



Journey to the Birth of the Solar System

Join David Kaplan on a virtual-reality tour showing how the sun, the Earth and the other planets came to be.

By Natalie Wolchover

Only over the past half-century have scientists uncovered the story of the sun, the Earth, the moon and our neighboring planets. Each meteorite plucked off the ground, every moon rock collected by Apollo astronauts and every measurement recorded by NASA's far-flung probes has provided a clue that planetary scientists have pieced into a coherent account of how the solar system formed and evolved.

For the closest possible thing to a firsthand experience of how our corner of the cosmos took shape, we partnered with [Chorus Films](#) to create a 360-degree virtual-reality video — the latest in our [In Theory video series](#) hosted by the theoretical physicist David Kaplan. The video can be viewed in a VR headset, on a smartphone or on a computer.

On a **mobile device**, we recommend connecting to a Wi-Fi network and viewing the video on the [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) app; the video will not play correctly in a mobile browser. If Wi-Fi is unavailable and you need to stream the video over a cellular network, use this [Vimeo link](#) for best results. Simply move the phone or drag your finger across the screen to look around. Make sure the audio is turned on and wear headphones for the most immersive experience.

On a **desktop computer**, use Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer or Opera; Safari is not a supported browser. You can click and drag or use the arrow keys to explore the 360-degree environment.

To view with **Google Cardboard**, use the YouTube or Vimeo app (again, Vimeo is better if you're not on Wi-Fi), tap the headset icon at the bottom-right of either player, and position your phone in the Cardboard.

For the best possible viewing experience, watch with a dedicated **virtual-reality headset** such as the Oculus Rift or the Gear VR.

Update: This VR film has been reconfigured as a freely available planetarium show. [Click here](#) to download the fulldome planetarium files.