



← Milky Way image taken by the Spitzer Space Telescope

Aglow with Dust
Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is a dusty place. It is so dusty, in fact, that we cannot see its center with normal light. The Spitzer Space Telescope has helped astronomers cut through the clouds of dust. With it, we can see over 30 million stars in the inner part of our galaxy.



← Spitzer Space Telescope

NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope is the fourth and final piece in NASA's Great Observatories program. It was launched in 2003.

The Spitzer Space Telescope senses **infrared light**. This helps astronomers see through clouds of dust in space. It is helping scientists find very young stars and new solar systems.

Spitzer is the largest infrared telescope ever launched into space. It is named for the first scientist to suggest placing telescopes in space. These telescopes have led to new discoveries about our universe.



Stargazing 101

What's the best place for stargazing? The darker the place the better! Light is the biggest obstacle to a clear view of the heavens. So the best stargazing is found in rural areas, far from city lights. Altitude also helps. That's why most observatories are placed on mountaintops.

Stargazing on the Islands

Most people know that Hawaii is a great place to sightsee. It is also one of the best places to watch the stars!

Many of the world's best observatories on land are in Hawaii. You can probably find an observatory near you, too. You can also visit one online.

What makes Hawaii good for stargazing? The dry and still air gives a clear view. The high altitudes and thousands of miles of ocean help as well. With few city lights around, the skies are nice and dark.

The Keck Twin Telescopes were built on Mauna Kea in Hawaii. From the top of this volcano, scientists watch the skies. They can see into the deepest parts of the universe. Each "twin" is eight stories high. It weighs about 300 tons. Mauna Kea is an inactive volcano. It does not erupt. So, it makes a good, high spot for an observatory.

↓ The Keck Twin Telescopes are located on Mauna Kea on the island of Hawaii.

