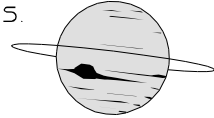


Were you surprised at the size of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune compared to the other planets?

These four planets are called the gas giants. A balloon filled with air is a good way to represent them, since air is a gas. If you won a trip to visit the gas giants, what could you look forward to?

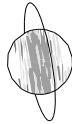
**HUGE
STORMS!**

Even from Earth we can see the Great Red Spot, a storm on Jupiter that has been raging for over 300 years.



**A FLOATING
TOUR!**

If you could visit a gas giant there wouldn't be a surface you could step on. You'd have to float around in the atmosphere in a blimp or a hot air balloon. (Watch out for the storms, though!)



**FANTASTIC
RINGS!**

All the gas giants have rings, but none are more spectacular than Saturn's. Saturn's rings look solid, but they're really a thin sheet of orbiting snowballs and ice chunks. Uranus' ring is tipped sideways like a rolling hoop.



**PLENTY OF
MOONS!**

Gas giants all have a lot of moons, each one a unique world of its own, and many as big as small planets. To mention just a couple ...

EUROPA, a moon of Jupiter, is covered with a sheet of cracked ice. Scientists think that under the ice there might be huge oceans, and maybe life!

IO, another of Jupiter's moons, features volcanoes that blast out a trillion tons of sulfur and sodium every year.



PLUTO - The Farthest Planet?

Pluto's strange orbit takes it out to the coldest reaches of space, where even air would freeze and turn to liquid. It then returns and, for a short time, is actually closer than Neptune. Then it's off to deep space again. Pluto may be cold and distant, but it's never really alone. It has a large moon called Charon. Together, Charon and Pluto travel around the sun once every 248 years. Pluto is a dwarf planet. Another is Eris, discovered in 2005, about the same size as Pluto and much farther from the sun.