



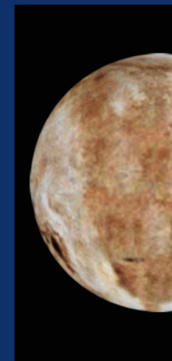
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Summary Information Sheet PLUTO/CHARON

Pluto is named after the Roman god of the underworld. It is the smallest major planet in the Solar System and has never been investigated by a spacecraft. It was discovered in 1930. Pluto's only known moon Charon is fairly close to it and about half its size. It is difficult to separate the bodies when viewed from Earth.



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One revolution around the Sun lasts 247.7 Earth years

Mantle and surface of water ice

Rocky core

Charon
Radius: 590 km
Mass: 1.9×10^{22} kg

Distance from Pluto 19,700 km
One Revolution lasts 6.39 days

Rocky core

Icy mantle

Inclination of the Equator to orbital plane $26^{\circ}44'$

Atmosphere of methane (probably mixed with nitrogen)

Surface of water ice and frozen methane

Pluto's orbit is more tilted and more elongated than that of any other major planet

A section of Pluto's orbit is closer to the Sun than Neptune's orbit. Thus, for some time, Neptune is the most distant major planet



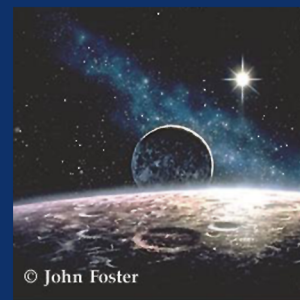
The discovery of Pluto



Pluto's surface



Pluto and Charon



Pluto space art

Physical Data

Property
Distance from the Sun
Rotation period
Equatorial radius
Mass
Density
Satellites

Pluto
5966 million km
6 days 9 hrs 18 min
1195 km
1.3×10^{22} kg
1100 kg/m^3
1

For comparison

Moon
150 million km
27 days 8 hrs
1738 km
7.35×10^{22} kg
3340 kg/m^3
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Earth
150 million km
23 hrs 56 min
6378 km
5.97×10^{24} kg
5520 kg/m^3
1