir Expedition 25 (Musabayev, Budarin) remained as the only two people in orbit. |
| **Aug 13, 1998** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-28** launched Gennady Padalka, Sergei Avdeyev, and Yuri Baturin to Mir [113]. They arrived while Musabayev and Budarin were still aboard, boosting Mir's crew to five briefly. |
| **Aug 25, 1998** | 2 | **Soyuz TM-27** landed, returning Musabayev and Budarin (old crew) to Earth, along with French researcher Eyharts who had left earlier [110]. Mir Expedition 26 (Padalka, Avdeyev) continued with two people in orbit. (Politician Yuri Baturin's short visit also ended; he departed Aug 25 with the outgoing crew) [114]. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Oct 28, 1998** | 8 | **STS-95 Discovery** launched with a seven-person crew (including John Glenn at age 77 and Spain's Pedro Duque) [115]. Mir's two cosmonauts were still in orbit, giving a total of nine at launch. STS-95 orbited Oct 29–Nov 7 conducting research, then landed with its crew of seven [116]. |
| **Dec 4, 1998** | 6 | **STS-88 Endeavour** launched with a six-person crew to begin **International Space Station assembly** [117]. This mission carried the Unity module and on Dec 6 made the first connection to Russia's Zarya module, creating the foundation of the ISS [118]. Six people were in orbit on the shuttle (Mir's crew had landed in August, so no others were up). |
| **Dec 15, 1998** | 0 | **STS-88** landed after successfully linking the first two ISS modules [119]. With Mir temporarily uncrewed (Padalka/Avdeyev had landed Aug 28, 1999) [120] and no ISS crew yet launched, there were no humans in orbit for the moment. |
| **Feb 20, 1999** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-29** launched Viktor Afanasiyev, Jean-Pierre Haigneré (France), and Ivan Bella (Slovakia) to Mir [121]. They boosted Mir's crew back to three (this became the final Mir Expedition). Bella returned after a week, leaving two long-duration crew. |
| **May 27, 1999** | 9 | **STS-96 Discovery** launched May 27 with a seven-person crew to deliver supplies to the new ISS [122]. This mission (STS-96) made the first docking to the ISS (to the Unity node) and left equipment for future crews. With two cosmonauts on Mir, nine people were in orbit. |
| **June 6, 1999** | 2 | **STS-96** landed June 6 after its 10-day mission [122]. Two cosmonauts on Mir remained the only people in space. |
| **July 23, 1999** | 7 | **STS-93 Columbia** launched July 23 commanded by Eileen Collins (first female shuttle commander) with a five-member crew, deploying the Chandra X-ray Observatory [123]. Two on Mir made it seven in orbit. STS-93 ended July 27. |
| **Dec 19, 1999** | 6 | **STS-103 Discovery** launched Dec 19 with a seven-person crew (including Jean-François Clervoy and Claude Nicollier of ESA) to service the Hubble Space Telescope [124]. By this time Mir's last crew had returned (Mir was vacant after Aug 1999), so seven were in orbit. STS-103 landed Dec 27, 1999 [124], concluding the 1990s with no one else aloft. |
| **Oct 31, 2000** | 3 | **Soyuz TM-31** launched from Baikonur carrying the **Expedition 1** crew — William Shepherd (USA), Yuri Gidzenko, and Sergei Krikalev (Russia) — the **first long-duration crew to the International Space Station** [125]. They arrived at ISS on Nov 2, 2000, marking the start of a continuously occupied space station [126]. Three people were now in orbit (and human presence in space has been uninterrupted since). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes (Launches, Landings, Station Visits, Overlaps) |
|---|---|---|
| **Nov 30, 2000** | 8 | **STS-97 Endeavour** launched with a five-person crew (mission to install the first set of ISS solar arrays) [127]. At launch, the three Expedition 1 crew were aboard ISS, so the total in orbit became eight. Endeavour docked to ISS on Dec 2, and the crew installed the P6 solar array truss, increasing the station's power [128] [129]. |
| **Dec 11, 2000** | 3 | **STS-97** undocked and landed on Dec 11, bringing its five astronauts home [130]. The ISS Expedition 1 crew remained on orbit (three people). The year 2000 ended with three humans aboard the International Space Station, inaugurating a permanent human foothold in space. |

**Sources:** NASA mission archives [3] [4] [125], Encyclopædia Britannica spaceflight chronology [131] [67], and Roscosmos historical reports. (All missions listed were orbital. Suborbital flights and space tourist visits are excluded.)

---


[1] [2] [5] [6] [7] [8] [9] [10] [11] [12] [13] [14] [16] [17] [18] [19] [20] [21] [22] [23] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [54] [55] [56] [57] [58] [59] [131] Space exploration - Astronauts, Missions, Decade | Britannica
https://www.britannica.com/science/space-exploration/Crewed-spaceflights-1980-89

[3] [4] The First Space Shuttle - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/image-article/the-first-space-shuttle/

[15] Salyut 7 - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salyut_7

[31] [32] [33] [36] [37] [44] [45] [46] [49] [50] [60] [61] [62] [63] [65] [66] [67] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] [81] [82] [83] [84] [85] [86] [90] [91] [92] [93] [94] [95] [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103] [104] [105] [106] [107] [108] [109] [110] [111] [112] [113] [114] [115] [116] [117] [118] [119] [120] [121] [122] [123] [124] Space exploration - Astronauts, Missions, Decade | Britannica
https://www.britannica.com/science/space-exploration/Crewed-spaceflights-1990-99

[34] [51] [XML] Salyut 7 - NASA - NSSDCA - Spacecraft - Details
https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/nmc/spacecraft/display.action?id=1982-033A

[35] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] [43] [47] [48] Soyuz T-13, T14 with Salyut-7 Series
https://www.globalsecurity.org/space/world/russia/soyuz_t13_t14_salyut-7%20series.htm

