


# DISCOVER

Science, Technology, and The Future

- 
- [Log In](#)
- [Subscribe](#)
- [Give a Gift](#)
- [Archives](#)
- [Customer Service](#)

SEARCH

- [Health & Medicine](#)
- [Mind & Brain](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Space](#)
- [Human Origins](#)
- [Living World](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Physics & Math](#)
- [Video](#)
- [Photos](#)
- [Podcast](#)
- [RSS](#)

## [Blogs / Bad Astronomy](#)

« [Online TAM registration closes tonight](#)

## [LRO First Light images of the Moon!](#)



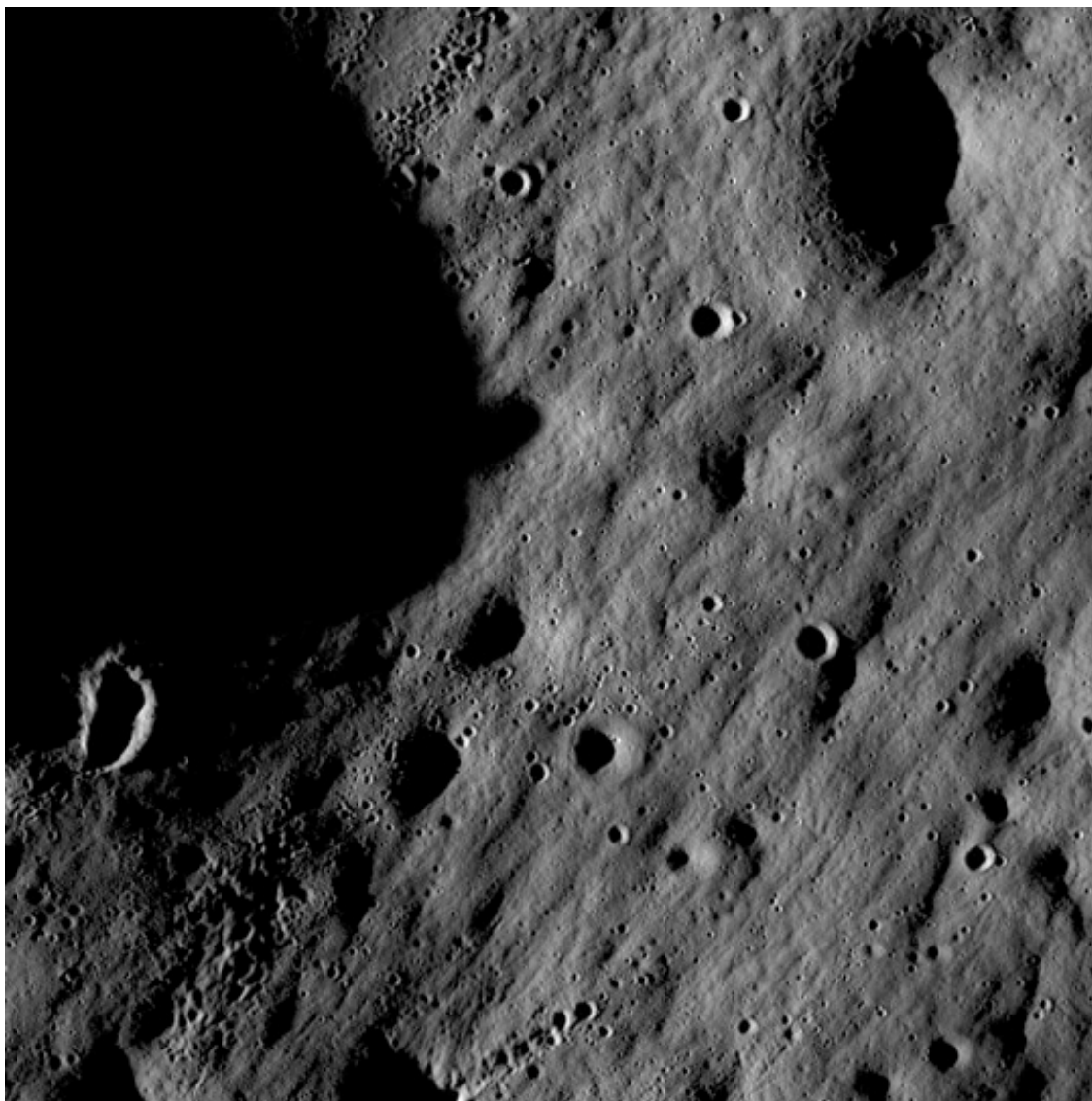
88 diggs 

 Stumble! 5 

[Update: Ken Bowley on Facebook clued me in that the LRO camera [has a page](#) where you can see the raw images, and zoom in — [WAY in](#) — on the image strips. They have 73 cm resolution, folks. Yikes.]

The Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter [has returned its first images from the Moon!](#) Woohoo!

Check. It. Out!



Whoaaaa.

This image, taken in the Mare Nubium region of the Moon, shows a heavily cratered area. The scale here is amazing: the whole image is 1400 meters across, or *just under a mile*. That's like looking out your airplane window... if you were over the frakking Moon! Even in this compressed image (click to embiggen) features just a few meters across are distinguishable. See that perfectly circular crater just to the right and a tad below the middle of the picture? It's about 60 meters across, just a bit bigger than two tennis courts end-to-end. It would easily fit in a football stadium.

## Holy Haleakala.

It's a little difficult to interpret the image; for example, near the bottom in the middle I thought for a moment I saw a crater chain. I don't think that's real; our eyes tend to pick out linear features even when they aren't there. Too bad, because that would be cool; crater chains form when an asteroid or comet breaks up before it hits, and we do see them on pretty much every cratered object in the solar system. You can also get them near a larger impact, when junk ejected from the crater splashes out and lands nearby.

I guarantee we'll see lots of such chains as LRO snaps more pictures. Awesome.

Check this one too:



This image has the same scale as the other, and shows a region of low hummocks undulating across the Moon. I don't have much to say scientifically about this particular picture, but I will say that it is eerily

beautiful, and completely enthralling. I wouldn't mind having that framed over my desk!

So there you go, folks. If you want to explore the Moon, all you have to do is sit back and wait for the images to roll in. And remember: when it settles into its final orbit, the pictures LRO takes will have a resolution of *0.5 meters*, or 18 inches!

Wow. I cannot wait to see more.

July 2nd, 2009 12:13 PM by [Phil Plait](#) in [Astronomy](#), [NASA](#) | 12 comments | [RSS feed](#) | [Trackback >](#)

## 12 Responses to “LRO First Light images of the Moon!”

1. 1. *jb* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:16 pm](#)

it is amazing that regardless of the resolution the Moon always looks the same..grey and rocky 😊  
very cool pics  
jb

2. 2. *Dotan Cohen* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:21 pm](#)

This is why I read BA! Keep up the astronomy, and tone down the sceptics. Thanks!

3. 3. *dhtroy* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:22 pm](#)

Phil,

I read somewhere that NASA plans to image the area from our Moon mission, do you know if this is true? and if so, will we finally be able to see the stuff we left behind on the surface?

I would think, at that close range, we should, but then, I'm a noobie with this stuff, so you'll have to enlighten me.

Regardless, these pictures are amazing.

D.

4. 4. *John Karabaic* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:23 pm](#)

Does that mean it will get pictures of the Apollo landing sites with enough detail to distinguish larger objects?

5. 5. *Kit* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:27 pm](#)

So, in the top picture, what is the D shaped “mouth” on the lower edge of the large dark area on the left side? It has a bright edge all the way around. The other craters have sunshine on one side and are dark on the other.

6. 6. [Christopher Ambler](#) Says:  
[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:40 pm](#)

By a strange coincidence, that's the exact spot on which I plan to open my first restaurant.

"Great food. No atmosphere."

7. 7. [TechSkeptic](#) Says:  
[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:42 pm](#)

Kit,

That area is blacked out because it shows the moonbase currently under construction by the zeebleoid armada. Our government is heavily influenced by their participation in our energy and medical advances. You can't possibly think we have come all this way by ourselves, can you?

8. 8. [IVAN3MAN](#) Says:  
[July 2nd, 2009 at 12:53 pm](#)

[Grammar Mode]

Phil Plait:

That's like looking out your airplane window...

There is a missing preposition in that sentence; it is more grammatically correct to state: *That's like looking out of your airplane window...*

[/Grammar Mode]



9. 9. [Project Savior](#) Says:  
[July 2nd, 2009 at 1:11 pm](#)

That is cool, and difficult to interpret.

Are the littler craters on the sides of big ones the ejecta stuff, (can't remember the name) impacts of the stuff thrown out by the meteor impact, or just random impacts near the spot that the bigger one hit. Either way it's cool.

10. 10. [Mchl](#) Says:  
[July 2nd, 2009 at 1:19 pm](#)

OK... so I suppose behind the scenes plan in NASA is to have Eagle landing site photographed before July 20th 2009? 😊

[edit]

Hey! There's a giant ear in on the left of the first picture!

11. 11. [Matt P](#) Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 1:23 pm](#)

What we'll see is drag marks away from the landing site, leading to disguised trapdoors in the surface.

12. *Guysmiley* Says:

[July 2nd, 2009 at 1:26 pm](#)

Like Buzz said, magnificent desolation. Very cool!

## Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

Submit Comment

**SUMMER SAVINGS**

**DISCOVER**  
ENERGY WITHOUT LIMITS

**SAVE HALF!**

GIVE A FULL YEAR OF **DISCOVER** FOR HALF THE REGULAR ONE-YEAR RATE, **JUST \$15**  
**BUT HURRY! THIS OFFER WON'T LAST**

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

## • About Bad Astronomy

If you went to BadAstronomy.com and found yourself here, never fear: the BA Blog has moved to its new home at Discover Blogs. The original BA site (with

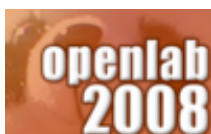


the Moon Hoax debunking and all that) [is still online](#), too.

Phil Plait, the creator of Bad Astronomy, is an astronomer, lecturer, and author. After ten years working on Hubble Space Telescope and six more working on astronomy education, he struck out on his own as a writer. He has written two books, dozens of magazine articles, and 12 bazillion blog articles. He is a skeptic, and fights misuses of science as well as praising the wonder of real science.



Bad Astronomy was chosen as one of [Time.com's Best Blogs of 2009](#).



[Open Lab 2008](#) is a collection of the best blog posts of the year, all in one place. Are you a science junkie? Yeah, you want it.



- **Subscribe to BA using an RSS Feed**

Subscribe to Bad Astronomy [using RSS!](#) 

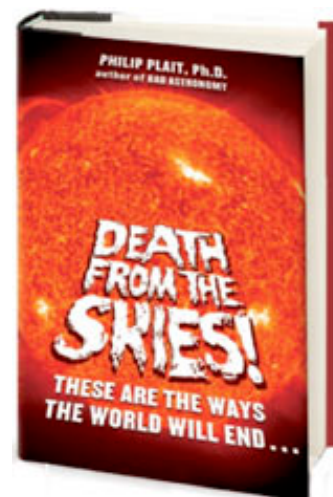
 [Catch me on Twitter](#)

- **Death from the Skies!**

Order a copy of *Death from the Skies!* from [Amazon](#), [Barnes and Noble](#), or [Borders](#).

"If things worked the way I wanted them to, any reporter about to do another 'sensational' story on deadly meteors would consult this volume, and *bang!* common sense would find its way into the news. How strange would *that* world be?"

-- Adam Savage, *Mythbusters*



"Reading this book is like getting punched in the face by Carl Sagan. Frightening, but oddly exhilarating."

-- Daniel H. Wilson, author of *How to Survive a Robot Uprising*

- 

## • Disclaimer

The opinions and ideas expressed in this blog are solely those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of Discover Magazine and/or the James Randi Educational Foundation, of which Dr. Plait serves as President.

## • Recent Posts

- [LRO First Light images of the Moon!](#)
- [Online TAM registration closes tonight](#)
- [Binary planetary systems caught in the act of forming!](#)
- [OK, one more volcano awesomeness](#)
- [See the ISS over the next week](#)

## • Social/Networking/Cool Stuff



I support [the International Year of Astronomy 2009!](#)



## • Post Categories



Select Category ▾

## • Archives

Select Month ▾

## • Blogroll

- [Bad Astronomy \(old site\)](#)
- [Bad Astronomy and Universe Today Forum](#)
- [Commenting Policy](#)
- [Computer Support](#)
- [Contact Information](#)
- [DM: 80 Beats](#)
- [DM: Better Planet](#)
- [DM: Discoblog](#)
- [DM: Reality Base](#)
- [DM: Science Not Fiction](#)
- [DM: The Intersection](#)
- [DM: The Loom](#)
- [James Randi Educational Foundation](#)
- [Planetary Society Blog](#)
- [Politics and Religion posts](#)
- [Press Kit](#)
- [The Antivax Bible](#)
- [Universe Today](#)

-  **[DISCOVERmagazine.com: Latest Articles on Space](#)**
  - [Staring at the Sun, Just as Galileo Did](#)
  - [Building the World's Wimpiest Space Thruster—Harder Than It Sounds](#)
  - [Russia's Dark Horse Plan to Get to Mars](#)
  - [A Scientist's Guide to Finding Alien Life: Where, When, and in What Universe](#)
  - [The Frontiers of Astronomy](#)
  
-  **[DISCOVER Blogs: The Loom](#)**
  - [Radio: The Takeaway Learns to Speak Firefly](#)
  - [Fireflies: The Invertebrate Opera](#)
  - [Genomes In Newsweek: Futures Near and Far](#)
  - [Sex and “Sex”](#)
  - [Congratulations Are In Order](#)

**SUMMER SAVINGS**

**SAVE HALF!**



**GIVE A FULL YEAR OF DISCOVER FOR HALF THE REGULAR ONE-YEAR RATE JUST \$15 BUT HURRY! THIS OFFER WON'T LAST**

**SUBSCRIBE NOW**

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#) - [Reader Services](#) - [Subscribe Today](#) - [Advertise](#) - [About Us](#)