

## 14.3: The Milky Way — Our Home Galaxy

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It is estimated that the Milky Way Galaxy has a population of 100 billion to 400 billion stars. Initially, astronomers did not associate the Milky Way Galaxy with other galaxies they saw through their telescopes. Recall, that they called these other galaxies “nebulae.”

### Characteristics of the Milky Way Galaxy

The Milky Way Galaxy is a Spiral Galaxy and most likely a barred spiral. This characteristic is difficult to confirm due to our location within the Milky Way Galaxy and all of the nebulosity we have to look through. Recall, that the Milky Way Galaxy is part of the Local Group of galaxies, and that group is a part of the Virgo supercluster of galaxies.

This large barred spiral galaxy is believed to be similar in shape to the Milky Way Galaxy. Dust lanes, spiral arms, and a bar at the galaxy’s center are visible.

Some have referred to this image as a ‘picture postcard’ of the Milky Way Galaxy.



NGC 6744, A Barred Spiral GalaxyCC BY 3.0 | Image courtesy of ESO.

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