

See the first amazing photos taken by Sentinel-2B!



This stunning picture shows an Italian city called Brindisi

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It has been just over a week since ESA's Sentinel-2B satellite was blasted into orbit, and it is already sending incredible pictures back to Earth!

Looking at Earth from space, Sentinel-2B was challenged to photograph part of our planet from the Baltic Sea, through Europe, and ending in northern Libya. As the satellite took its pictures they were transmitted to ESA scientists in Italy who were waiting eagerly!



The Karavasta Lagoon in Albania looks spectacular

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It was bad news at first as most of eastern Europe was cloudy so there was not much to see. But everything changed when Sentinel-2B was over Italy, as fabulously clear weather gave the satellite a perfect view of the landscape below. Particularly good pictures were taken of southern Italy's Calabria and Apulia regions, as well as part of Albania's coast.

These pictures were not just taken for fun. Technicians are using them to calibrate the satellite's instruments to ensure they are working as well as possible. In around three months all the tests will be complete and Sentinel-2B can begin its mission of monitoring Earth, helping to keep our planet and the life on it healthy and safe.



Sentinel-2B used infrared to create this picture of a town called Crotona

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Sentinel-2B has a twin satellite called Sentinel-2A that was launched in June 2015. Working together, the Sentinels can photograph the same places on Earth every five days. Josef Aschbacher, Director of ESA's Earth Observation Programmes, explains why this is useful: "With the second Sentinel-2 satellite in orbit, we now have much better coverage – which is especially important for monitoring areas frequently covered by clouds."

Would you like Sentinel satellites to take wonderful pictures of your home town as seen from space?

Cool fact: Sentinel-2B has high resolution cameras that give it very sharp vision. Each pixel in the photos shows a piece of Earth only 10 metres across!

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