

## Cristina Koch is the first female astronaut to spend 328 days in space! Here's a little about her mission.



Cristina Koch on the ISS, studying the effects of microgravity on leafy greens.

Credit: NASA, space.com

American astronaut **Cristina Koch** is the first woman to have spent 328 days in space! She blasted off to the International Space Station on March 14, 2019, and just returned on February 5, 2020. This is the longest spaceflight undertaken by a woman. The previous record for a woman being in space is held by Peggy Whitson and was 288 days. Koch was also part of

the first all women's spacewalk on October 18, 2019.

**What did she do up there for so long?** Well, she did six spacewalks, and spent some time fixing the International Space Station. She also conducted different experiments on the ISS. She studied plant growth on the ISS, and set up instrumentation to facilitate 3D printing of human tissues (!) in space, amongst other things. Some of these such high tech experiments are helped by the lack of gravity in space.

**Effects of micro (very little) or zero gravity on the human body:** The amount of time she spent up there will also be very useful to scientists, as they will see the effects that being so long in space has on the female body. We already know that it causes bone and muscle loss in humans, and is also hard on the kidneys.

**What did she miss while away?** In her words, "Oh, how I miss the wind on my face, the feeling of raindrops, sand on my feet and the sound of the surf crashing on the Galveston beach... I cannot wait to feel and hear Earth again."

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This article was adapted from articles on CNN and space.com by Sunaina Murthy