

The classic photograph of the Earth taken on December 7, 1972 by the Apollo 17 crew while traveling toward the moon, often referred to as 'the blue marble.' This photograph extends from the Mediterranean Sea to Antarctica and was the first time the Apollo trajectory made it possible to photograph the south polar ice cap. Almost the entire coastline of Africa is visible, with the Arabian Peninsula in view at the northeastern edge of Africa. (Image courtesy the Image Science & Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center, photograph number AS17-148-22727.)



Satellite image of the same scene as the Apollo 17 photograph to the left. Satellites of today enable digital images of the entire globe to be produced every day. This image was created from digital data acquired on December 7, 2006, thus having the same solar illumination and seasonal meteorology as the Apollo 17 photograph, but with clouds and haze that occurred in 2006. (Data from the MODIS instruments on the Terra and Aqua satellites.)