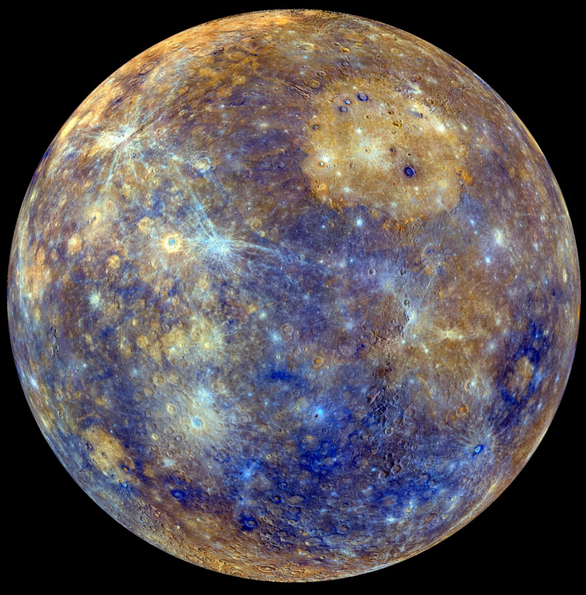
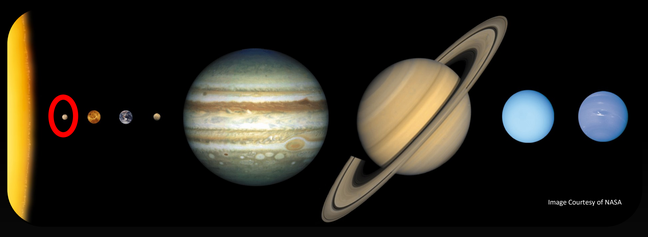




Mercury

Terrestrial Planet

Year = 88 earth days

Day = 176 Earth days

2.6 times smaller than earth

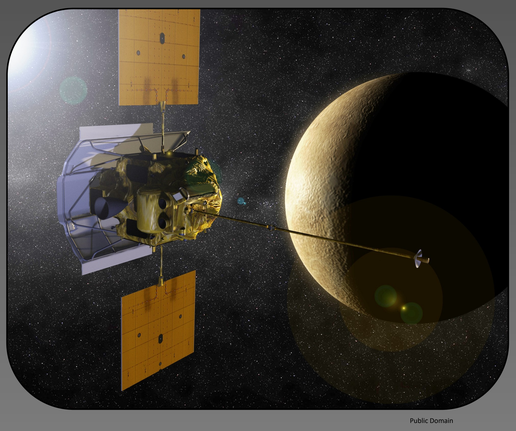
Radius = 1,516 miles

35,983,125 miles from Sun

Gravity = 12.1 ft/s^2

Mercury is the smallest planet in our solar system and is the closest planet to the Sun. Due to its proximity to the Sun the light shining down would be more than seven times brighter than it is on Earth. Similar to Earth, Mercury has a large metallic core and, some of it molten, and a crust, though it resembles Earth's moon with many craters. The craters are named for famous musicians and artists from Earth such as Beethoven and Rembrandt. Mercury's temperatures are extreme, with daytime temperatures reaching 800 degrees Fahrenheit and night time as low as –290 Fahrenheit. Mercury has no moon and no atmosphere.

The first US spacecraft to visit Mercury was the Mariner 10, which took pictures of nearly half of Mercury's surface in the early 1970s. NASA's latest mission to Mercury was the Messenger, which orbited the planet for four years before crashing onto its surface in 2015. Messenger took six and a half years to travel from Earth before it entered Mercury's orbit. It collected data about the planet's magnetic field, found water in its exosphere and ice at its poles, and completely mapped the planet using over 100,000 pictures.



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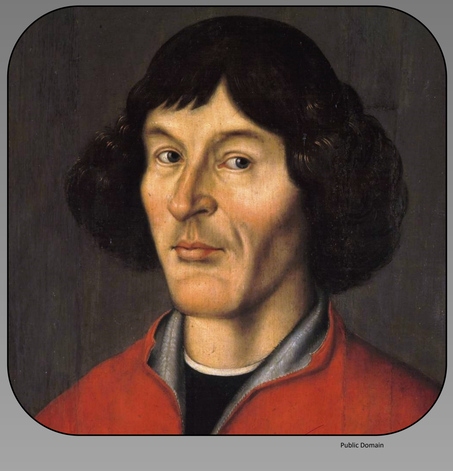

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Known to the ancients, Mercury was first theorized to be what we know as a planet when Nicolaus Copernicus developed his heliocentric model. Copernicus hypothesized that, with the Sun at the center, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn orbited in concentric circles. The outer ring he believed to be a field of stationary stars.