[52] Soyuz TM-2
https://weebau.com/flights/soyuztm2.htm

[53] Spaceflight mission report: Soyuz TM-3 - SPACEFACTS
http://www.spacefacts.de/mission/english/soyuz-tm3.htm

[64] Soyuz TM-8
https://weebau.com/flights/soyuztm8.htm

[68] [XML] Soyuz-TM 8 - Spacecraft - the NSSDCA
https://nssdc.gsfc.nasa.gov/nmc/spacecraft/display.action?id=1989-071A

87 89 Space Station 20th: STS-71, First Shuttle-Mir Docking - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/history/space-station-20th-sts-71-first-shuttle-mir-docking/

88 STS-71 - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/mission/sts-71/

125 126 Oct. 31, 2000, Launch of First Crew to International Space Station - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/image-article/oct-31-2000-launch-of-first-crew-international-space-station/

127 129 130 STS-97 - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/mission/sts-97/

128 Space Station 20th: STS-97 Brings Power to the International Space Station - NASA
https://www.nasa.gov/history/space-station-20th-sts-97-brings-power-to-the-international-space-station/

## 2001–2010: Shuttle Era and ISS Assembly

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| 2001-02-07 | 8 | Space Shuttle Atlantis STS-98 (5 astronauts) launched to the ISS, raising the orbital population from 3 to 8 [1]. (Destiny module delivered) |
| 2001-02-20 | 3 | STS-98 Atlantis landed back on Earth, reducing orbit count to 3 (Expedition 1 crew on ISS). |
| 2001-03-08 | 10 | Shuttle Discovery STS-102 (7 crew, incl. 3 new ISS Expedition 2 members) launched to ISS, boosting orbit population to 10 [2]. |
| 2001-03-21 | 3 | STS-102 landed (returning Expedition 1 to Earth), leaving 3 Expedition 2 crew aboard ISS [2]. |
| 2001-04-19 | 10 | Shuttle Endeavour STS-100 (7 crew) launched to ISS (Canadarm2 delivery), raising orbit population to 10 [3]. |
| 2001-05-01 | 3 | STS-100 Endeavour landed, bringing orbit population back to 3 (Expedition 2 on ISS). |
| 2001-04-28 | 13 | Soyuz TM-32 launched (3 crew including Dennis Tito, the first space tourist) to ISS [4]. With Expedition 2 (3) and Shuttle STS-100 (7) still in orbit, a then-record 13 people were in space. |
| 2001-05-06 | 3 | Soyuz TM-32's crew (including Tito) returned to Earth, lowering orbital count to 3 [4]. |
| 2001-07-12 | 8 | Shuttle Atlantis STS-104 (5 crew) launched to ISS (Quest airlock delivery), increasing population to 8. |
| 2001-07-24 | 3 | STS-104 landed, leaving 3 on ISS (Expedition 2). |
| 2001-08-10 | 10 | Shuttle Discovery STS-105 (7 crew, rotation of Expedition 3) launched, bringing orbit count to 10. |
| 2001-08-22 | 3 | STS-105 landed with outgoing Expedition 2; 3 Expedition 3 crew remain on ISS. |
| 2001-10-21 | 6 | Soyuz TM-33 launched (3 crew, taxi mission to ISS). ISS crew (3) + Soyuz crew = 6 in orbit. |
| 2001-10-31 | 3 | Soyuz TM-33 crew returned, orbit population back to 3 (Expedition 3). |
| 2001-12-05 | 10 | Shuttle Endeavour STS-108 (7 crew, delivered Expedition 4) launched, raising count to 10. |
| 2001-12-17 | 3 | STS-108 landed with Expedition 3; 3 Expedition 4 crew stay aboard ISS. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2002-03-01** | 10 | Shuttle *Columbia* STS-109 (7 crew, Hubble servicing mission) launched, bringing total to **10** in orbit (ISS Exp 4 + STS-109) [5]. |
| **2002-03-12** | 3 | STS-109 landed (no ISS crew exchange), reducing orbit count to **3**. |
| **2002-04-08** | 10 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-110 (7 crew) launched to ISS (S0 Truss delivery), raising population to **10**. |
| **2002-04-19** | 3 | STS-110 landed, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2002-04-25** | 6 | Soyuz TM-34 launched to ISS (3 crew incl. Mark Shuttleworth, second space tourist); orbit count **6**. |
| **2002-05-05** | 3 | Soyuz TM-34 crew (with Shuttleworth) returned, orbit count back to **3**. |
| **2002-06-05** | 10 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-111 (7 crew, delivered Expedition 5) launched, population **10**. |
| **2002-06-19** | 3 | STS-111 landed with Expedition 4; **3** Expedition 5 crew remain. |
| **2002-10-07** | 9 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-112 (6 crew) launched to ISS (S1 Truss), raising orbit count to **9**. |
| **2002-10-18** | 3 | STS-112 landed, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2002-10-30** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-1 launched to ISS (3 crew on taxi mission), increasing count to **6**. |
| **2002-11-10** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-1 crew returned, orbit population back to **3**. |
| **2002-11-23** | 10 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-113 (7 crew, delivered Expedition 6) launched, bringing orbit population to **10**. |
| **2002-12-07** | 3 | STS-113 landed with Expedition 5; **3** Expedition 6 crew stay on ISS. |
| **2003-01-16** | 10 | Shuttle *Columbia* STS-107 (7 crew, science mission) launched. With 3 on ISS, **10** people were in orbit. |
| **2003-02-01** | 3 | *Columbia* broke up on reentry, tragically killing its 7 crew [6]. The orbital population dropped from 10 to **3** (the ISS crew). |
| **2003-04-26** | 5 | Soyuz TMA-2 launched (2 new Expedition 7 crew) to ISS. This boosted orbit count to **5** (Expedition 6's 3 + Soyuz crew). |
| **2003-05-04** | 2 | Soyuz TMA-1 landed with 3 Expedition 6 members, leaving only **2** people (Expedition 7) on ISS. Due to the shuttle stand-down, ISS crews were reduced to two. |
| **2003-10-15** | 3 | China's first crewed mission *Shenzhou 5* launched (1 taikonaut). Along with 2 on ISS, **3** were in orbit [7]. |
| **2003-10-16** | 2 | *Shenzhou 5* landed after 21 hours, leaving **2** on ISS. China became the third nation to independently launch a human to space. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2003-10-18** | 5 | Soyuz TMA-3 launched (3 crew, Expedition 8 + ESA visitor) to ISS, raising orbit population to **5**. |
| **2003-10-27** | 2 | Soyuz TMA-3's taxi visitor and 2 Expedition 7 crew returned to Earth on Soyuz TMA-2, leaving **2** on ISS (Expedition 8). |
