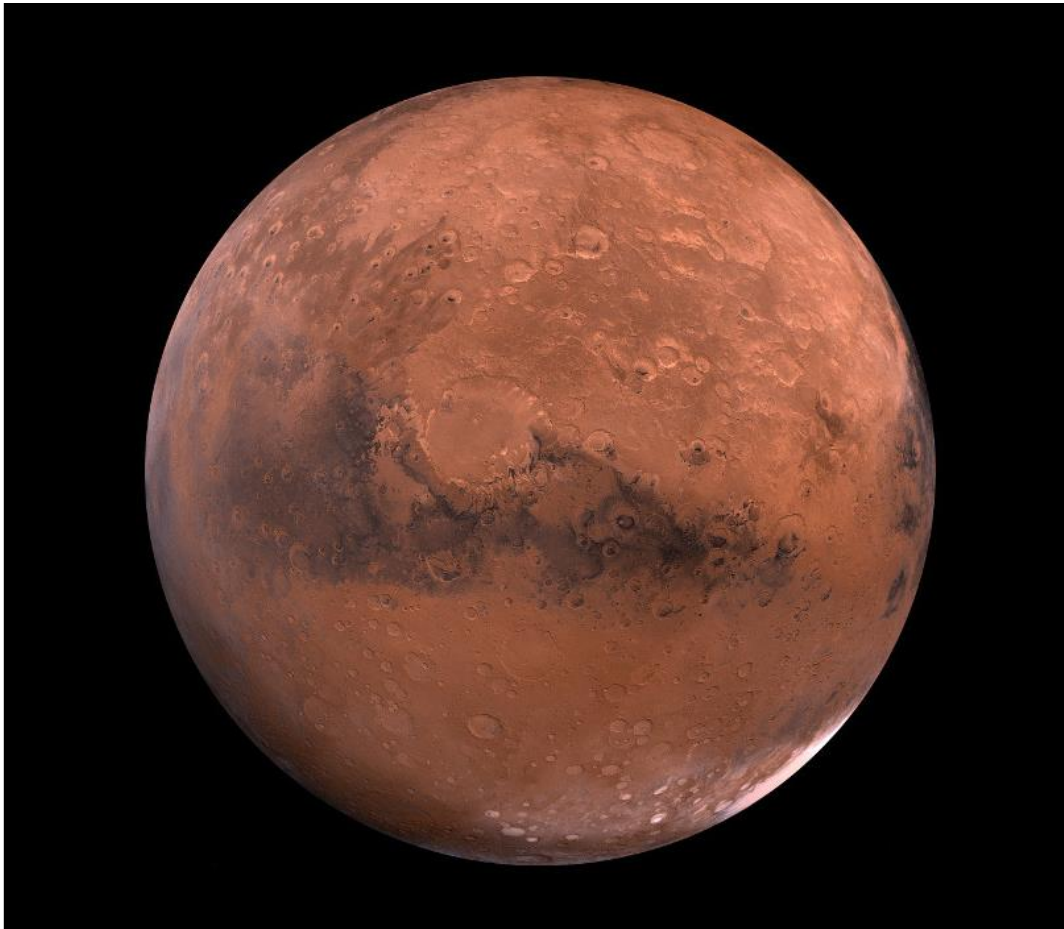


The four smaller inner planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars, are terrestrial planets, being primarily composed of rock and metal

Mars > Named after the Roman god of war



Equatorial Diameter:	6,792 km
Polar Diameter:	6,752 km
Mass:	6.39 × 10 ²³ kg (0.11 Earths)
Moons:	2 (Phobos & Deimos)
Orbit Distance:	227,943,824 km (1.38 AU)
Orbit Period:	687 days (1.9 years)
Surface Temperature:	-87 to -5 °C

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Mars and Earth have approximately the same landmass. Even though Mars has only 15% of the Earth's volume and just over 10% of the Earth's mass, around two thirds of the Earth's surface is covered in water. Martian surface gravity is only 37% of the Earth's (meaning you could leap nearly three times higher on Mars).

Mars is home to the tallest mountain in the solar system. **Olympus Mons**, a shield volcano, is 21km high and 600km in diameter. Despite having formed over billions of years, evidence from volcanic lava flows is so recent many scientists believe it could still be active.

Mars has the largest dust storms in the solar system. They can last for months and cover the entire planet. The seasons are extreme because its elliptical (oval-shaped) orbital path around the Sun is more elongated than most other planets in the solar system.

On Mars the Sun appears about half the size as it does on Earth. At the closest point to the Sun, the Martian southern hemisphere leans towards the Sun, causing a short, intensely hot summer, while the northern hemisphere endures a brief, cold winter: at its farthest point from the Sun, the Martian northern hemisphere leans towards the Sun, causing a long, mild summer, while the southern hemisphere endures a lengthy, cold winter.

One day Mars will have a ring. In the next 20-40 million years Mars' largest moon Phobos will be torn apart by gravitational forces leading to the creation of a ring that could last up to 100 million years.

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Guide To Observing
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