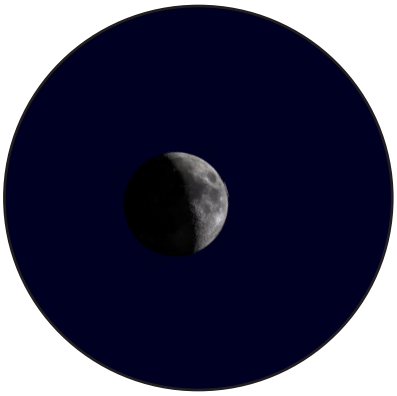
Can You See the Flag on the Moon?

Let's take a closer look.

The smallest crater a human eye can see on the Moon is 100 km (60 mi) across. You could drive across a crater that size in an hour... if there were lunar freeways.

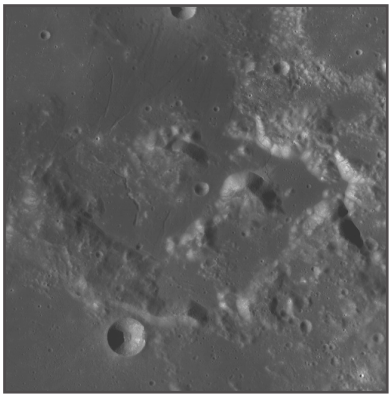


Through a pair of good binoculars, the smallest crater you can see on the Moon is 10 km (6 mi) across. You could walk 10 km in about two hours here on Earth.

(Moon image Jay Tanner)

A backyard telescope can resolve craters about 1 km (0.6 mi) across about the size of a large neighborhood.

(Moon image courtesy NASA's Scientific Visulization Studio: svs.gsfc.nasa.gov/4442)

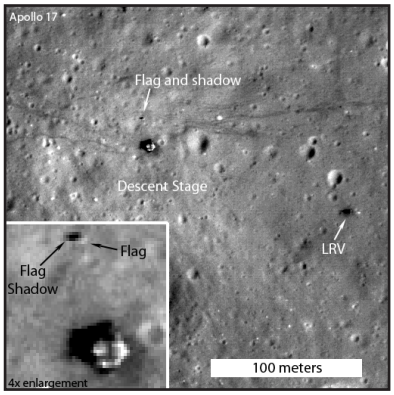


The Hubble Space Telescope could just make out a crater 100 meters or yards across, the length of a soccer field.

(image via trek.nasa.gov/moon)

NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter can resolve objects about 1 meter across and can just make out the flag left by Apollo 17 astronauts.

(NASA/Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter)



Astronauts first landed on the Moon in 1969. This image is from Apollo 17 in 1972. What would be the largest feature they could see on Earth?

(NASA)

Find activities and local astronomy events with the NASA Night Sky Network: nightskynetwork.org

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