| **2005-04-15** | 5 | Soyuz TMA-6 launched (3 crew, Expedition 11 + ESA visitor) to ISS, raising orbit count to **5** (Expedition 10 had 2). |
| **2005-04-25** | 2 | Soyuz TMA-5 landed with 2 Expedition 10 crew and ESA visitor, leaving **2** on ISS (Expedition 11). |
| **2005-07-26** | 9 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-114 (7 crew, "Return to Flight") launched to ISS after a 2½-year hiatus, boosting orbit population to **9**. |
| **2005-08-09** | 2 | STS-114 landed (no crew exchange); orbit population back to **2** (ISS Expedition 11). |
| **2005-09-30** | 5 | Soyuz TMA-7 launched (3 crew, Expedition 12 + tourist Gregory Olsen) to ISS; population **5**. |
| **2005-10-11** | 2 | Soyuz TMA-6 landed with Expedition 11 crew and Olsen, leaving **2** on ISS (Expedition 12). |
| **2005-10-12** | 4 | *Shenzhou 6* launched (2 Chinese crew). With 2 on ISS, **4** people were in orbit. |
| **2005-10-17** | 2 | *Shenzhou 6* landed after 5 days, leaving **2** on ISS. |
| **2006-03-30** | 5 | Soyuz TMA-8 launched (3 crew, Expedition 13 + Brazilian visitor) to ISS, raising orbit count to **5**. |
| **2006-04-08** | 2 | Soyuz TMA-7 landed with Expedition 12 crew and Brazilian visitor; **2** remain on ISS (Expedition 13). |
| **2006-07-04** | 9 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-121 (7 crew) launched to ISS; population **9**. (European astronaut Thomas Reiter joined the ISS, restoring it to 3-person staffing) [5]. |
| **2006-07-17** | 3 | STS-121 landed (6 crew returned; Reiter stayed aboard ISS), leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 13 now 3 people). |
| **2006-09-09** | 9 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-115 (6 crew) launched to ISS, boosting orbit count to **9**. |
| **2006-09-18** | 12 | Soyuz TMA-9 launched (3 crew, Expedition 14 + tourist Anousheh Ansari) while STS-115 was still docked. This temporary overlap brought the total to **12** in orbit. |
| **2006-09-21** | 6 | STS-115 landed, leaving **6** people (ISS crew and visiting Soyuz crew) in orbit. |
| **2006-09-29** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-8 landed with 2 Expedition 13 crew and Ansari, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 14). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2006-12-10** | 10 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-116 (7 crew) launched to ISS, population **10**. (ISS crew rotation: astronaut S. Williams arrived, ESA's T. Reiter later departed) |
| **2006-12-22** | 3 | STS-116 landed (6 returned; S. Williams stayed on ISS), leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 14). |
| **2007-04-07** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-10 launched (3 crew, Expedition 15 + Charles Simonyi as tourist) to ISS, raising orbit population to **6**. |
| **2007-04-21** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-9 landed with 2 Expedition 14 crew and Simonyi (tourist), leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 15). |
| **2007-06-08** | 10 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-117 (7 crew) launched to ISS, boosting orbit count to **10**. (NASA's Clayton Anderson joined ISS, S. Williams would later return on shuttle) |
| **2007-06-22** | 3 | STS-117 landed (6 returned; one astronaut stayed on ISS), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2007-08-08** | 10 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-118 (7 crew) launched to ISS, population **10**. |
| **2007-08-21** | 3 | STS-118 landed; orbit count back to **3**. |
| **2007-10-10** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-11 launched (3 crew, Expedition 16 + Malaysia's first astronaut) to ISS, raising count to **6**. |
| **2007-10-21** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-10 landed with 2 Expedition 15 crew and the Malaysian visitor, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 16). |
| **2007-10-23** | 10 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-120 (7 crew) launched to ISS, population **10**. (Delivered Harmony module; astronaut D. Tani joined ISS, Italian astronaut Paolo Nespoli returned on shuttle) |
| **2007-11-07** | 3 | STS-120 landed (6 returned; one astronaut stayed on ISS), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2008-02-07** | 10 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-122 (7 crew) launched to ISS, bringing orbit population to **10**. (Delivered *Columbus* lab; ESA's Léopold Eyharts joined ISS, D. Tani returned) |
| **2008-02-20** | 3 | STS-122 landed (6 returned; one stayed on ISS), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2008-03-11** | 10 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-123 (7 crew) launched to ISS, raising orbit count to **10**. (Delivered Dextre; astronaut Garrett Reisman stayed on ISS, L. Eyharts returned) |
| **2008-03-26** | 3 | STS-123 landed (6 returned; one stayed on ISS), leaving **3** aboard ISS. |
| **2008-04-08** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-12 launched (3 crew, Expedition 17 + S. Korea's first astronaut Yi So-yeon) to ISS; orbit population **6**. |
| **2008-04-19** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-11 landed with 2 Expedition 16 crew and Yi So-yeon, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 17). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2008-05-31** | 10 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-124 (7 crew) launched to ISS, boosting orbit count to **10**. (Delivered *Kibo* lab; astronaut Greg Chamitoff stayed on ISS, G. Reisman returned) |
| **2008-06-14** | 3 | STS-124 landed (6 returned; one stayed on ISS), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2008-09-25** | 6 | *Shenzhou 7* launched (3 Chinese crew) during ISS Expedition 17 (3), bringing total in orbit to **6**. (First Chinese spacewalk performed) |
| **2008-09-28** | 3 | *Shenzhou 7* landed, reducing orbit population to **3** (ISS crew). |
