

China's long march into space

If the unmanned probe *Chang'e-5* returns safely to Earth, it will make China only the third country to retrieve samples from the moon and will bring its crewed missions a step closer

1999
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2009

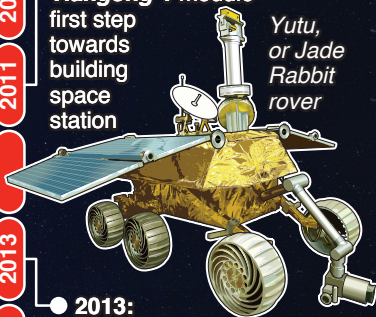
- **1964:** China launches and recovers rocket carrying mice
- **1999:** Successfully launches ***Shenzhou-1***, China's first unmanned spacecraft
- **2003:** China becomes third country after U.S. and Russia to send a man into space when ***Yang Liwei*** orbits Earth in ***Shenzhou-5*** spacecraft



- **2007:** First lunar orbiter, ***Chang'e-1***, goes round moon
- **2008:** ***Zhai Zhigang*** successfully completes China's first space walk

2010
2011
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020

- **2011:** China launches ***Tiangong-1*** module – first step towards building space station



- **2013:** China lands ***Chang'e-3*** lander and rover ***Yutu*** on moon – first such "soft-landing" since 1976
- **2019:** ***Chang'e-4*** becomes first probe from any nation to touch down on far side of moon
- **Jul 2020:** China launches ***Tianwen-1*** spacecraft to Mars in first independent mission to another planet
- **Dec 2020:** ***Chang'e-5*** spacecraft intends to become first mission since 1976 to bring home lunar samples



Chang'e-5 mission launch, Nov 23, 2020