

SPACE FOOD FIRSTS

NASA Food Technology Commercial Space Center
Space Food Facts

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Mercury (1961-1963): John Glenn ate applesauce from an aluminum tube during a Mercury mission in 1962, becoming the first U.S. astronaut to eat in space. Other foods eaten on Mercury flights included cubed foods and freeze-dried powders.

Gemini (1965-1966): Scientists made great strides in the area of food safety during the Gemini era. The Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) program was developed as a result of these efforts to identify and prevent hazards that could cause food-borne diseases. HACCP is still widely used today.

Apollo (1968-1972): Apollo astronauts were the first to have hot water in space, eat from open containers with utensils, have foods packaged in retort pouches and cans, and snack on a “food bar” (a fruit bar designed to fit inside an astronaut’s suit and be eaten without the use of hands).

Skylab (1973-1974): The Skylab food system is the most sophisticated to date. Skylab was the first and only mission where astronauts could enjoy the use of refrigerators, freezers, and a dining room and table. Food warmers to heat foods were also introduced during Skylab.

Shuttle (1981-present): Shuttle crewmembers were the first to eat from open containers secured on a meal tray. They were also the first U.S. astronauts to plan their own in-flight menus.

Shuttle/Mir Joint Missions (1994-1998): Astronauts living aboard Mir during the joint U.S./Russia missions were the first to experience a food supply in which half of the foods were supplied by the United States and half were supplied by Russia.

International Space Station (1998-present): ISS astronauts were the first to use a pantry-style food system where food is organized in containers by category and to use a database for foods that includes labels in both Russian and English. Expedition 8 astronauts were the first to implement a 10-day menu rotation.

Photos courtesy of NASA



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