| **2008-10-12** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-13 launched (3 crew, Expedition 18 + tourist Richard Garriott) to ISS; orbit population **6**. |
| **2008-10-24** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-12 landed with 2 Expedition 17 crew and Garriott, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 18). |
| **2008-11-14** | 9 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-126 (7 crew) launched to ISS, increasing count to **9**. (Brought supplies to prepare ISS for larger crews) |
| **2008-11-30** | 6 | STS-126 landed (all 7 returned; no change in ISS crew this time, as it remained Expedition 18). **6** people (Expedition 18) stay on ISS. |
| **2009-03-15** | 10 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-119 (7 crew) launched to ISS, raising orbit population to **10**. (Delivered final solar arrays; JAXA astronaut Koichi Wakata joined ISS, Sandy Magnus later returned on shuttle) |
| **2009-03-25** | 6 | **(Record Overlap)** During STS-119's mission, Soyuz TMA-14 launched on **2009-03-26** (3 crew, Exp 19 + tourist Charles Simonyi) while STS-119 was still docked. For a brief period, **13** people were in orbit (the 6 on ISS, 7 on STS-119, plus Soyuz en route) [8] . |
| **2009-03-28** | 6 | STS-119 landed (shuttle's 7 crew returned; Wakata stayed on ISS), leaving **6** on ISS – marking the start of a permanent six-person ISS crew. |
| **2009-04-08** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-13 landed with 2 Expedition 18 crew and tourist Simonyi; the new Expedition 19 (6 members) remained on ISS, so **6** people stayed in orbit. |
| **2009-05-11** | 10 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-125 (7 crew, final Hubble servicing mission) launched. With 3-member Expedition 19 temporarily awaiting new arrivals (some ISS crew had returned earlier), orbit population peaked at **10** (no ISS docking). |
| **2009-05-24** | 3 | STS-125 landed (all 7 returned), leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 19 had temporarily dropped to 3 while awaiting replacements). |
| **2009-05-27** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-15 launched (3 crew) to ISS, returning station to full **6**-person occupancy (Expedition 20 began with 6). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2009-07-15** | 13 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-127 (7 crew) launched to ISS, resulting in a *record-breaking* **13** people in orbit when it arrived [8]. (All 6 ISS Expedition 20 crew + 7 shuttle crew were together on ISS) |
| **2009-07-31** | 6 | STS-127 landed (all 7 returned; one ISS astronaut had been exchanged earlier), leaving **6** on ISS. |
| **2009-08-28** | 13 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-128 (7 crew) launched to ISS, again bringing the total to **13** in orbit (6 on ISS + 7 on shuttle). |
| **2009-09-12** | 6 | STS-128 landed (7 returned; one new astronaut remained on ISS), leaving **6** on ISS. |
| **2009-09-30** | 9 | Soyuz TMA-16 launched (3 crew, Expedition 21 + tourist Guy Laliberté) to ISS. For about 11 days, **9** people were in orbit (Expedition 20/21 handover with 6 on ISS + 3 on arriving Soyuz). |
| **2009-10-11** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-14 landed with 3 crew (including Laliberté and two Expedition 20 members), leaving **6** on ISS (Expedition 21). |
| **2009-11-16** | 12 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-129 (6 crew) launched to ISS (resupply mission), increasing orbit population to **12** (6 ISS + 6 shuttle). |
| **2009-11-27** | 6 | STS-129 landed (all 6 returned; no change to ISS crew), leaving **6** on ISS. |
| **2009-12-01** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-15 landed with 3 Expedition 21 crew, temporarily reducing ISS occupancy to **3** (Expedition 22). |
| **2009-12-20** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-17 launched (3 crew) to ISS to begin Expedition 22/23, restoring the station crew to **6**. |
| **2010-02-08** | 11 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-130 (6 crew) launched to ISS (delivered Node 3 *Tranquility* & Cupola), raising orbit population to **11**. |
| **2010-02-21** | 5 | STS-130 landed (all 6 returned; no crew swap), leaving **5** on ISS (Expedition 22 temporarily at 5 after one crew's earlier return). |
| **2010-03-18** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-16 landed with 2 Expedition 22 crew (leaving one behind), so ISS population dropped to **3** for two weeks. |
| **2010-04-02** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-18 launched (3 crew) to ISS for Expedition 23, restoring ISS crew to **6**. |
| **2010-04-05** | 13 | Shuttle *Discovery* STS-131 (7 crew) launched to ISS, bringing the total to **13** in orbit once docked (6 ISS + 7 shuttle). |
| **2010-04-20** | 6 | STS-131 landed (7 returned; one astronaut had been left on ISS), leaving **6** on ISS. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2010-05-14** | 12 | Shuttle *Atlantis* STS-132 (6 crew) launched to ISS (delivered *Rassvet* module), bringing orbit population to **12**. |
| **2010-05-26** | 6 | STS-132 landed (all 6 returned; no change to station crew), leaving **6** on ISS. (*STS-132 was the final flight of Atlantis*) |
| **2010-06-02** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-17 landed with 3 Expedition 23 crew, reducing ISS crew to **3** (Expedition 24 interim). |
| **2010-06-15** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-19 launched (3 crew) to ISS to begin Expedition 24, bringing station crew back to **6**. |
| **2010-09-25** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-18 landed with 3 Expedition 24 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 25). |
| **2010-10-07** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-01M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 25/26), raising orbit count to **6**. |
| **2010-11-25** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-19 landed with 3 Expedition 25 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 26). |

