

LUNAR MISSION "FIRSTS"

A chronological journey through historic lunar exploration milestones

[PREPARED BY ARUN JOY]

EARLY SOVIET MISSIONS (1959)



Luna 1

1959

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First mission to the Moon
- ★ First spacecraft to fly by the Moon
- ★ Intended to impact the Moon but missed by ~5,900 km
- ★ Became the first probe to leave Earth and fly past another astronomical body (entered orbit around the Sun)



Luna 2

1959

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First spacecraft to impact the lunar surface
- ★ Made the USSR the first country to impact the Moon



Luna 3

1959

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ Returned the first images of the far side of the Moon



EARLY US MISSIONS & SOVIET LANDINGS (1962-1966)



Ranger 4

1962

United States (NASA)

- ★ First spacecraft to impact the far side of the Moon
- ★ Also the first U.S. spacecraft to reach another celestial body
- ★ Intended to transmit pictures during descent, but a system failure caused loss of communication before impact



Luna 9

1966

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First spacecraft to land successfully on the Moon
- ★ USSR became the first country to soft-land on the lunar surface
- ★ Transmitted the first-ever photographs from the Moon's surface



Luna 10

1966

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First spacecraft to orbit the Moon



CREWED MISSIONS & SOVIET ACHIEVEMENTS

(1968-1970)



Zond 5

1968

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First lunar spacecraft to be recovered successfully
- ★ Carried the first Earth life to travel to and around the Moon
- ★ Two tortoises, fruit fly eggs, plant seeds, and bacteria
- ★ Returned safely to Earth → tortoises survived, though with ~10% weight loss



Apollo 8

1968

United States (NASA)

- ★ First crewed mission to the Moon
- ★ First crewed mission to enter lunar orbit
- ★ First crew to orbit the Moon (10 orbits before returning to Earth)
- ★ Crew: Frank Borman (Commander), James Lovell (Command Module Pilot), William Anders (Lunar Module Pilot)



Apollo 11

1969

United States (NASA)

- ★ First crewed landing on the Moon
- ★ Neil Armstrong became the first human to walk on the Moon, followed by Buzz Aldrin, while Michael Collins stayed in lunar orbit
- ★ Crew: Neil Armstrong (Commander), Buzz Aldrin (Lunar Module Pilot), Michael Collins (Command Module Pilot)



Lunokhod 1

1970

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First rover on an extraterrestrial body



Luna 16

1970

Soviet Union (USSR)

- ★ First robotic lunar sampling mission (returned soil samples to Earth)

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS (2019-2023)



Chang'e 4

2019

China (CNSA)

- ★ First mission to soft-land on the far side of the Moon
- ★ Conducted a biological experiment that sprouted cotton seeds, the first plants to germinate on the Moon



Chandrayaan-3

2023

India (ISRO)

- ★ First lunar mission to achieve a soft landing near the lunar south pole
- ★ Made India the fourth country to soft-land on the Moon (after USSR, USA, and China)

LATEST ACHIEVEMENTS (2024)



SLIM 2024

Japan (JAXA)

- ★ First mission to achieve pinpoint landing on the Moon (within 100 meters of target)



IM-1 2024

United States (Intuitive Machines, private company, supported by NASA)

- ★ First private spacecraft to soft-land on the Moon



Chang'e 6 2024

China (CNSA)

- ★ First mission to collect and return lunar samples from the far side of the Moon



Thanks for reading!

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