



Spitzer image from NASA/JPL-Caltech/R. Kennicutt (University of Arizona).

April 2007



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	○	2	3	4	5	6
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29	30					

Sombrero Galaxy

Messier 104 is called the Sombrero Galaxy because in visible light (image to the right), only the near rim of dust can be seen, as if it were the brim of a hat. The image above from the Spitzer Space Telescope infrared array camera, however, shows in red the bright, smooth ring of dust circling the galaxy. Spitzer's infrared view also reveals the starlight, piercing through the obscuring dust, along with the bulge of stars and an otherwise hidden disk of stars within the dust ring. Spitzer's view shows clumpy areas in the far edges of the ring where stars are forming.

The Sombrero Galaxy is located about 28 million light-years away. Spitzer detected infrared emission not only from the ring, but from the center of the galaxy too, where there is a huge black hole, believed to be a billion times more massive than our Sun.

This magnificent galaxy spans a distance across Earth's sky nearly one-fifth the span of the full Moon. For more information on these and other images, see www.spitzer.caltech.edu.



Visible-light image from NASA/Hubble Space Telescope/ Hubble Heritage Team

