

Summary Information Sheet

MERCURY

Mercury, named after the swift messenger of the ancient gods, is the innermost planet in the solar system.

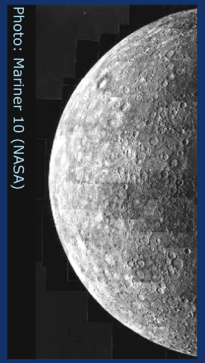


Photo: Mariner 10 (NASA)



www.eso.org



www.eaae-astro.org



One rotation lasts 58.65 Earth days

Thin rocky mantle

Caloris basin with a diameter of 1300 km, the largest of 15 ancient basins. It is surrounded by concentric rings of mountains

Large metallic core

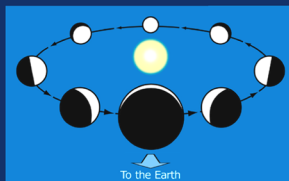
Crater
Mercurian craters look like lunar craters

One revolution around the Sun lasts 87,97 Earth days

Craters with light-colored rays resulting from the violent impacts during Mercury's stormy past

Freezing cold surface on the side opposite the Sun (~-200° C)

Intercrater Plains are level to gently rolling terrain between and around large craters



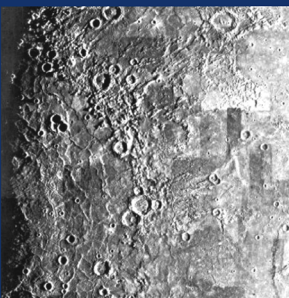
Mercury's phases

Cliffs or Scarps

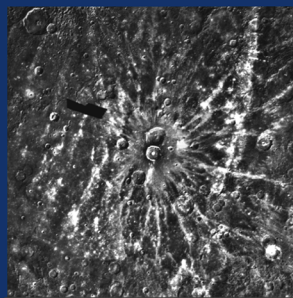
Burning hot surface on the side that faces the Sun (~400° C)

Weird terrain (opposite side)

Rotational axis is inclined 83° to the plane of the Ecliptic



Caloris Basin



Crater Degas with light coloured rays



Discovery Rupes



Intercrater Plains

Physical Data

Property
Distance from the Sun
Rotation period
Equatorial radius
Mass
Density

Mercury
58 million km
59 days
2240 km
3.30×10^{23} kg
5430 kg/m ³

For comparison

Earth
150 million km
23 hrs 56 min
6378 km
5.97×10^{24} kg
5520 kg/m ³

Moon
150 million km
27 days 8 hrs
1738 km
7.35×10^{22} kg
3340 kg/m ³