

Image Courtesy of NASA



Venus

Terrestrial Planet

Year = 225 earth days

Day = 243 Earth days

1.1 times smaller than earth

Radius = 3,760 miles

67,495,284 miles from Sun

Gravity = 29.1 ft/s^2

What makes a planet? There are three criteria for a celestial body to be classified a planet. It has to orbit the Sun, have enough mass to assume hydrostatic equilibrium (form into a round shape), and has to have become gravitationally dominant in its area, pulling other celestial bodies into orbit around it.



Image Courtesy of NASA

The Magellan spacecraft traveled to Venus in the early 1990s and successfully mapped 98% of the planet with high resolution images.

Venus has the longest day of any planet in our solar system. Its day is longer than its year, which makes for a long Monday! It is also one of two planets that orbit east to west. Venus has a thick atmosphere containing sulfuric acid that traps greenhouse gasses, and is the hottest planet in our solar system with a surface temperature of 880 degrees. Spacecraft that have explored the planet do not last very long in such high heat and no human has ever been there. Venus is also covered in volcanoes, a pretty inhospitable planet!

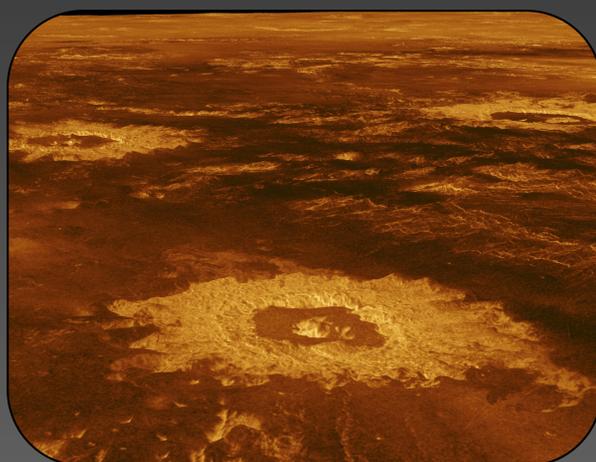
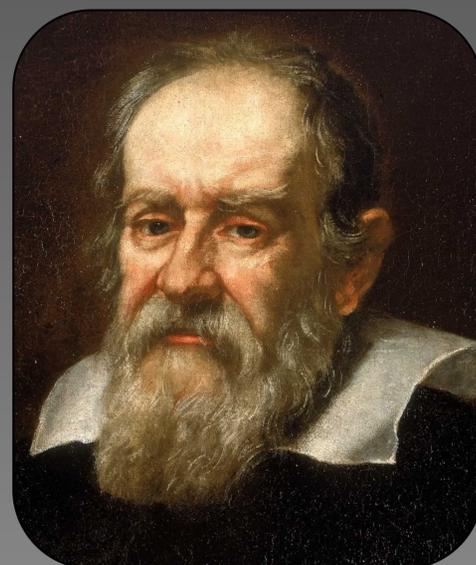


Image Courtesy of NASA

Galileo Galilei, an Italian astronomer, built his own telescope after learning of the invention of the spyglass. Using his invention he was the first to observe and chart the different phases of



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Venus similar to those of the Moon. His study of astronomy led him to conclude that Copernicus' heliocentric theory was correct. The Catholic Church's official stance maintained that Earth was the center of the universe and everything rotated around it. Galileo published a defense of heliocentrism in 1632 and was sentenced by the Church to house arrest for the remainder of his life.