

Astronauts wait to return to Earth

NASA will decide in mid-August how and when to bring two astronauts – Sunita Williams and Barry Wilmore – back from the International Space Station, possibly including a ride home in a SpaceX capsule, after repeatedly delaying their return aboard Boeing's Starliner



United Launch Alliance Atlas V

CST-100 Starliner Crew module

International Space Station

Kibo

Zvezda

Zarya

Destiny

Nauka

Harmony

Unity Columbus

Starliner docked with Harmony module

Service module

Russian modules

U.S. / European / Japanese modules

Astronaut to scale

■ Jun 5, 2024:
Wilmore and Williams launch on eight-day mission aboard Boeing Starliner – Boeing's first time launching astronauts

SpaceX return: Starliner will be cut loose. Once its docking port is empty, then SpaceX will launch **Dragon** capsule to fill that slot – in which Wilmore and Williams will ride back to Earth

■ Jun 6:
As Starliner approaches ISS, four helium leaks in propulsion system are detected. Five of craft's 28 thrusters also malfunction

■ Thrusters:
Needed at flight's end to keep capsule in right position for critical deorbit burn

Service module tanks:
Four fuel, four oxidizer, and two pressurant tanks which use inert helium gas to push fuel into propulsion system

Forward docking system:
To connect to ISS