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TEEN QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

How Much Will a Trip into Space Cost?

There are lots of things you could be saving for—a new bike, things to buy on vacation, or maybe even a car. But what if you have your sights set even higher...how much do you need to save to become a space tourist?

Space tourism is in its early years. There's still a lot to figure out when it comes to sending non-astronauts into space! Especially when the companies pioneering space tourism are all relatively young—they haven't been around as long as NASA has. But based on NASA's information and some of the companies' calculations, we can estimate what a ticket might cost to get you out of the atmosphere.

Currently, it costs NASA roughly \$80 million to send a person to the International Space Station (ISS). This same trip with the company SpaceX will cost you a little less, only \$62 million. Virgin Galactic sold a limited number of tickets for \$250,000 each for a suborbital flight—meaning for less than \$1 million you can experience zero gravity and leave the Earth's atmosphere, but you won't reach the ISS, which is in orbital space further away from Earth.



Zero Gravity Corporation offers a zero-gravity experience for a fraction of the price tag of leaving Earth completely. For \$5,000, you'll fly aboard a modified Boeing 727 that ascends and then dives steeply to give you periods of up to 30 seconds of weightlessness. You can catch one of these flights from airports in Orlando, Las Vegas, and San Francisco.

However you plan to become a space tourist, you'd better start saving today!

Build a Terrarium

A terrarium is a mini garden of tropical plants or desert succulents partially or fully enclosed by a glass container. Inside a terrarium, you can create and grow a landscape to fit your wildest imagination. Here's how.

Materials

- A clear glass jar, vase, bowl, old aquarium, specialized terrarium container from a gardening store, or whatever interesting glass container you have at home
- Activated charcoal (also called activated carbon)
- Potting soil appropriate for the plants you chose
- Gravel or collection of marble-sized and smaller rocks
- Small scoop or spoon
- Gloves
- Water
- Optional: moss, decorative rocks, or décor like tiny pine cones, shells, ceramic figurines



First, decide what types of plants you want in your terrarium. Inside each glass container, you can only create one type of environment, so be sure all of the plants like the same soil, amount of water and light.

Succulents, like cacti, need very little water and do well in more direct sunlight. Use an open glass container for a succulent terrarium.

Tropical plants, like ferns and begonias, like it constantly humid and warm, so they do best in a closed container.

Next, clean your chosen glass container so plenty of light can get to the plants. Put a layer of pebbles or small rocks at the bottom, about an inch deep. This provides drainage for the plants—believe it or not, certain plants can drown when their roots sit in water.

The next layer to add is ½ inches of charcoal followed by potting soil. The terrarium should be half full.

Now you can add your plants! Dig a small well in the soil for each plant with a spoon or your fingers. Gently shake loose the old soil clumped around the roots of the plants and then place them to your terrarium. Add more soil on top of roots and pat down gently. Leave some space between each plant for them to breathe and grow.

Finally, add any decorative elements—it's your little world, so do what you want! Read up on how often to water the particular plants in your terrarium and place in indirect light (not on a windowsill).

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