

With Puerto Rico in her heart! Deborah Martorell travels to space on a Blue Origin mission ^[1]

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Meteorologist Deborah Martorell after exiting the capsule of Blue Origin's NS-34 mission. (Blue Origin screenshot)

Early Sunday morning, Puerto Rico made space history once again when the New Shepard suborbital vehicle took off with six crew members on board, including a familiar face to Puerto Ricans: **meteorologist Deborah Martorell** [3].

It was 8:43 a.m. Puerto Rico time when the spacecraft ignited its engines in Van Horn, Texas, to begin **Blue Origin's** NS-34 mission. Martorell occupied seat number 6 in the capsule.

Three minutes after takeoff, the New Shepard capsule separated from the rocket and entered zero gravity, during which passengers could move around. Immediately, Martorell was heard on the live broadcast saying, "Oh, my God," and laughing. Shortly thereafter, amid the voices of the astronauts, the meteorologist was heard saying, "Thank you, God."

The capsule returned at 8:54 a.m. on a trip that lasted 10 minutes and 20 seconds.

At around 9:05 a.m., Martorell was the last to descend from the capsule. At the door, she raised her arms and quickly waved a Puerto Rican flag.

In tears, the meteorologist thanked her family—especially her father, who was unable to travel to Texas—as well as the Puerto Rican people.

“Words cannot describe what I experienced,” she said emotionally, after talking about the beauty of seeing Earth from space.

“It's like flying to another dimension. Everything was perfect. The morning was perfect, the weather was perfect,” she said during Blue Origin's live broadcast from the site where New Shepard landed.

Martorell is not alone, as she was accompanied by investor **Arvi Bahal**, Turkish businessman **Gökhan Erdem**, educator and philanthropist **Lionel Pitchford**, entrepreneur **J.D. Russell**, and tech mogul **H.E. Justin Sun**, who in 2021 won Blue Origin's first seat auction with a bid of \$28 million.

But beyond the rest of the crew, she is accompanied by her lifelong dream. The Puerto Rican's presence and her national pride are evident in the official mission patch, which features symbols representing the crew members.

The head of Meteorology and Science Reporter for **Teleonce** decided that **the silhouette of the Puerto Rico archipelago would be the symbol she would include on the patch, which she will wear on her uniform.**

“The shape of Puerto Rico symbolizes my beloved home, the map of Puerto Rico,” said the meteorologist after Blue Origin revealed the patch design.

In an interview with **El Nuevo Día**, Martorell shared what it meant to her to fly into space and become the first meteorologist to achieve this milestone.

“It may sound repetitive, but it's something that, for as long as I can remember, I've always wanted and dreamed of,” the meteorologist told this newspaper at the time.

“At this stage of my life, at this stage of my professional career and at my age, it's the perfect time. For me, it's not just the dream I can achieve, it's also everything I can do afterwards and everything I can share when I get there. All the young people we can impact, the children, the schools, the programs we can perhaps start to help not only young people, but women as well,” she reflected.

“Space has the magic to motivate, it has the magic to inspire, it has the magic to unite, and I think it came at the perfect time,” she shared.

How did the meteorologist get this opportunity?

Martorell shared that in January of this year, she enrolled in courses offered by the PoSSUM Astronaut-Scientist Project at the International Institute of Astronautical Sciences (IIAS) at Florida

Tech in Melbourne.

“I was accepted, I started my courses, and then I had to go to Florida to take the final practical part. While I was in that process, I saw the Blue Origin calls again. **I wrote as I always had and had never received a thank-you email. But the difference this time was that I included that I was in the scientist-astronaut program,**” she said.

“In that practical part, you go through experiences like G-forces. What I took in that course served as training because what they told me at Blue Origin was very similar to what I had learned,” she explained.

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