

JOURNEY TO INFINITY

Script by Steve Tidey, May 2006

<i>Show running times</i>	<i>Visuals</i>	<i>Narration</i>
00.40 – 1.29	SHOW TITLE fades away. The Milky Way galaxy stretches across the starlit sky, as the Earth and Moon float into view	<p>Our Universe fascinates us. We've all looked into the night sky and wondered what's out there.</p> <p>City lights across Europe and and natural starlight from our galaxy, the Milky Way. Our ancestors could only travel to the stars in their imagination, but today we launch space probes to the Moon and beyond in the name of exploration.</p> <p>Welcome aboard the Infinity Express. Join us on a journey to explore what's out there. You don't need to know the sky's language to enjoy the trip. Just bring your sense of awe.</p>
1.30 – 1.54	We approach the Sun and flyby	<p>Life on Earth exists at the Sun's whim. We're hostages to fortune, vulnerable to the many daily explosions on its surface that disrupt our communications, and threaten Earth's ecology.</p> <p>To know the Sun's behaviour is to know something about how the Universe works, and so astronomers constantly observe its turbulent face, always learning.</p>
1.55 -2.12	Mercury flyby	<p>One side of airless Mercury is scorched to a cinder by the Sun. The other side freezes until it rotates into white-hot daylight again, to begin another cycle of wild extremes.</p>
2.15 – 2.29	Venus flyby	<p>Scientific reality has ripped away the romantic image Venus once had as a lush paradise. Radio waves have pierced the clouds to reveal a hellish environment that would quickly crush, corrode and cook you.</p>

2.33 – 2.58	Earth and Moon flyby, with the ISS orbiting the Earth.	<p>Viewing our hectic world from out here, we see the wider picture. Everything you have ever known, is down there on Earth. Just as in the sky, we see no borders. The Earth is one with the cosmos.</p> <p>Astronauts aboard the International Space Station enjoy this view, and so did Apollo astronauts. The Moon’s motions determine the dates of religious festivals, such as Eid and Easter.</p>
3.00 – 3.57	<hr/> <p>Approaching Mars</p> <p>The Sojourner rover rolls off the lander to start studying the Martian surface</p> <p>Flying over the rugged Martian terrain</p> <p>Leaving Mars behind</p>	<hr/> <p>An ancient god of war. A home to hostile aliens. A seemingly dead world. Mars has been all these things to us.</p> <p>We’ve dispatched more probes to the Red Planet than anywhere else, in the hope of answering that intriguing question: Are we alone in the Universe? The answer may come in our lifetime, as there <i>could</i> be single-celled life-forms in water ice discovered deep beneath the surface.</p> <p>Someone here today may walk on these cold, dusty plains, at the spearhead of humanity’s search for that life.</p> <p>Mars represents a logical place for us to spread our restless spirit to new cosmic frontiers, and its allure shows no sign of diminishing.</p>
3.58 – 4.16	Asteroid flyby	<p>We have no trouble navigating through this sparsely spread asteroid belt. Hundreds of thousands of these rogue mountains tumble eternally. They chart a lonely course, only occasionally colliding in grand silence.</p>

4.17 – 4.44	Jupiter flyby	<p>To Hindus mighty Jupiter represents Brhaspati, chief priest to the gods.</p> <p>Jupiter’s trade winds, jet streams and heat combine to produce Earth-size cloud banks and cyclones.</p> <p>It revolutionised the way humanity thinks about itself, when Galileo’s telescope showed moons circling the planet. That discovery was hailed as proof that Earth wasn’t at the centre of the Universe.</p>
4.46 – 5.26	Saturn flyby	<p>Here in the realm of planets Saturn is royalty, surrounded by its rings, the crown jewels. We’re unsure about their age, or why they formed, but we’re glad they did.</p> <p>Don’t miss an opportunity to view Saturn through a telescope. It’s been a gateway to the heavens for many casual observers. You’ll never forget seeing it seemingly suspended like a cosmic ornament, floating serenely through space. Saturn invites you into the sky, seduces your imagination and never lets you go.</p>
5.27 – 5.46	Uranus flyby	<p>Uranus was discovered by an astronomer in England, from the garden of his house in Bath. Each of its seasons lasts over 20 Earth years. Since astronomers discovered its ring system, we’ve been surprised to learn that rings are fairly common around planets.</p>
5.49 – 6.07	Neptune flyby	<p>There’s Neptune – and one of its moons, Triton. Unusually for a large moon, Triton orbits the planet in the <i>opposite</i> direction to the other moons. Its surface is covered by geysers spewing exotic liquids, and deep below may lie water ice containing microbial life.</p>
6.09 – 6.25	Pluto flyby	<p>Here at the edge of darkness, time moves at a snail’s pace for Pluto and its moon, Charon; these frozen bodies have made only <i>one</i> circuit of the Sun - one Pluto year – since the 18th century.</p>

6.27 – 6.57	A solar system orrrery rotates	<p>Our solar system is like a giant celestial clock, on which each planet is placed at the end of an imaginary hand. The Sun’s overwhelming gravitational attraction keeps everything in motion.</p> <p>A beam of light can travel seven times round the Earth in one second, but it would take <i>11 hours</i> to cross the solar system! Yet, on a cosmic scale, that’s merely a walk down the road...</p>
6.58 – 7.13	The Centauri triple star system floats by	<p>The three nearest stars to the Sun. How far have we just travelled? Well, that light beam would take over <i>four years</i> to reach where we are now!</p>
7.14 – 7.34	The Plaiedes star cluster drifts past	<p>Here’s another celestial signpost. We’re passing the Plaiedes, or Seven Sisters. Wispy folds of gas envelope hundreds of young stars that shout their presence in the darkness.</p>
7.35 – 7.51	<p>The Orion Nebula appears. We move toward and into it.</p> <p>Proto stars flyby</p>	<p>These cocooned stars are young on a cosmic time-scale, but in <i>human</i> terms they began forming when our ancestors were learning to stand upright.</p> <p>New worlds in the making. New Earths? Only time will tell.</p>
7.52 – 8.51	<p>The Milky Way rotates</p> <p>The Milky Way moves into the distance.</p> <p>Dozens of galaxies fly past us.</p>	<p>In the blink of an eye, our Infinity Express has sped us beyond the Milky Way galaxy, our local city of stars in their billions. Where’s our own star, the Sun? Lost in immensity, a mere grain of sand on the cosmic beach.</p> <p>We’re now hurtling towards the outer limits of known space, our final destination before returning home to Earth.</p> <p>Now every point of light represents a galaxy of stars. We have discovered billions of these galaxies, every bit as vast, complex and fascinating as our own. Even our Milky Way is now lost in immensity.</p>

8.53 - 9.03	HST orbits the Earth	<p>Space telescopes are at the forefront of breakthroughs we've made in understanding the Universe's size and rich complexity. Almost daily astronomers find new delights that intrigue and inform us.</p> <p>So next time you look into the night sky, remember how small our world really is. And think about how much more there is for us to discover in our <i>fascinating</i> Universe.</p>
	FADE OUT AND END TITLES	