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Neptune is warmer than Uranus, despite being much farther from the sun. One theory is that pressure built up under the planet's thick clouds turns carbon and methane into a rain of diamonds. Then, as they fall to the planet's interior, they melt and generate increased heat. As the heat radiates out into the frigid region of space, it stirs up the entire atmosphere, creating winds around the planet.



Aerodynamic flows are not impeded by mountain ranges, valleys or continental boundaries so the winds develop and blow around, with nothing slowing them down.

In addition, the extremely cold temperatures here make the atmosphere less dense, also contributing to supersonic winds on Neptune, faster than anything on Jupiter and Saturn.

Neptune was discovered by Urbain Le Verrier in 1846. Previously, due to inconsistencies in the calculations of the orbit of Uranus, the existence of Neptune had been inferred.

To date, only the Voyager 2 spacecraft has passed close enough to capture images of the planet with supersonic winds.

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