

Moon



This photograph of the Moon was taken in December 1972 by the Apollo 17 mission—shortly after the spacecraft left the Moon to return to Earth. The view shows the full Moon. The region at the right (about two-thirds of the total) is part of the Moon's far side, the side never seen from Earth. The dark regions are the maria, which are covered with dark-colored basalt lava flows. The dark, nearly circular mare region at the upper left is called Mare Crisium. Below it and to the left is Mare Fecunditatis, with the large white crater Langrenus. The light-colored regions are the lunar highlands, which are made of older rocks and contain extensive large craters made by large projectiles that struck the Moon more than 4 billion years ago. The bright, rayed crater near the upper-right rim is Giordano Bruno, a fresh crater formed by a much younger impact event. (Courtesy of NASA)