The Top 10 Views of Earth From Space

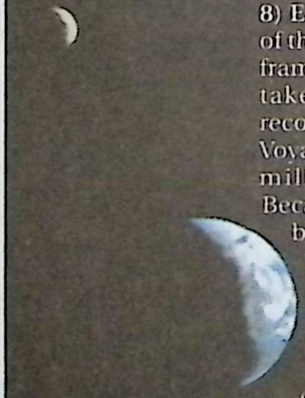
Humans have sent many missions, both manned and robotic, beyond our planet to explore our neighboring celestial bodies. Now and then, these intrepid explorers have glanced home to provide us with sometimes stunning and always thought-provoking images. The following is a compilation of ten of those homeward glances, from the moon and beyond.



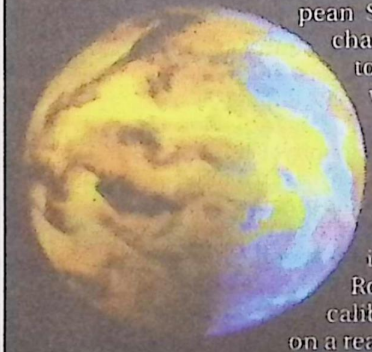
10) Earthrise: The iconic image of the Earth rising, the first of its kind taken by an astronaut from lunar orbit, greeted the Apollo 8 astronauts as they rounded the far side of the Moon during their insertion burn. The photo is displayed here in its original orientation, though it is more commonly viewed with the lunar surface at the bottom of the photo.



9) Galileo's Breath-taking Shots: This color image of the Earth was taken by the Galileo spacecraft on December 11, 1990, as it departed on its three year flight to Jupiter. Antarctica is visible at the bottom of the image, and dawn is rising over the Pacific Ocean.



8) Earth and Moon: This picture of the Earth and Moon in a single frame, the first of its kind ever taken by a spacecraft, was recorded Sept. 18, 1977, by NASAs Voyager 1 at a distance of 7.25 million miles from Earth. Because Earth is many times brighter than the Moon, the Moon was artificially brightened by a factor of three relative to the Earth by computer enhancement so that both bodies would show clearly in the prints.



7) While Chasing a Comet: The European Space Agency's comet chasing mission Rosetta took these infrared and visible images during its Earth fly-by in early March 2005 while on its way to Comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko. The images gave the Rosetta team a chance to calibrate its instruments on a real space object to make sure everything was in working order.



6) Far From Home: Apollo 17: Astronaut Harrison Schmitt, Apollo 17 lunar module pilot, is photographed here next to the U.S. flag during NASA's final lunar landing mission in the Apollo series. The photo was taken at the Taurus-Littrow landing site while Schmitt was conducting extravehicular activity (EVA).