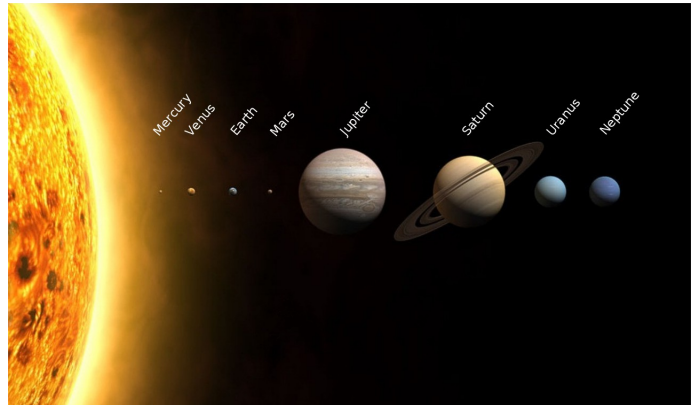


Venus

[by Afroditi-Gr]

Venus is the second planet from the sun and our closest planetary neighbor.

Similar in structure and size to Earth, Venus spins slowly in the opposite direction most planets do. Its thick atmosphere traps heat in a runaway greenhouse effect, making it the hottest planet in our solar system with surface temperatures hot enough to melt lead. Glimpses below the clouds reveal volcanoes and deformed mountains.



Venus is named for the ancient Roman goddess of love and beauty, the counterpart to the Greek goddess Aphrodite.

Venus: 10 Need-To-Know Things

1. Earth-Sized

Venus is only a little smaller than Earth. If the sun were as tall as a typical front door, the Earth and Venus would each be about the size of a nickel.

2. Second Rock

Venus orbits our sun, a star. Venus is the second closest planet to the sun at a distance of about 108 million km (67 million miles) or 0.72 AU.

3. A Day Longer Than a Year

One day on Venus (the time it takes for Venus to rotate or spin once with respect to the stars) lasts as long as 243 Earth days. One day-night cycle on Venus takes 117 Earth days because Venus rotates in the direction opposite of its orbital revolution around the Sun. Venus makes a complete orbit around the sun (a year in Venusian time) in 225 Earth days or slightly less than 2 Venusian day-night cycles.

4. Rough Terrain

Venus is a rocky planet, also known as a terrestrial planet. Venus' solid surface is a cratered and volcanic landscape.



5. Always Cloudy

Venus' thick and toxic atmosphere is made up mostly of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and nitrogen (N₂), with clouds of sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) droplets.

6. Moonless

Venus has no moons.

7. Ringless

There are no rings around Venus.

8. Many Visitors

More than 40 spacecraft have explored Venus. The Magellan mission in the early 1990s mapped 98 percent of the planet's surface.

9. No Place to Live

No evidence for life has been found on Venus. The planet's extreme high temperatures of almost 480 degrees Celsius (900 degrees Fahrenheit) make it seem an unlikely place for life as we know it.

10. Backspin

Venus spins backwards (retrograde rotation) when compared to the other planets. This means that the sun rises in the west and sets in the east on Venus.