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Uranus:

Once considered one of the blander-looking planets, Uranus (pronounced YOOR un nus) has been revealed as a dynamic world with some of the brightest clouds in the outer solar system and 11 rings. The first planet found with the aid of a telescope, Uranus was discovered in 1781 by astronomer William Herschel. The seventh planet from the Sun is so distant that it takes 84 years to complete one orbit. Uranus, with no solid surface, is one of the gas giant planets (the others are Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune).

The atmosphere of Uranus is composed primarily of hydrogen and helium, with a small amount of methane and traces of water and ammonia. Uranus gets its blue-green color from methane gas. Sunlight is reflected from Uranus' cloud tops, which lie beneath a layer of methane gas. As the reflected sunlight passes back through this layer, the methane gas absorbs the red portion of the light, allowing the blue portion to pass through, resulting in the blue-green color that we see. The planet's atmospheric details are very difficult to see in visible light. The bulk (80 per-cent or more) of the mass of Uranus is contained in an extended liquid core consisting primarily of 'icy' materials (water, methane, and ammonia), with higher-density material at depth.



Uranus as it would appear to human eyes.

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Just the Facts

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Distance from the Sun: 2,870,972,200 km

Equatorial Radius: 25,559 km

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Volume: 69,142,000,000,000 km³

Mass: 86,849,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 kg

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