Saturn

Saturn is named after the god of agriculture. The associated Greek god, Kronos, was the son of Uranus and Gaea and the father of Zeus (Jupiter). Saturn is the root of the English word "Saturday" (Saturnus' day).

Saturn has been known since prehistoric times. Galileo was the first to observe it with a telescope in 1610, he noted its odd appearance but was confused by it. Early observations of Saturn were complicated by the fact that the Earth passes through the plane of Saturn's rings every few years as Saturn moves in its orbit. Galileo's observations image of Saturn therefore changes drastically. It was not until 1659 that Christiaan Huygens correctly interpret the geometry of the rings. Saturn's rings remained unique in the known solar system until 1977 when very faint rings were discovered around Uranus (and shortly thereafter around Jupiter and Neptune).

Saturn was first visited by NASA's Pioneer 11 in 1979 and later by Voyager 1 and 2. Cassini (a joint NASA / ESA project) arrived on July 1, 2004 and will orbit Saturn for at least four years.

Saturn is visibly flattened (oblate) when viewed through a small telescope. Its equatorial and polar diameters vary by almost 10% (120,536 km vs. 108,728 km). This is the result of its rapid rotation and fluid state. The other gas planets are also oblate, but not to much an extent.

Saturn is the least dense of the planets, its specific gravity (0.71) is less than that of water.

Like Jupiter, Saturn is about 75% hydrogen and 25% helium with traces of water, methane, ammonia and ethane. Theoretical models of the interior suggest that there should be a rocky core surrounded by a layer of metallic hydrogen and then a layer of molecular hydrogen. Saturn's core is thought to be much smaller than Jupiter's and to have a mass of about 9 Earth masses. Saturn's core is thought to be much hotter than Jupiter's, at about 11,000 K (compared to 4,000 K for Jupiter). Saturn's core is surrounded by a layer of metallic hydrogen and then a layer of molecular hydrogen. Saturn's core is thought to be much hotter than Jupiter's, at about 11,000 K (compared to 4,000 K for Jupiter). Saturn's core is surrounded by a layer of metallic hydrogen and then a layer of molecular hydrogen.

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Saturn has the most moons out of all the planets in space. Saturn has a ring going around it. It is mad out of ice, rock and dust. Saturn is very brite and it is the best planet to see out of a telescop

Planet Notes

- Saturn is a giant gas planet which is made up of about 75% hydrogen and 25% helium. It's most famous for its Hellionds of beautiful rings.
- Saturn was first visited by the Pioneer 11 spacecraft in 1979. Saturn has also since been visited by Voyager 1 and Voyager 2.
- Saturn's rings are made up mostly of water ice, but they may also include rocky particles with icy coatings. The origin of the rings of Saturn is currently unknown.
- Saturn is made up of materials which are lighter than water. If placed in a big pond, Saturn would float much like an ice cube does in a glass of water.
- Saturn has 18 known moons - more than any other planet! There may very well be several small ones yet to be discovered.