

16.7: Selected Moons of the Planets (Appendix G)

Note: As this book goes to press, nearly two hundred moons are now known in the solar system and more are being discovered on a regular basis. Of the major planets, only Mercury and Venus do not have moons. In addition to moons of the planets, there are many moons of asteroids. In this appendix, we list only the largest and most interesting objects that orbit each planet (including dwarf planets). The number given for each planet is discoveries through 2015. For further information see <https://solarsystem.nasa.gov/planets/solarsystem/moons> and https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_natural_satellites.

Table 16.7.1: Selected Moons of the Planets

Planet (moons)	Satellite Name	Discovery	Semimajor Axis (km \times 1000)	Period (d)	Diameter (km)	Mass (10^{20} kg)	Density (g/cm ³)
Earth (1)	Moon	—	384	27.32	3476	735	3.3
Mars (2)	Phobos	Hall (1877)	9.4	0.32	23	1×10^{-4}	2.0
	Deimos	Hall (1877)	23.5	1.26	13	2×10^{-5}	1.7
Jupiter (79)	Amalthea	Barnard (1892)	181	0.50	200	—	—
	Thebe	Voyager (1979)	222	0.67	90	—	—
	Io	Galileo (1610)	422	1.77	3630	894	3.6
	Europa	Galileo (1610)	671	3.55	3138	480	3.0
	Ganymede	Galileo (1610)	1070	7.16	5262	1482	1.9
	Callisto	Galileo (1610)	1883	16.69	4800	1077	1.9
	Himalia	Perrine (1904)	11,460	251	170	—	—
Saturn (82)	Pan	Voyager (1985)	133.6	0.58	20	3×10^{-5}	—
	Atlas	Voyager (1980)	137.7	0.60	40	—	—
	Prometheus	Voyager (1980)	139.4	0.61	80	—	—
	Pandora	Voyager (1980)	141.7	0.63	100	—	—
	Janus	Dollfus (1966)	151.4	0.69	190	—	—
	Epimetheus	Fountain, Larson (1980)	151.4	0.69	120	—	—
	Mimas	Herschel (1789)	186	0.94	394	0.4	1.2
	Enceladus	Herschel (1789)	238	1.37	502	0.8	1.2
	Tethys	Cassini (1684)	295	1.89	1048	7.5	1.3
	Dione	Cassini (1684)	377	2.74	1120	11	1.3
	Rhea	Cassini (1672)	527	4.52	1530	25	1.3

Planet (moons)	Satellite Name	Discovery	Semimajor Axis (km × 1000)	Period (d)	Diameter (km)	Mass (10 ²⁰ kg)	Density (g/cm ³)
	Titan	Huygens (1655)	1222	15.95	5150	1346	1.9
	Hyperion	Bond, Lassell (1848)	1481	21.3	270	—	—
	Iapetus	Cassini (1671)	3561	79.3	1435	19	1.2
	Phoebe	Pickering (1898)	12,950	550 (R) ¹	220	—	—
Uranus (27)	Puck	Voyager (1985)	86.0	0.76	170	—	—
	Miranda	Kuiper (1948)	130	1.41	485	0.8	1.3
	Ariel	Lassell (1851)	191	2.52	1160	13	1.6
	Umbriel	Lassell (1851)	266	4.14	1190	13	1.4
	Titania	Herschel (1787)	436	8.71	1610	35	1.6
	Oberon	Herschel (1787)	583	13.5	1550	29	1.5
Neptune (14)	Despina	Voyager (1989)	53	0.33	150	—	—
	Galatea	Voyager (1989)	62	0.40	150	—	—
	Larissa	Voyager (1989)	118	1.12	400	—	—
	Triton	Lassell (1846)	355	5.88 (R) ²	2720	220	2.1
	Nereid	Kuiper (1949)	5511	360	340	—	—
Pluto (5)	Charon	Christy (1978)	19.7	6.39	1200	—	1.7
	Styx	Showalter et al (2012)	42	20	20	—	—
	Nix	Weaver et al (2005)	48	24	46	—	2.1
	Kerberos	Showalter et al (2011)	58	24	28	—	1.4
	Hydra	Weaver et al (2005)	65	38	61	—	0.8
Eris (1)	Dysnomea	Brown et al (2005)	38	16	684	—	—
Makemake (1)	(MK2)	Parker et al (2016)	—	—	160	—	—

Planet (moons)	Satellite Name	Discovery	Semimajor Axis (km × 1000)	Period (d)	Diameter (km)	Mass (10 ²⁰ kg)	Density (g/cm ³)
Haumea (2)	Hi'iaka	Brown et al (2005)	50	49	400	—	—
	Namaka	Brown et al (2005)	39	35	200	—	—

Footnotes

¹R stands for retrograde rotation (backward from the direction that most objects in the solar system revolve and rotate).

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