

## NASA Back to the Moon in 2026



*NASA now wants to launch its Artemis 2 mission in February 2026, the first human mission to the moon since 1972. [1]*

What should we be expecting from that lunar flyby mission?

Lakiesha Hawkins, NASA's acting deputy associate administrator said it would be an important moment in the human exploration of space. "We together have a front row seat to history," she told a news conference this on Sept. 24, 2025 announcing NASA's decision.

"The launch window could open as early as the fifth of February, but we want to emphasize that safety is our top priority."

NASA is targeting as early as February 2026 for the launch of Artemis II, the first crewed mission in the Artemis program. The mission will send four astronauts on a flyby trip around the Moon, but without a lunar landing.

Its key purpose is to validate deep-space systems, life support, navigation, and crew operations in a real mission context beyond low Earth orbit.

The crew includes Reid Wiseman (Commander), Victor Glover (Pilot), Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen. Over the next year, they will continue simulated training, emergency drills, and hardware integration to prepare for all scenarios.

Artemis II will also test the Orion spacecraft's ability to support human life on long translunar trajectories.

If successful, Artemis II will pave the way for Artemis III and subsequent missions aiming to land on the Moon, set up sustainable bases, and use the Moon as a staging point for Mars exploration. [1]

***In the long run, both the United States and China plan to establish permanent lunar bases. With Artemis II, humanity takes its next bold step toward that future—rekindling the spirit of exploration that defined the Apollo era while charting a new path to the stars [2]***

### References

[1] NASA news conference 24 Sept. 2025 on Youtube

[2] Neil deGrasse Tyson on facebook

September 29 2025, Joachim J. Kehr, Editor Journal of SpaceOperations & Communicator <https://opsjournal.org>