

MARS IN A MINUTE: Is Mars Red Hot?

Mars may look hot, but don't let its color fool you. Mars is actually pretty cold!

In orbit, Mars is about 50 million miles farther away from the Sun than Earth! That means it gets a lot less light and heat to keep it warm.

Mars also has a hard time holding onto the heat it does get. On Earth, much of the sun's heat gets trapped in our atmosphere, which acts like a blanket to keep our planet warm. But Mars' atmosphere is about 100 times thinner than Earth's - so heat from the sun can easily escape.

How easily? If you were standing on the Martian equator at noon, it would feel like summer at your feet, but winter near your head.

At night, it's even worse: when the sun goes down, temperatures can plummet to negative triple digits! And beware of cold winter nights, when it could drop even lower!

So if you plan to visit, better bring a spacesuit to keep warm – Mars really is a pretty cool planet!