A space station, also known as an orbital station or an orbital space station, is a spacecraft capable of supporting a human crew in orbit for an extended period of time, and is therefore a type of space habitat. It lacks major propulsion or landing systems. Stations must have docking ports to allow other spacecraft to dock to transfer crew and supplies. The purpose of maintaining an orbital outpost varies depending on the program. Space stations have most often been launched for scientific purposes. The International Space Station is a collaboration of 15 nations working. See more of International Space Station on Facebook. Log In. or Create New Account. See more of International Space Station on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account? This history is explored in the new illustrated book Space Stations: The Art, Science, and Reality of Working in Space by Gary Klimas, Ron Miller, and Robert Pearlman, out from Smithsonian Books on Tuesday. Advertisement. Beginning with the telescopic observations of Galileo Galilei in the early 1600s, the book details the cultural and technological breakthroughs that have made space stations possible.