



Bode's Galaxy, M81

M81, often called Bode's Galaxy, is a spiral galaxy like our own Milky Way. It is 12 million light-years away and can be seen with a small telescope in the Big Dipper constellation part of the sky. This Spitzer Space Telescope image was made using infrared light. Our eyes cannot see infrared, so many of the details of the galaxy would be unknown to us if not for infrared telescopes.

The center of the galaxy (which appears white) has mostly old stars. The spiral arms, which appear red) contain a lot of gas and dust. The clumpy places in the spiral arms are where new stars are forming.

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An
infrared
view of
galaxies by

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National Aeronautics and
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Whirlpool Galaxy, M51

M51, also called the Whirlpool Galaxy, is a spiral galaxy with a much smaller companion galaxy. It is 37 million light-years away in the constellation Canes Venatici.

This image was made using four different wavelengths of infrared light. It shows in red the gas and dust between the spiral arms and mysterious spoke-like structures connecting them. The areas of gas and dust are where new stars are forming. The companion galaxy does not seem to be forming new stars. These star forming regions would not be seen in ordinary visible light.

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