

# SAMANTHA CRISTOFOLETTI

The first Italian woman in space



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Who is Samantha?





Born in Milan, Italy, on 26 April 1977 Samantha Cristoforetti is an avid reader with a passion for science and technology, and an equal interest in humanities. She enjoys learning foreign languages and her current challenge is Chinese. Occasionally she finds the time to hike, scuba dive or practice yoga.



# Education



Samantha completed her secondary education at the Liceo Scientifico in Trento, Italy, in 1996 after having spent one year as an exchange student in the USA.

In 2001, she graduated from the Technical University of Munich, Germany, with a master's degree in mechanical engineering with specialisations in aerospace propulsion and lightweight structures. As part of her studies, she spent four months at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure de l'Aéronautique et de l'Espace in Toulouse, France, working on an experimental project in aerodynamics. She wrote her master's thesis in solid rocket propellants during a 10-month research stay at the Mendeleev University of Chemical Technologies in Moscow, Russia.

As part of her training at the Italian Air Force Academy, Samantha also completed a bachelor's degree in aeronautical sciences at the University of Naples Federico II, Italy, in 2005.

# Experience



## Becoming astronaut

In 2001, Samantha joined the Italian Air Force. She was admitted to the Air Force Academy as an officer candidate and served as class leader for four years. Following her graduation in 2005, she attended the Euro-NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training program at Sheppard Air Force Base in the United States.

Samantha was selected as an ESA astronaut in May 2009.

On 23 November, 2014 Samantha was launched from the cosmodrome of Baikonur in Kazakhstan. She returned to Earth on 11 June, 2015 after spending 200 days in space. The mission, which was given the name Futura, was the second long-duration flight opportunity for the Italian Space Agency.

In 2019 Samantha served as commander for NASA's 23rd Extreme Environment Mission Operations mission on a 10-day stay in the world's only undersea research station, Aquarius.



# Special honours and associations

## Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic

In July 2015 Samantha was awarded the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic by the Italian president.

She holds honorary degrees from the University of Pavia, Politecnico di Torino and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.



Samantha is a UNICEF ambassador and donates to UNICEF the proceeds from sales of her memoir *Diary of an Apprentice Astronaut*, in which she shares her experience of being selected as an astronaut and then training for and flying her first space mission.



# Current assignment



Samantha has been assigned a second mission to the International Space Station. She is currently in training for this mission, which is scheduled for 2022.



