

First space tourist grins down on planet Earth

A It was a giant leap for the tourist industry and the most expensive holiday in history. When Dennis Tito, a 60-year-old Californian, blasted off yesterday he was burning money at the rate of £30,000 a mile. The International Space Station, with which he docks tomorrow, orbits 220 miles above the Earth and the 8 day excursion is costing him £14m.

B A first class return ticket from London to New York in an aircraft or aboard the QE2 costs a mere £1 a mile, measured in a straight line.

C The Soyuz rocket with Tito on board ascended from the launchpad of the Baikonur Cosmodrome on the barren steppes of Kazakhstan in central Asia under sunny blue skies. A television monitor showed Tito in a white spacesuit and a plexiglass helmet, grinning broadly.

D A ground controller asked 'How do you feel?' 'Khorosho (good)' Tito replied in Russian.

E American and Russian space officials had argued whether it was safe for Tito to board the space station, with NASA relenting only after he had agreed not to sue if anything went wrong, and to sleep only in Russian sections of the craft.

F He has been allowed only 7kg of luggage, a dictaphone, two pens designed to work in zero gravity, three cameras and nine CDs – among them songs from the Beatles and Andrea Bocelli, the blind Italian tenor.

G As the surge of power took him skyward, Tito must have cared little. Amateurs have flown in space before – among them three congressmen and a Saudi prince – but he was floating into history as the first paying tourist.

H The final countdown began at 3am Moscow time, when Tito and his companions, Talgat Musabayev, the flight commander, and Yuri Baturin, a former politician who became a cosmonaut three years ago, were awoken at their hotel.

I A team of doctors washed the crew with a special alcohol lotion before they dressed in disinfected long johns and ordinary uniforms for breakfast and a final meeting with relatives. About 25 family members, including two sons and a daughter, as well as business partners, friends, and Suzanne, his former wife, travelled to Kazakhstan to bid Tito farewell.

J After a 40 minute ride to the test centre, he was fitted with his cosmonaut suit. In keeping with superstition, the spacemen were not allowed to watch the setting up of the booster rocket. Instead, they performed their own bizarre ritual; a ceremonial urination on the tyres of the minibus that took them to the launchpad – the same one from which Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space.

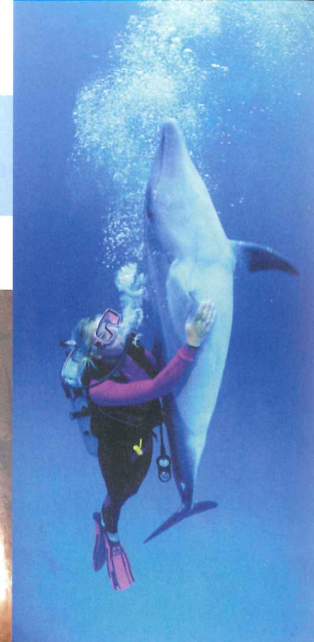
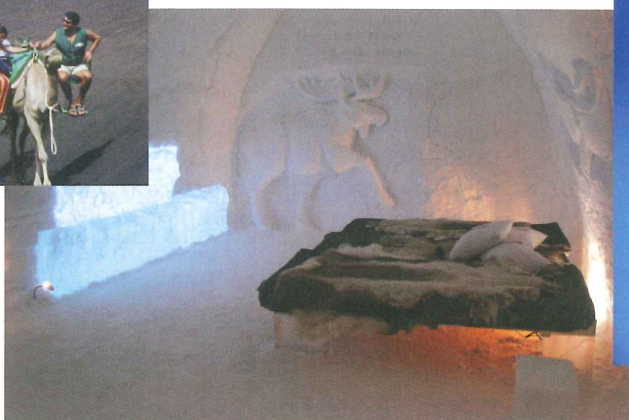
K In space, Tito will be sustained by Russian soups, juice, tea and coffee, all in toothpaste-like tubes, fruit and ready cooked vegetables as well as canned meats. 'I do miss a good hamburger,' he said.

L He is unlikely to miss the gruelling physical requirements of securing his place in the annals. Zero gravity flights and head spinning sessions in a centrifuge – creating gravitational forces eight times those on Earth – might have been enough to deter lesser citizens. Tito never lost consciousness and was said by trainers to have been an exemplary student.

M 'I'm not a professional astronaut,' he said, 'but I'm as dedicated to the mission as any astronaut would be'.

3

Out of this world



Look at these pictures and answer the questions.

- Which holiday would you most/least like to go on?
- What is the appeal of each of these holidays?

Reading skills

Strategy

Look quickly through the article for just the numbers. When you find one, look at the words around it to get the answer.

Skimming and scanning

1 The numbers below all appear in the article. What do they refer to? Find the answers as quickly as possible.

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------------|---|----|-------|
| 1 | 60 | <i>Dennis Tito's age</i> | 4 | 14 | |
| 2 | 220 | | 5 | 7 | |
| 3 | 8 | | 6 | 25 | |

2 Read the article quickly. Are these statements True or False?

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | Dennis Tito's space trip cost more than any other holiday. | T/F |
| 2 | Tito went to space with an all - American crew. | T/F |
| 3 | Dennis ate hamburgers in space. | T/F |

Reading 1

True, False or Not Given

1 Do these statements agree with the information in the article?

Write: **TRUE** if the statement is true according to the passage
FALSE if the statement is false according to the passage
NOT GIVEN if the information is not given in the passage

- The weather on the day of the launch was good.
- Tito slept in a specially designed Russian sleeping bag.
- Tito was the first non professional astronaut in space.
- The rocket was launched at 3am Moscow time.
- Tito did not enjoy wearing his cosmonaut's suit.

Short answers

2 Answer these questions using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS OR A NUMBER**.

- What did doctors use to wash the crew?
- Who is Suzanne?
- How long did it take to get to the test centre?
- What will liquids be kept in?

Guessing meaning from context

3 Guess the definitions of the words from the context.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 <i>blasted off</i> (para.A) | 4 <i>ascended</i> (para.C) |
| A exploded | A moved quickly |
| B landed | B went up |
| C left Earth for space | C flew |
| 2 <i>docks</i> (para.A) | 5 <i>deter</i> (para.L) |
| A joins together | A make s.o decide not to do something |
| B arrives | B encourage s.o to do something |
| C sees | C force s.o to do something |
| 3 <i>orbits</i> (para.A) | 6 <i>exemplary</i> (para.L) |
| A goes round | A lazy |
| B goes down | B excellent |
| C goes up | C healthy |