



The Cambridge Guide to the Solar System

By Kenneth R. Lang

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Richly illustrated with full-color images, this book is a comprehensive, up-to-date description of the planets, their moons, and recent exoplanet discoveries. This second edition of a now classic reference is brought up to date with fascinating new discoveries from 12 recent Solar System missions. Examples include water on the Moon, volcanism on Mercury's previously unseen half, vast buried glaciers on Mars, geysers on Saturn's moon Enceladus, lakes of hydrocarbons on Titan, encounter with asteroid Itokawa, and sample return from comet Wild 2. The book is further enhanced by hundreds of striking new images of the planets and moons. Written at an introductory level appropriate for undergraduate and high-school students, it provides fresh insights that appeal to anyone with an interest in planetary science. A website hosted by the author contains all the images in the book with an overview of their importance. A link to this can be found at www.cambridge.org/solarsystem.

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Editorial Review

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Libraries will find a use for this book both in the reference and in the circulating collections. The photographs are stunning, the numerous charts and graphs are exemplary, and the narrative is bulging with all the important information about the solar system that is available to date. The author has done a wonderful job of making many of the complicated scientific concepts accessible to the layperson. The language is challenging for students younger than high school, but many of the charts, graphs, maps, captions, sidebars, and introductions should be understandable to middle-school readers.

The beginning chapters are an overview of the field of space science, with emphasis on discoveries, discoverers, and tools. The major planets and the moon have their own chapters. Uranus and Neptune are treated in the same chapter, because they are so similar. Pluto has no chapter at all, because it is no longer considered a major planet. Chapters on comets, asteroids and meteorites, and colliding worlds end the narrative. The lengthy chapters follow the same layout, beginning with lists of important fundamental facts, histories of explorations and discoveries, and descriptions of the atmosphere, landforms, and moons. Each planet chapter ends with a summary diagram of the essential makeup of the planet. The numerous photographs are a balanced mixture of large black and white and color, most from NASA files. There are rich appendixes of books and Web sites and a good index.

Anyone with a need for information on the solar system should find fulfillment in the pages of this handsome work, and it is a beautiful browsing book. More current and less technical than *Encyclopedia of the Solar System* (Academic, 1998), it is recommended for high-school, public, and academic libraries.

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Review

'Journeys deep into space have revealed dozens of distinctive worlds of unexpected diversity. Ken Lang presents a richly illustrated and remarkably thorough guide to the new view of the Solar System that has emerged, a view that beckons us on further journeys of discovery.' Edward Stone, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory

'... exceptionally good ... so clearly written that it is within the cope of even the complete newcomer to astronomy, but there are also sections, usually in boxes, that will be useful to the serious student ... this is a well-written and splendidly illustrated book, suitable for readers of all kinds. it may be recommended without hesitation and will be a welcome addition to any astronomical library.' Patrick Moore, The Times Higher Education Supplement

'In Ken Lang's brilliant guide, he shows us how to read the character of the worlds of our solar system and how to understand not only the distinctive nature of each one but how they relate as families. I came away from the book with my mind liberated from gravity and the bounds of a human lifespan, images of the development of other worlds over their 4 billion year history crowding through my imagination.' Paul Murdin, University of Cambridge

'... a very readable and informative volume ... it is a fascinating read because the author focuses on the development of ideas about the planets, on the basis of observations available at the time. This gives a strong

narrative quality to the text, which enlivens the arguments and allows the reader to appreciate the significance of key new observations.' Astronomy Geophysics

'Competitively priced in hardback, the book should be a best seller.' The Observatory

'... very browseable ... for those wishing for a well documented guide to our present knowledge of the Solar system this is very good value ... Recommended ...'. Astronomy Now

About the Author

Kenneth R. Lang is a Professor of Astronomy at Tufts University. He is a well-known author and has published 25 books. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Sun (Cambridge University Press, 2001) was recommended by the Library Journal as one of the best reference books published that year. He has extensive teaching experience, and has served as a Visiting Senior Scientist at NASA headquarters.

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