



Image of supernova courtesy of NASA.

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[Remnants of supernovas in our galaxy](#)

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It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Supernova!

You're probably wondering who or what a supernova is. Well, you came to the right place. The easiest way to picture one is to think of it as a huge explosion in outer space.

At the end of a star's lifetime, its nuclear fuel runs out, and the star is no longer supported by nuclear energy. This causes what's left of the star to explode in all directions, making any fireworks show you've seen seem pale in comparison.

This is a rare event in our own galaxy. The last supernova seen in the Milky Way was Kepler's Star, and this was back in 1604. However, even when we can't see supernovas, we sometimes know when they occurred based on the evidence that they leave behind. A famous supernova remnant is the Crab Nebula, left from an explosion in 1054. Another famous remnant is Cygnus Loop. Outside the Milky Way, the most recent supernova observed was in 1987 in a neighboring galaxy known as the Large Magellanic Cloud.

The coolest thing about supernovas, aside from how neat they look, is that when the material blown off by them scatters throughout space, it forms clouds of dust that later form stars and planets. In fact, all elements on earth except hydrogen and helium are thought to have arrived here because of supernovas. Think about that the next time you look out the window!

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