



ROYAL
OBSERVATORY
GREENWICH

Pluto

Solar System



Holiday



Solar System Holiday



Pluto

In 2006 astronomers rethought what it meant to be a planet. They decided on 3 rules that an object needs to follow for it to be called a planet. Unfortunately, Pluto breaks one of those rules because it has never tidied up its orbit around the Sun which is still cluttered with other space rocks. Therefore we now call Pluto a dwarf planet but it remains a fascinating part of our Solar System of course!

A day on Pluto is almost as long as a week is on Earth and one year on Pluto lasts for 248 Earth years! This means that since Pluto was discovered in 1930, it still has not made its way around the Sun once yet.

Pluto behaves differently to the other planets in many ways. Its path around the Sun is a different shape from that of the eight planets in that it is a lot more elliptical or egg-shaped. Sometimes it even cuts in front of Neptune so that it is closer to the Sun than the gas planet! Pluto's orbit is also tilted at an angle instead of being almost perfectly flat around the Sun.

There are 5 moons orbiting Pluto. Charon is the largest of the lot and is about half as big as Pluto. Pluto itself is very small compared to the Earth — you can fit 170 Plutos inside our planet!

Type of object	Dwarf planet
How many can you fit inside the Earth?	170
Number of moons	5
What is it made of?	Rock and ice
Main colour	Brown and beige
How long is a year?	248 Earth years
How long is a day?	Almost 6.5 Earth days
Does it have seasons?	Yes
Minimum temperature (°C)	-238
Maximum temperature (°C)	-218

