

# NASA's Ingenuity helicopter has made its fourth and furthest flight

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**NASA's Perseverance rover captured this image of the Ingenuity helicopter during its fourth flight**

NASA/JPL-Caltech/ASU/MSSS

The Ingenuity helicopter has flown on Mars once again. During its fourth flight on 30 April, the drone flew further and faster than ever before – and it is far from finished, as NASA also announced a month-long extension to its mission.

**Ingenuity** achieved all of the main goals of its mission in its first three flights, so the aim of the fourth flight was to push beyond that slightly. The fourth flight lasted nearly two minutes, during which the helicopter flew 266 metres and reached a top speed of 13 kilometres per hour. That's more than twice as far and nearly twice as fast as the previous test.

The mission was planned to include only five flights before the Perseverance rover drove away and began its own primary missions of searching for signs of ancient life and collecting samples to be returned to Earth. However, NASA officials announced

on 30 April that Ingenuity will travel alongside Perseverance, capturing aerial images that could help the rover scout potential routes and scientifically interesting areas nearby.

“Now we have a chance to... [demonstrate] for future robotic and even crewed missions the benefits of having a partner nearby that can provide a different perspective – one from the sky,” said MiMi Aung at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory in [a statement](#). “We are going to take this opportunity and run with it – and fly with it.”

Because of this extra time, Ingenuity’s fifth flight will not take it back to the airfield from which all of its tests so far have lifted off. Instead, it will be a one-way trip to a new landing spot that the helicopter checked out during its fourth flight. From there, it will make one or two more flights during the following 30 Martian days.

If the helicopter’s hardware is still doing well after those flights, its mission may be extended yet again, NASA officials said.