Solar system size chart

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Our solar system"s star is classified as a small-to-medium sized star, yet comes in at a whopping 1,329,000 km in diameter and weights approximately 2000 trillion trillion tonnes. That"s not a typo, it really is that heavy. The surface of the Sun is a staggering 5500 degrees Celsius, but its core is a nearly inconceivable 15 million degrees Celsius. To put the Sun into perspective, here are a few interesting facts:

Neptune is the furthest planet from the Sun, being 4,497.1 million km away. Neptune has a diameter of 49,528 km and a mass of 10.243 (1024). Uranus is composed of hydrogen and helium and is surrounded by a cloud layer with winds faster than the speed of sound (2,100 km per hour). An abundance of methane givens Neptune a brilliant blue colouring. One orbit around the solar star takes roughly 165 Earth years, and one day on Neptune is 19 Earth hours. Here are some interesting facts about Neptune:

Ah, the "famous planet that is not a planet". Perhaps it is not technically considered a "standard" planet. But we still like to include it in our Solar System model.

If you’re interested in planets, the good news is there’s plenty of variety to choose from in our own Solar System. From the ringed beauty of Saturn, to the massive hulk of Jupiter, to the lead-melting temperatures on Venus, each planet in our solar system is unique — with its own environment and own story to tell about the history of our Solar System.

No human was around 4.5 billion years ago when the Solar System was formed, so what we know about its birth comes from several sources: examining rocks on Earth and other places, looking at other solar systems in formation and doing computer models, among other methods. As more information comes in, some of our theories of the Solar System must change to suit the new evidence.

Today, scientists believe the Solar System began with a spinning gas and dust cloud. Gravitational attraction at its center eventually collapsed to form the Sun. Some theories say that the young Sun’s energy began pushing the lighter particles of gas away, while larger, more solid particles such as dust remained closer in.

Over millions and millions of years, the gas and dust particles became attracted to each other by their mutual gravities and began to combine or crash. As larger balls of matter formed, they swept the smaller particles away and eventually cleared their orbits. That led to the birth of Earth and the other eight planets in our Solar System. Since much of the gas ended up in the outer parts of the system, this may explain why there are gas giants — although this presumption may not be true for other solar systems discovered in the universe.

Until the 1990s, scientists only knew of planets in our own Solar System and at that point accepted there were

nine planets. As telescope technology improved, however, two things happened. Scientists discovered exoplanets, or planets that are outside of our solar system. This began with finding massive planets many times larger than Jupiter, and then eventually finding planets that are rocky — even a few that are close to Earth’s size itself.

The other change was finding worlds similar to Pluto, then considered the Solar System’s furthest planet, far out in our own Solar System. At first astronomers began treating these new worlds like planets, but as more information came in, the International Astronomical Union held a meeting to better figure out the definition.

The result was redefining Pluto and worlds like it as a dwarf planet. This is the current IAU planet definition:

“A celestial body that (a) is in orbit around the Sun, (b) has sufficient mass for its self-gravity to overcome rigid body forces so that it assumes a hydrostatic equilibrium (nearly round) shape, and (c) has cleared the neighborhood around its orbit.”

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Web: https://www.kary.com.pl/contact-us/
Email: energystorage2000@gmail.com
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