

# WORLD'S FIRST MISSION TO TOUCH THE SUN LIFTS OFF: NASA

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

This handout photo released by NASA shows the United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy rocket with the Parker Solar Probe onboard shortly after the Mobile Service Tower was rolled back on August 10, 2018, Launch Complex 37 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. | Photo Credit: [AFP](#)

NASA's Parker Solar Probe, mankind's first mission to 'touch' the Sun, has been launched today on a seven-year long journey to unlock the mysteries of our star's fiery outer atmosphere and its effects on space weather.

Liftoff took place from Space Launch Complex 37 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in the US early today.

3-2-1... and we have liftoff of Parker [#SolarProbe](#) atop [@ULAlaunch](#)'s [#DeltaIV](#) Heavy rocket. Tune in as we broadcast our mission to "touch" the Sun: <https://t.co/T3F4bqeATB>  
[pic.twitter.com/Ah4023Vfvn](https://t.co/T3F4bqeATB)

The launch of the United Launch Alliance Delta IV Heavy rocket carrying the spacecraft was scrubbed yesterday due to a violation of a launch limit, resulting in a hold.

The car-sized spacecraft will travel directly into the Sun's atmosphere, about four million miles from its surface - and more than seven times closer than any spacecraft has come before, thanks to its innovative Thermal Protection System. The USD 1.5 billion mission will perform the closest-ever observations of a star when it travels through the Sun's outer atmosphere, called the corona.

It will make 24 passes through the corona during its seven-year mission. The mission will rely on measurements and imaging to revolutionise our understanding of the corona and how processes there ultimately affect near-Earth space.

The Parker Solar Probe carries a lineup of instruments to study the Sun both remotely and in situ, or directly. Together, the data from these instruments should help scientists answer three foundational questions about our star.

Parker Solar Probe will explore the corona, a region of the Sun only seen from Earth when the Moon blocks out the Sun's bright face during total solar eclipses. The corona holds the answers to many of scientists' outstanding questions about the Sun's activity and processes.

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