

CLOUDS AROUND OLYMPUS -- The great Martian volcano, Olympus Mons, is wreathed in clouds in this Viking-1 orbiter view from a distance of 8,000 kilometers. The multi-ringed caldera (volcanic crater), 24 kilometers high and some 80 kilometers across, appears cloud-free. The clouds are thought to be water ice condensed from the atmosphere as it cools moving up the slopes of the volcano. The cover shifts with the winds and varies in intensity with the times of day and seasons of the Martian year. Olympus Mons measures about 600 kilometers across at the base.

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