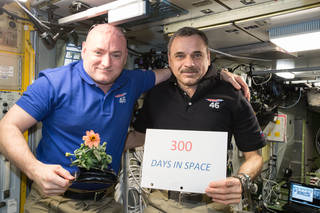
**International Space Station**



(01-22-2016) --- One-year mission crewmembers Scott Kelly of NASA (left) and Mikhail Kornienko of Roscosmos (right) celebrated their **300th consecutive day in space on Jan. 21, 2016**. By spending a **total of 340 days aboard the International Space Station**, the astronauts **help scientists understand what happens to the human body while in microgravity for extreme lengths of time**. Kelly is holding a zinnia grown in space as part of the Veggie experiment on the International Space Station.

***Credits: NASA***

NASA astronaut and Expedition 46 Commander Scott Kelly and his Russian counterpart Mikhail Kornienko returned to Earth March 1 after an historic 340-day mission aboard the International Space Station. **The**[**unprecedented mission continues**](https://www.nasa.gov/content/scott-kelly-returns-but-science-for-nasa-s-journey-to-mars-continues)**as scientists continue to assess and apply the data to advance NASA’s understanding and preparations for long-duration human spaceflight on the Journey to Mars.**

**The International Space Station continues to be the world’s premier orbiting laboratory,** where **humans have been continuously**[**conducting critical research**](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/index.html)**for more than 16 years to demonstrate new technologies and**[**provide benefits to Earth**](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/research/benefits/index.html)**.** Most recently, astronaut Peggy Whitson joined the [space station crew](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/expeditions/index.html); in February she will become the first woman to command the orbiting outpost twice. By the conclusion of her mission she is set to become the U.S. astronaut with the [most cumulative time in space](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/jeff-williams-racks-up-new-time-in-space-record), surpassing Jeff Williams’ 2016 record of 534 days.

During **four missions in 2016, NASA’s**[**commercial cargo partners**](https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/station/structure/launch/index.html)**Orbital ATK and SpaceX launched more than 24,000 pounds of critical supplies to the International Space Station**, including **crew supplies** and **equipment** to **support hundreds of crucial science experiments and technology demonstrations aboard the space station.**

**Experiments included**[**Saffire-I**](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/nasa-ignites-fire-experiment-aboard-space-cargo-ship)**and**[**Saffire-II**](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/nasa-sets-space-fire-in-second-round-of-fire-safety-experiments), which provided a new way to study fire on an uncrewed exploration craft, and **research included the**[**sequencing of more than one billion base pairs of DNA in space**](http://nasa.tumblr.com/post/151016092994/why-sequencing-dna-in-space-is-a-big-deal)**for the first time.**

**The agency’s first test of an expandable module began with the delivery to the station of the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (BEAM) in April and its full expansion in May. During the**[**two-year test mission of BEAM**](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/beam-update-expandable-habitat-reveals-important-early-performance-data)**to determine whether astronauts could use such structures for deep space missions, astronauts will enter the module for a few hours several times each year to retrieve sensor data and assess conditions.**

**Throughout 2016, hundreds of engineers and technicians with NASA, Boeing, and SpaceX worked to complete the final designs, manufacturing, and testing of commercial space transportation systems to return crewed spacecraft launches to American soil.** While [Commercial Crew Program development](https://www.nasa.gov/feature/2016-advances-mark-commercial-crews-path-to-flight-0) continues on Earth, important preparations are underway on the space station, including the delivery and installation of **the**[**first International Docking Adapter**](https://www.nasa.gov/image-feature/spacewalkers-successfully-install-new-docking-adapter-for-commercial-crew-flights), which will enable future crews to arrive via **Boeing’s CST-100 Starliner and SpaceX’ s Crew Dragon spacecraft.**

NASA also [awarded future cargo resupply contracts](https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/nasa-awards-international-space-station-cargo-transport-contracts) to ensure the critical science, **research and technology demonstrations that are informing the agency’s Journey to Mars are delivered to the International Space Station from 2019 through 2024**