## 2011–2020: Post-Shuttle, ISS & Tiangong Operations

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2011-02-24** | 9 | Space Shuttle *Discovery* STS-133 (6 crew, final *Discovery* flight) launched to ISS, raising orbit population to **9**. (Brought supplies and the *Leonardo* module) |
| **2011-03-09** | 3 | STS-133 landed (all 6 returned; no crew exchange), leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 26). |
| **2011-03-16** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-21 launched (3 crew) to ISS for Expedition 27, restoring ISS crew to **6**. |
| **2011-05-16** | 12 | Shuttle *Endeavour* STS-134 (6 crew) launched to ISS (delivered AMS-02 experiment), boosting orbit count to **12** (6 ISS + 6 shuttle). |
| **2011-06-01** | 6 | STS-134 landed (all 6 returned), leaving **6** on ISS. |
| **2011-06-07** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-02M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 28), keeping ISS at **6**. |
| **2011-07-08** | 10 | **Last Shuttle:** *Atlantis* STS-135 (4 crew) launched on the final Space Shuttle mission, to resupply ISS. ISS (6) + STS-135 (4) = **10** people in orbit. |
| **2011-07-21** | 6 | STS-135 landed, ending the Shuttle program. Orbit population dropped to **6** (Expedition 28 on ISS). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2011-09-16** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-21 landed with 3 Expedition 28 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 29). *(A Soyuz launch scheduled for September was delayed by a rocket failure, temporarily reducing ISS crew.)* |
| **2011-11-14** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-22 launched (3 crew) to ISS, restoring station crew to **6** (Expedition 29/30). |
| **2012-04-27** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-22 landed with 3 Expedition 30 crew; **3** remain on ISS (Expedition 31). |
| **2012-05-15** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-04M launched (3 crew) to ISS for Expedition 31/32, keeping ISS at **6**. |
| **2012-06-16** | 9 | **First Tiangong Mission:** China's *Shenzhou 9* launched (3 crew including China's first female astronaut) and docked with Tiangong-1 station on June 18. With 6 on ISS + 3 on Tiangong-1, **9** people were in orbit. |
| **2012-06-29** | 6 | *Shenzhou 9* crew returned to Earth after a 13-day mission, reducing global orbit count to **6** (ISS crew). |
| **2012-07-01** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-03M landed with 3 Expedition 31 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 32). |
| **2012-07-15** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-05M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 32/33), raising ISS crew to **6**. |
| **2012-09-17** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-04M landed with 3 Expedition 32 crew; **3** remain on ISS (Expedition 33). |
| **2012-10-23** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-06M launched (3 crew) to ISS for Expedition 33/34, keeping ISS at **6**. |
| **2012-11-18** | 6 | **Private CRS Demo:** SpaceX Dragon CRS-1 (uncrewed) returned cargo from ISS – *not counted* here as it was uncrewed (orbital human count remained **6**). |
| **2012-11-19** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-05M landed with 3 Expedition 33 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 34). |
| **2012-12-19** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-07M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 34/35), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2013-03-16** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-06M landed with 3 Expedition 34 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2013-03-28** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-08M launched (3 crew) to ISS for Expedition 35, restoring station to **6**. |
| **2013-06-11** | 6 | **Second Tiangong Mission:** *Shenzhou 10* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong-1 for a 15-day mission. With 6 on ISS and 3 on Tiangong, **9** people were in space. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2013-06-26** | 6 | *Shenzhou 10* returned to Earth, leaving **6** (ISS crew) in orbit. |
| **2013-09-10** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-08M landed with 3 Expedition 35/36 crew, dropping ISS to **3** crew. |
| **2013-09-25** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-10M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 37), restoring **6** aboard ISS. |
| **2013-11-11** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-09M landed with 3 Expedition 36/37 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 38). |
| **2013-11-07** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-11M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 38/39), raising ISS to **6** (carried the Olympic torch to orbit). |
| **2014-03-11** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-10M landed with 3 Expedition 38 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2014-03-26** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-12M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 39), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2014-05-14** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-11M landed with 3 Expedition 39 crew, leaving **3** on ISS (Expedition 40). |
| **2014-05-28** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-13M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 40/41), bringing ISS crew back to **6**. |
| **2014-09-10** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-12M landed with 3 Expedition 40 crew; orbit count **3** (Expedition 41 remains). |
| **2014-09-26** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-14M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 41/42), raising ISS to **6**. |
| **2014-11-10** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-13M landed with 3 Expedition 41 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2014-11-23** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-15M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 42), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2015-03-12** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-14M landed with 3 Expedition 42 crew; ISS crew drops to **3**. |
| **2015-03-27** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-16M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 43, included *One-Year Mission* astronaut Scott Kelly and cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko), bringing ISS back to **6**. |
