

Russian-American Crew Take Short Cut to Space Station

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida — Two Russian cosmonauts and a U.S. astronaut took a short cut to the International Space Station on Thursday, arriving at the orbital outpost less than six hours after their Soyuz capsule blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The express route, used for the first time to fly a crew to the station, shaved about 45 hours off the usual ride, allowing NASA astronaut Chris Cassidy and Russian cosmonauts Pavel Vinogradov and Alexander Misurkin to get a jumpstart on their planned 5.5-month mission.

The crew's Soyuz capsule parked itself at the station's Poisk module at 6:28 a.m. Moscow time, just five hours and 45 minutes after launch.

All previous station crews, whether flying aboard NASA's now-retired space shuttles or on Russian Soyuz capsules, took at least two days to reach the station, a \$100 billion research laboratory that flies about 400 kilometers above Earth.

"The closer the station, the better we feel. Everything is going good," the cosmonauts radioed to flight controllers outside Moscow as the Soyuz capsule approached the orbital outpost, a project of 15 nations.

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