

China Is Launching a Fake, Extra-bright Moon to Cut the Cost of City Lights

By [RT News](#)

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In a move that sounds straight out of a sci-fi paperback, China is planning to launch the first artificial 'moon' into orbit in order to replace street lights and reduce energy costs.

Chinese scientists say the man-made moon, which is essentially an illuminated satellite, will be in orbit by 2020. It will be eight times brighter than Earth's moon and will shine down on the city of Chengdu, the capital of the southwestern Sichuan province.

It's hoped the innovation will replace the need for streetlights and will reduce annual electricity costs by up to 1.2 billion yuan (\$173 million).

Residents shouldn't worry that it will "light up the entire night sky," Wu Chunfeng, chief of the Tian Fu New Area Science Society, [said](#) to China Daily.

"Its expected brightness, in the eyes of humans, is around one-fifth of normal streetlights," he said, adding that it could even assist emergency services during blackouts and natural disasters.

The 'moon' will only illuminate a 50-square-kilometer area, as it's much closer to Earth than our real moon. It will sit about 500km (310 miles) away, compared to the moon's 380,000km (236,000 miles).

If the project proves successful, China plans to launch three more moons around the country by 2022.

"The first moon will be mostly experimental, but the three moons in 2022 will be the real deal with great civic and commercial potential," Wu said.

Before it makes its city debut, however, the moon will have to be tested in an uninhabited desert so that its light beams don't interfere with people or Earth-based space observation equipment.

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