



Photograph of Jupiter and Io courtesy of NASA

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Jupiter

Jupiter is so big that it is more massive than all other moons and planets in our solar system combined! When you look at Jupiter through a telescope, you can see broad, horizontal, colored bands. These are formed by powerful winds that blow at over 400 mph. Unlike Earth, Jupiter has no solid surface. It is made up entirely of gas. As you travel farther and farther toward the center of the planet, the gas becomes more and more dense. The center of Jupiter, although not solid, is very hot (about 54,000°F). Not a very pleasant place to be!

Jupiter is also very important historically. By observing Jupiter's four largest moons (today we know there are a total of 39), Galileo found evidence that the other planets in our solar system did not necessarily orbit the earth. This may not sound very exciting today, but it was a big deal in 1610!

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