| **2015-05-13** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-15M landed with 3 Expedition 43 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2015-07-23** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-17M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 44), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2015-09-12** | 9 | Soyuz TMA-18M launched on **2015-09-02** (3 crew incl. visiting astronauts from Denmark and Kazakhstan). For about 10 days, ISS had **9** people (6 resident + 3 visitors) during the crew handover. |
| **2015-09-12** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-16M landed (with 3 crew including the short-term visitors), leaving **6** on ISS (Year-mission crew remained onboard). |
| **2015-12-11** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-17M landed with 3 Expedition 45 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2015-12-15** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-19M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 46), bringing station back to **6**. |
| **2016-03-02** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-18M landed with 3 Expedition 46 crew (including S. Kelly and M. Kornienko after 340 days in space), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2016-03-19** | 6 | Soyuz TMA-20M launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 47), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2016-06-18** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-19M landed with 3 Expedition 47 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2016-07-07** | 6 | Soyuz MS-01 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 48; first of upgraded Soyuz-MS series), raising ISS crew to **6**. |
| **2016-09-06** | 3 | Soyuz TMA-20M landed with 3 Expedition 48 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2016-10-17** | 5 | **Tiangong-2 Mission:** *Shenzhou 11* launched (2 crew) to China's Tiangong-2 space lab. At this time ISS had 3 crew, so **5** people were in orbit. |
| **2016-10-19** | 8 | Soyuz MS-02 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 49), boosting total in orbit to **8** (3 ISS + 2 Tiangong-2 + 3 Soyuz en route). |
| **2016-11-18** | 6 | *Shenzhou 11* crew landed after 30 days, leaving **6** in orbit (ISS crew). |
| **2016-11-22** | 3 | Soyuz MS-01 landed with 3 Expedition 49 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2016-12-01** | 6 | Soyuz MS-03 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 50), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2017-04-10** | 3 | Soyuz MS-02 landed with 3 Expedition 50 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2017-04-20** | 6 | Soyuz MS-04 launched (2 crew – Russia flew one seat empty) to ISS (Expedition 51), bringing ISS to **5** initially, then **6** once a later arrival filled the crew. |
| **2017-07-02** | 5 | **(Temporary)** Soyuz MS-03 landed with 3 Expedition 50/51 crew, leaving **5** on ISS (Expedition 52 had a crew of 2 until next launch). |
| **2017-07-28** | 8 | Soyuz MS-05 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 52/53), bringing ISS crew to **5** → then **6**. Total in orbit momentarily **8** (5 ISS + 3 launching). |
| **2017-09-03** | 3 | Soyuz MS-04 landed with 2 Expedition 52 crew (having had one fewer crew), leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2017-09-13** | 6 | Soyuz MS-06 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 53), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2017-12-14** | 3 | Soyuz MS-05 landed with 3 Expedition 53 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2017-12-17** | 6 | Soyuz MS-07 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 54), bringing ISS back to **6**. |
| **2018-02-27** | 3 | Soyuz MS-06 landed with 3 Expedition 54 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2018-03-21** | 6 | Soyuz MS-08 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 55), raising ISS crew to **6**. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2018-06-03** | 3 | Soyuz MS-07 landed with 3 Expedition 55 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2018-06-08** | 6 | Soyuz MS-09 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 56), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2018-10-04** | 6 | **Soyuz Launch Abort:** Soyuz MS-10 launched on 2018-10-11 with 2 crew, but aborted to an emergency landing. They did not reach orbit, so orbital count remained **6** (Expedition 57 on ISS). |
| **2018-12-20** | 6 | Soyuz MS-09 landed with 3 Expedition 57 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. (Expedition 58 ran with 3 members due to the MS-10 abort.) |
| **2018-12-03** | 6 | Soyuz MS-11 launched (3 crew) to ISS, quickly boosting ISS back to **6** despite the prior abort incident. |
| **2019-03-15** | 3 | Soyuz MS-11 landed with 3 Expedition 58/59 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2019-03-15** | 6 | Soyuz MS-12 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 59/60), restoring ISS to **6**. |
| **2019-04-17** | 6 | **First Crew Dragon:** SpaceX Crew Dragon *DM-1* returned to Earth on Mar 8 after an uncrewed test flight to ISS (no change in human count). ISS remained at **6**. |
| **2019-06-24** | 3 | Soyuz MS-11 (launched earlier) landed with 3 Expedition 59 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2019-07-20** | 6 | Soyuz MS-13 launched (3 crew) on the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11, raising ISS population to **6** (Expedition 60/61). |
| **2019-09-06** | 3 | Soyuz MS-12 landed with 3 Expedition 60 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2019-09-25** | 9 | Soyuz MS-15 launched (3 crew, Expedition 61 + UAE's first astronaut Hazza Al Mansoori) to ISS. For one week, **9** people were in orbit during the crew handover (6 on ISS + 3 short-visit crew). |
| **2019-10-03** | 6 | Soyuz MS-12 landed with 3 crew (including Al Mansoori and 2 ISS crew), leaving **6** on ISS (Expedition 61). |
| **2019-12-18** | 3 | Soyuz MS-13 landed with 3 Expedition 61 crew, leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2019-12-20** | 6 | Soyuz MS-15 (the last Soyuz to launch from Baikonur's Gagarin pad) launched 2019-09-25 (see above) remained, and Soyuz MS-16 was delayed to 2020. ISS stayed at **6** through the end of 2019. |

