



NASA'S STUCK ASTRONAUTS WELCOME THEIR NEWLY ARRIVED REPLACEMENTS TO THE SPACE STATION - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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This image made from video by NASA shows astronauts greeting each other after a SpaceX capsule docked with the International Space Station, Sunday, March 16, 2025. Top row from left: Nick Hague, Alexander Gorbunov, Suni Williams, Alexei Ovchinin and Ivan Vagner. Bottom row from left: Butch Wilmore, Takuya Onishi, Anne McClain, Kirill Peskov, Nichole Ayers and Don Pettit.

Just over a day [after blasting off](#), a SpaceX crew capsule arrived at the International Space Station on Sunday, delivering the replacements for NASA's [two stuck astronauts](#).

The four newcomers — representing the U.S., Japan and Russia — will spend some time learning the station's ins and outs from [Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams](#). Then the two will strap into their own SpaceX capsule later this week, one that has been up there since last year, to close out an unexpected extended mission that began last June.

[Wilmore and Williams](#) expected to be gone just a week when they launched on [Boeing's first astronaut flight](#). They hit the nine-month mark earlier this month.

The Boeing Starliner capsule encountered so many problems that NASA insisted it come back empty, leaving its test pilots behind to wait for a SpaceX lift.

While the seven space station residents prepared for the new arrivals, one of the Russians — Ivan Vagner — briefly put on an alien mask in a lighthearted moment. Wilmore swung open the space station's hatch and rang the ship's bell as the new crew floated in one by one and were greeted with hugs and handshakes..

"It was a wonderful day. Great to see our friends arrive," Williams told Mission Control.

Wilmore's and Williams' ride arrived back in late September with a downsized crew of two and two empty seats reserved for the leg back. But more delays resulted when their replacements' brand new capsule needed extensive battery repairs. An older capsule took its place,

pushing up their return by a couple weeks to mid-March.



Weather permitting, the SpaceX capsule carrying Wilmore, Williams and two other astronauts will undock from the space station early Tuesday and splash down off Florida's coast later that evening.

Until then, there will be 11 aboard the orbiting lab, representing the U.S., Russia and Japan.

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