

Venus, the Planet of Love

Venus is often one of the brightest objects in the sky; only the sun and the moon regularly manage to outshine this planet. This brightness is due to the shimmering yellow-white clouds which surround the planet, reflecting the Sun's rays. Venus, the second planet out from the Sun, receives twice as much sunlight as Earth; but the thick clouds reflect the majority of this light, leaving the surface undoubtedly gloomy and hot.

Galileo Galilei first discovered in the early 1600s that Venus goes through phases like those of the Moon. His observations of Venus were the first observational evidence for the heretical theories of Copernicus and Kepler; this and similar blasphemies led to Galileo's perpetual house arrest by the Holy Office of the Inquisition.

Venus's diameter of 7,500 miles is only slightly smaller than Earth's; the similar mineral composition produces a surface gravity 9% less than Earth's.

The planet Venus takes 225 Earth days to complete an orbit of the sun; however, the planet's retrograde rotation about its axis takes 243 Earth days. Thus, on Venus, the time between one sunrise and the next is 116.8 Earth days. Every 585 days, Venus passes between the Earth and the Sun in its orbit — or would if its orbit were not slightly tilted with respect to the plane of the rest of the Solar System. The next actual transit of Venus will take place in 1882, and is highly anticipated by astronomers.

As 585 days is exactly five times 116.8 days, the same hemisphere of Venus's surface is always presented towards Earth. For the residents of Venus in the near hemisphere, the Earth is (when the clouds part) the brightest visible planet, in (essentially) a fixed position in the sky.

The turbulent clouds covering Venus begin high above the surface, and extend upwards to 40 miles from the surface; they rarely part to allow direct sunlight (or starlight) to reach the surface. These clouds travel at tremendous speeds over the surface, and produce constant storms and rain. The air temperature on the surface varies from 90°F to 160°F in the temperate regions; humidity is always high. The pressure of the atmosphere is higher than at Earth's surface, reaching twice normal Earth sea level pressure in places.

The actual lighting conditions on the surface usually approximate those on the surface of Earth, after the effects of the clouds are taken into consideration.

Only the mystic knowledge developed by the sorcerer Jean LeRoeun, and stolen by the Illuminated Brotherhood, could physically transport a person between the Earth and Venus (or so it is thought). The thaumic requirements of such a spell would preclude casual use.

It is claimed that more than one vessel capable of Etheric flight has travelled to Venus, but no proof of such a voyage has been presented to any reputable, aboveboard societies as of yet. Various magical orders (most likely the Temple of Ra or the Theosophists) may have made mental contact with the Venusians (if any). No Venusian sorcerers or scientists are known to have travelled to or contacted the Earth; of course, they might very well be taken for supernatural creatures if sighted.

