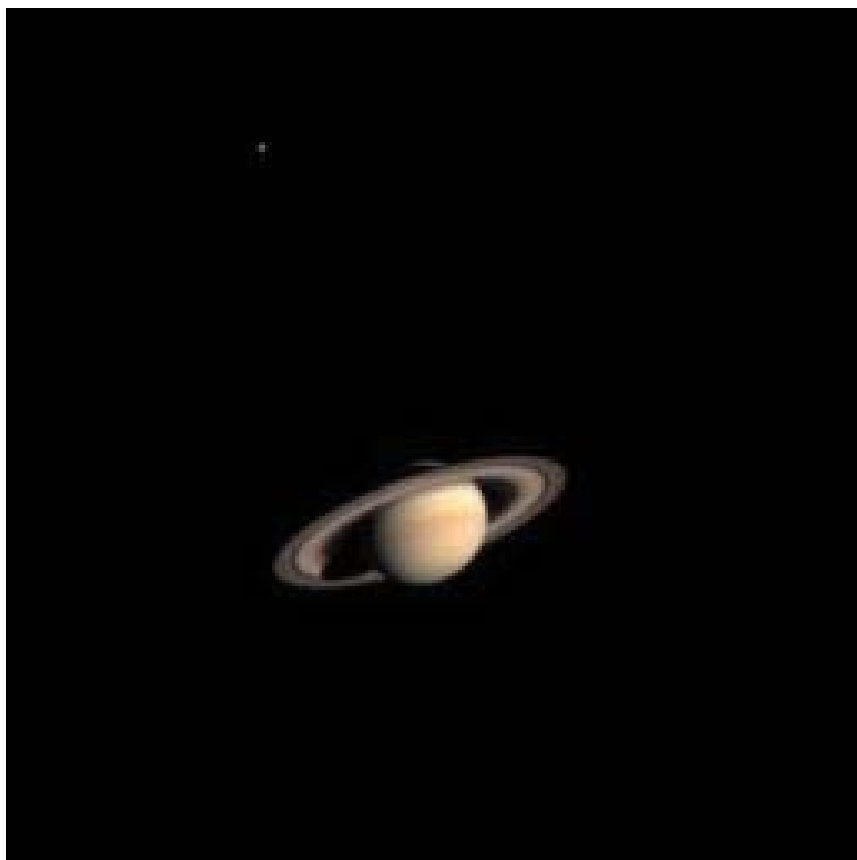


A first view of Saturn for *Cassini*



Saturn hangs serene and majestic in this first colour composite of images taken by NASA's *Cassini* spacecraft on its approach to the planet. Saturn was 285 million km (177 million miles) from the spacecraft, nearly twice the distance between the Sun and Earth, when *Cassini* took images of it in various filters as an engineering test on 2002 October 21.

It is summer in Saturn's southern hemisphere. The Sun is 27° below the equator and casts a semi-circular shadow of the planet on the rings. The shadow extends partway across the rings, leaving the outer A ring in sunlight. Titan appears at upper left – it is the only satellite resolved from this distance.

Cassini will enter orbit around Saturn on 2004 July 1. It will release the ESA probe, *Huygens*, which will descend through Titan's atmosphere on 2005 January 14.

NASA/JPL/Southwest Research Institute

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