## 2021–2025: New Vehicles and Record Crews

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2020-05-30** | 5 | **Crew Dragon Era Begins:** SpaceX *Crew Dragon* Demo-2 launched (2 NASA astronauts) to ISS – the first crewed orbital launch from U.S. soil since 2011. ISS crew (3) + Demo-2 (2) = **5** in orbit. |
| **2020-08-01** | 3 | Crew Dragon Demo-2 splashed down, returning its 2 astronauts and leaving **3** on ISS. |
| **2020-10-14** | 3 | Soyuz MS-17 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 64), but arrived on a new 3-hour fast rendezvous. ISS crew back to **6**. *(Note: One ISS crew member had returned on Oct 21 via Soyuz MS-16, temporarily dropping ISS to 3)* |
| **2020-11-16** | 7 | **ISS at 7:** SpaceX Crew-1 (Crew Dragon *Resilience*, 4 astronauts) launched to ISS, increasing ISS crew from 3 to **7** – the first seven-person ISS crew (made possible by Crew Dragon) [5] . |
| **2020-12-17** | 7 | Soyuz MS-17 landed with 3 crew; ISS remained at **7** (Expedition 64 continued with Crew-1 astronauts on board). |
| **2021-04-09** | 10 | Soyuz MS-18 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 65). ISS crew temporarily **10** (7 + 3) during handover. |
| **2021-04-17** | 7 | Soyuz MS-17 (launched Oct 2020) landed with 3 crew, leaving **7** on ISS. |
| **2021-04-24** | 11 | SpaceX Crew-2 (4 astronauts) launched to ISS, briefly raising ISS population to **11** (4 new + 7 existing) during handover [5] . |
| **2021-04-28** | 7 | SpaceX Crew-1 (4 astronauts) departed ISS and splashed down, reducing ISS crew to **7**. |
| **2021-06-17** | 10 | **Chinese Station:** *Shenzhou 12* launched (3 crew) to China's new Tiangong (Tianhe) space station [9] . With 7 on ISS and 3 on Tiangong, **10** people were in orbit. This marked China's first long-duration space station mission. |
| **2021-09-16** | 14 | **First All-Private Orbital Mission:** SpaceX *Inspiration4* launched (4 private astronauts on Crew Dragon *Resilience*) into a 3-day Earth orbit [10] . Concurrently, 7 on ISS and 3 on Tiangong gave a total of **14** people in orbit – surpassing the Shuttle-era record of 13. |
| **2021-09-18** | 10 | *Inspiration4* safely splashed down, bringing the global orbital population back to **10** (ISS + Tiangong crews). |
| **2021-09-17** | 6 | *Shenzhou 12* returned to Earth after 90 days, leaving **7** in orbit (ISS crew only). *(Tiangong was unoccupied until the next crew)* |
| **2021-10-05** | 10 | Soyuz MS-19 launched (3 crew, incl. a Russian film director and actress on a short visit) to ISS. ISS temporarily at **10** (7 + 3 visitors). |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2021-10-17** | 7 | Soyuz MS-18 landed with the 2 visiting film crew and 1 cosmonaut, leaving **7** on ISS. |
| **2021-10-16** | 10 | *Shenzhou 13* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong, restoring **10** in orbit (7 ISS + 3 Tiangong). |
| **2021-12-08** | 13 | Soyuz MS-20 launched (3 crew: 1 cosmonaut + 2 Japanese space tourists) to ISS for a 12-day visit. With 7 on ISS and 3 on Tiangong, the total reached **13** in orbit. |
| **2021-12-20** | 10 | Soyuz MS-20 tourists returned to Earth (with their commander), leaving **7** on ISS and 3 on Tiangong (total 10). |
| **2022-04-08** | 14 | **First Private ISS Mission:** SpaceX *Axiom-1* launched (4 private astronauts) to the ISS [11]. For about one week, ISS had 11 people (7 ISS + 4 Ax-1), and with 3 on Tiangong (Shenzhou 13), the global count hit **14** in orbit. |
| **2022-04-16** | 11 | *Shenzhou 13* landed after a 182-day mission, leaving **11** people in orbit (ISS with Ax-1 visitors). |
| **2022-04-25** | 7 | Axiom-1's crew departed ISS and splashed down, returning the orbital population to **7** (ISS only). |
| **2022-06-05** | 10 | *Shenzhou 14* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong's Tianhe module, while ISS had 7 aboard, bringing total to **10** in orbit. (Tiangong's crew began the station's construction phase.) |
| **2022-09-29** | 10 | *Shenzhou 14* and ISS crews (7+3) brought orbit count to **10**. *(No change – both stations occupied.)* |
| **2022-10-05** | 14 | SpaceX Crew-5 (4 astronauts) launched to ISS, briefly raising ISS crew to 11 during overlap (Crew-4 still aboard). With 3 on Tiangong, **14** people were in orbit. |
| **2022-10-12** | 11 | Crew-4 (4 astronauts) returned to Earth, leaving **7** on ISS and 3 on Tiangong (total 10). |
| **2022-11-29** | 13 | *Shenzhou 15* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong, overlapping *Shenzhou 14*. For a week, Tiangong had 6 crew and ISS 7, totaling **13** in orbit. (First 6-person overlap on the Chinese station.) |
| **2022-12-04** | 10 | *Shenzhou 14* crew landed, leaving 3 on Tiangong and 7 on ISS (**10** total in orbit). |
| **2023-03-30** | 10 | *Shenzhou 15* (3) and ISS (7) = **10** in orbit. *(Steady operations; multiple Crew Dragon and Soyuz rotations in early 2023 kept ISS at 7.)* |
| **2023-05-21** | 14 | **Astronaut Peak:** Axiom-2 mission launched (4 private astronauts) to ISS, bringing ISS temporary crew to 11 (7 + Ax2's 4). With 3 on Tiangong (Shenzhou 15), **14** people were orbiting Earth. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2023-05-30** | 17 | *Shenzhou 16* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong, overlapping Shenzhou 15. At that moment, a **record 17 humans** were in orbit: 11 on ISS (7 ISS + 4 Ax-2) and 6 on Tiangong (3 + 3) [12]. *This surpassed the 14-person mark from 2021.* |
| **2023-05-31** | 13 | Axiom-2 departed ISS (4 returned), reducing ISS crew to 7 and global count to **13**. |
| **2023-06-03** | 10 | *Shenzhou 15* crew landed (3 returned) after handover, leaving 3 on Tiangong and 7 on ISS (**10** total). |
| **2023-09-15** | 10 | *Shenzhou 17* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong on 2023-10-26 (overlap with Shenzhou 16), while ISS crew rotations (Crew-6/7, Soyuz MS-23/24) kept about 10 people in orbit through fall 2023. *(The count stayed ~10–11 during routine handovers.)* |
| **2023-09-27** | 10 | Soyuz MS-22 (uncrewed) had returned in Mar 2023 with no crew after a coolant leak; by late 2023 ISS crew remained at 7, Tiangong at 3 (**10** total). |
| **2023-11-03** | 10 | *Shenzhou 16* crew landed after their mission, leaving 3 on Tiangong and 7 on ISS (**10** in orbit). |
| **2024-03-03** | 10 | SpaceX Crew-7 (4) and Crew-8 (4) overlapped briefly in March 2024, keeping ISS at 11 for a short period, while Tiangong (3) made **14**. Crew-7 departed 2024-03-11, returning ISS to 7 (**10** total). |
| **2024-06-05** | 9 | **New US Vehicle:** Boeing *Starliner CFT* (Crew Flight Test) launched with 2 astronauts (Butch Wilmore, Suni Williams) to ISS [13]. They joined the 7 on ISS, raising ISS crew to **9** (and total in orbit to 12 with Tiangong's 3). *(This was Starliner's first crewed flight.)* |
| **2024-09-10** | 16 | **Private Polaris Mission:** SpaceX *Polaris Dawn* launched (4 private astronauts) on a 5-day high-altitude mission. At launch, there were **16** people in orbit: 4 on Polaris Dawn, 9 on ISS (including a visiting Starliner crew) and 3 on Tiangong [14] [15]. |
| **2024-09-11** | 19 | Soyuz MS-26 launched (3 crew: 2 cosmonauts + NASA's Don Pettit) to ISS, setting a **world record of 19 humans in orbit simultaneously** [16] [17]. (4 Polaris Dawn + 12 on ISS (after Soyuz launch) + 3 on Tiangong = 19). This eclipsed the previous record of 17. |
| **2024-09-15** | 15 | Polaris Dawn splashed down after its mission, reducing the count to **15** in orbit (ISS and Tiangong crews, plus the newly arrived Soyuz MS-26 crew). |
| **2024-09-27** | 11 | SpaceX Crew-9 (4) launched to ISS, temporarily raising ISS crew to 11 during overlap with Crew-8. Total in orbit peaked at **14** (with Tiangong's 3) before Crew-8's return on Oct 5. |

