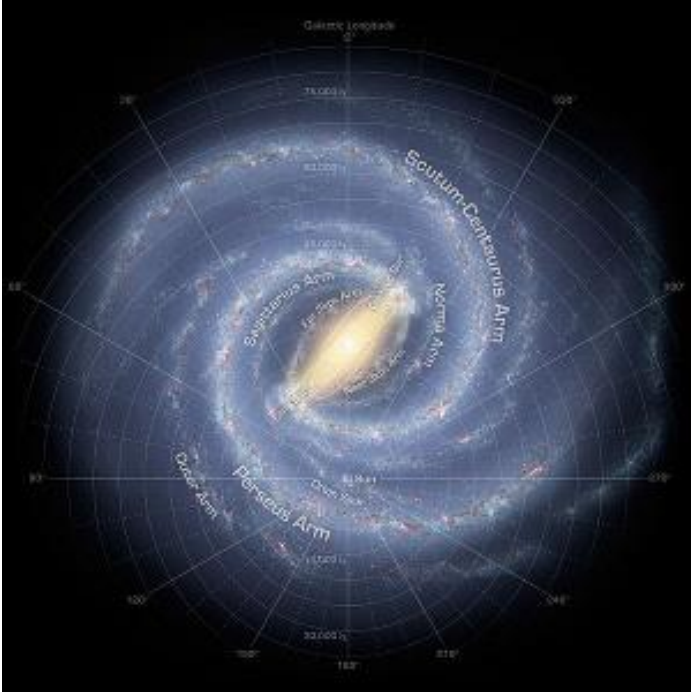


The Milky Way



Diameter: 100,000 light years

Sun's galactic rotation period: 250 million years (negative rotation)

(note: 1 light year is roughly 6 trillion miles)

(note: 1 galactic year is equal to 225-250 million years)

←(Artists' rendering of the Milky Way)

The following is an excerpt from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milky_Way

It is agreed that the Milky Way is a spiral galaxy, with observations suggesting that it is a barred spiral galaxy. It contains 200-400 billion stars and is estimated to have at least 50 billion planets, 500 million of which could be located in the habitable zone of their parent star. New data suggests there may be up to twice as many free-floating planets in the Milky Way as there are stars.

The Milky Way is part of the Local Group of galaxies and is one of around 200 billion galaxies in the observable universe.

The Solar System is located in the Milky Way galaxy around two thirds of the way out from the center, on the inner edge of the Orion-Cygnus Arm. The Sun orbits around the center of the galaxy in a galactic year—once every 225-250 million Earth years.

The "Milky Way" is a translation of the Latin Via Lactea, in turn translated from the Greek Γαλαξίας (Galaxias), referring to the pale band of light formed by stars in the galactic plane as seen from Earth.

More pictures can be found by searching Google for Milky Way Galaxy and clicking 'images'.



360 degree
panorama of the
Milky Way Galaxy



Visible to the naked eye
(away from city/suburban lights)

