



# The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System

By David Baker, Todd Ratcliff

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**The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System** By David Baker, Todd Ratcliff

The extreme events that we hear about daily—hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions—are extreme in purely human terms, in the devastation they do. But this book moves our understanding of the extreme into extraterrestrial dimensions and gives us an awe-inspiring sense of what our solar system at its utmost can do. Martian dust devils taller than Mount Everest. A hurricane that lasts over 340 years. Volcanoes with “lava” colder than Antarctica. Hail made of diamonds. Here, as the authors say, the “WOW” factor is restored to our understanding of scientific discovery, as we witness the grandeur and the weirdness that inspire researchers to dig deeper and go ever farther into the mysteries of the universe.

*The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System* combines a fascination with natural disasters and the mesmerizing allure of outer space to take readers on a journey that will forever change the way they view our solar system. Full of dazzling photographs from NASA’s most recent observations, this book explores extreme regions on Earth and beyond—giant turbulent storms, explosive volcanoes, and the possibility of life surviving in harsh conditions.

More than a collection of facts, the book conveys the dynamism of science as a process of exploration and discovery. As they amuse and entertain, **David Baker** and **Todd Ratcliff**, two experts in planetary science, highlight recent developments and unresolved mysteries and strive, at every turn, to answer that important scientific question: “Why?”

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

This is a cool book. Spectacularly illustrated, it conveys some of astronomy's heaviest facts in a light and airy way. Readers should have fun reading it. (Paul W. Hodge, Professor Emeritus of Astronomy, University of Washington)

Laid out in 50 brief but beautifully illustrated chapters, *The 50 Most Extreme Places in Our Solar System* is hugely enjoyable. (Jim Wild *Times Higher Education* 2010-11-04)

Just from a casual look, I can tell that this is the sort of book I would have pored over for hours at a certain phase in my life; if you have a young or young-at-heart stargazer in your home, I would encourage you to check it out. (Michael Merschel *Dallas Morning News* 2010-10-28)

As may be deduced from the title, this book would be of immediate interest to younger readers and their attention would easily be maintained by the tone and clarity of the writing. That said, more seasoned readers will also find it an enjoyable and fascinating look at the Solar System around us and will no doubt broaden their knowledge. I fully recommend this book to anyone of any age with an interest in the Solar System and how much of a hostile, humbling and amazing place it is to exist. (David Powell *Astronomy Now* 2011-01-01)

### **About the Author**

David Baker is the Chairman of the Physics Department at Austin College.

Todd Ratcliff is a planetary geophysicist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

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