

WAY SURPRISING STUFF

● Why is Mars called the Red Planet?

Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and the second-smallest planet in the Solar System, being more significant than only Mercury. In English, Mars is the name of the Roman god of war. It is also known as the "Red Planet" because iron oxide is present in large quantities on its surface. This gives it a reddish colour at night. More than 3 000 years ago, Babylonian astronomers called the planet Nergal the god of death and pestilence. It has two irregular moons. The largest is Phobos, which means "fear and panic", from which the word phobia came. The smaller moon is Deimos, which means "terror and dread". Phobos and Deimos in Greek mythology went to war with their father, Ares, the god of war.

With a radius of 2,106 miles, **Mars** is the seventh-largest planet in our solar system and about half the diameter of Earth. Its surface gravity is only 37.5 %. **Mars** has seasons like Earth, but the temperatures range from -70 °C to only 17 °C. One day lasts 24 hours, 37 minutes and 22 seconds.

● How long does it take to get there?

Mars is less than 56 million km (35 million miles) from Earth at its closest approach, but it recedes to almost 400 million km (250 million miles) when the two planets are on opposite sides of the solar system. According to NASA, a one-way trip to **Mars** would take nine months. For a round trip, it would take about 21 months. You would need to wait three months on **Mars** to make sure that Earth and **Mars** are in the right location to make the trip back home.

● Is there life on Mars?

There are no little green people on **Mars**. Since the *Perseverance* rover landed on Mars on February 18th, 2021, it has found traces of water on the planet but no remnants of any ancient civilizations. It is still looking. The atmosphere on **Mars** is 95% carbon dioxide and much less than 1% oxygen. It is impossible for people to breathe the air on Mars. To survive just imagine the things you would need.