| Date | People in Orbit | Mission Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **2024-10-31** | 12 | *Shenzhou 17* crew landed on Oct 31; *Shenzhou 18* had launched Apr 2024 and remained in orbit (3). ISS crews (7) continued normal rotations. About **10–12** people total stayed in orbit through late 2024. |
| **2024-10-26** | 15 | *Shenzhou 19* launched (3 crew) to Tiangong, overlapping *Shenzhou 18* (3) for a few days, making 6 on Tiangong. With 7 on ISS, about **13–15** people were in orbit in late Oct 2024. *Shenzhou 18* landed Nov 3, returning Tiangong to 3 crew.* |
| **2025-03-14** | 15 | SpaceX Crew-10 (4) launched to ISS, overlapping a few days with Crew-9's 4; ISS crew temporarily 11, plus 3 on Tiangong = **14** (no other visitors). Crew-9 landed Mar 18, leaving ISS at 7 (**10** total). |
| **2025-04-01** | 14 | **First Polar Orbit Crew:** SpaceX *Fram2* mission launched (4 private astronauts) into a 3.5-day polar orbit [18] [19]. With ISS (7) and Tiangong (3) crews, the total reached **14** in orbit. (*Fram2 was a privately funded mission, the first to carry astronauts over Earth's poles*.) |
| **2025-04-04** | 10 | Fram2's crew splashed down, lowering the count to **10** (ISS + Tiangong). |
| **2025-04-08** | 13 | Soyuz MS-27 launched (3 crew) to ISS (Expedition 73), temporarily raising ISS crew to 10 and global count to **13**. |
| **2025-04-19** | 10 | *Shenzhou 19* crew landed on Apr 29 after handing over to *Shenzhou 20* (launched Apr 24, 3 crew) a few days prior. ISS crew remained 10 during spring 2025. **(10** people in orbit as of late April 2025: 7 ISS + 3 Tiangong.) |

**Sources:** ISS Expedition archives [5] [8], NASA mission press releases, Wikipedia mission logs [16] [17], and space news reports. The orbital human population has grown with the advent of new spacecraft (Crew Dragon, Starliner) and China's station, reaching an all-time high of 19 simultaneous people in September 2024 [16] [17].

---


[1] [2] [3] [7] List of human spaceflights, 2001–2010 - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_human_spaceflights,_2001%E2%80%932010

[4] Dennis Tito - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dennis_Tito

[5] [12] [14] [15] Polaris Dawn Finally Gets a Break – SpacePolicyOnline.com
https://spacepolicyonline.com/news/polaris-dawn-finally-gets-a-break/

[6] Space Shuttle Columbia disaster - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_Shuttle_Columbia_disaster

[8] ISS reaches 13 crew, Endeavour has two missions left | News | Flight Global
https://www.flightglobal.com/space/iss-reaches-13-crew-endeavour-has-two-missions-left/87850.article

9 10 11 13 List of human spaceflights, 2021–present - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_human_spaceflights,_2021%E2%80%93present

16 Polaris Dawn - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polaris_Dawn

17 9 firsts in 5 days: Polaris Dawn crew lands from history-making SpaceX mission | Space
https://www.space.com/polaris-dawn-splashdown-records-firsts

18 Fram2 astronauts begin historic polar orbit spaceflight following a ...
https://spaceflightnow.com/2025/03/31/live-coverage-spacex-to-launch-fram2-astronauts-to-polar-orbit-on-falcon-9-rocket-from-the-kennedy-space-center/

19 SpaceX's private Fram2 astronauts splash down on Earth, ending ...
https://www.space.com/space-exploration/private-spaceflight/spacexs-private-fram2-astronauts-splash-down-on-earth-ending-historic-polar-orbit-expedition