

A Planet for Goldilocks: The Search for Evidence of Life Beyond Earth

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"Not too hot, not too cold" begins the prescription for a world that's just right for life as we know it. Finding evidence of life beyond Earth is one of the primary goals of science agencies around the world thanks in large part to NASA's Kepler Mission which launched in 2009 with the objective of finding Goldilocks planets orbiting other stars like our Sun. Indeed, the space telescope opened our eyes to the terrestrial-sized planets that populate the galaxy as well as exotic worlds unlike anything that exists in the solar system. The mission ignited the search for life beyond earth via remote detection of atmospheric biosignatures on exoplanets. Most recently, our collective imagination was awakened by the discovery of Goldilocks worlds orbiting some of the nearest neighbors to the Sun, turning abstractions into destinations. Dr. Batalha will give an overview of the science legacy of the Kepler Mission and other key discoveries. She'll give a preview of what's to come by highlighting the missions soon to launch and those that are concepts taking shape on the drawing board.