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FUTURE INDUSTRIES REPORT | TECHNOLOGY

SpaceX catches a Starship back from orbit for the first time

SpaceX caught its Starship spacecraft with the launch tower’s mechanical arms after a full orbital flight, a first for the company. Reusing the ship as well as the booster is what could make spaceflight dramatically cheaper.

By **Manasee Kurlekar** | November 15, 2026



Rockets used to be thrown away after a single flight. SpaceX has now caught one coming back from orbit!

SpaceX caught a Starship upper stage with the arms of its Starbase launch tower on November 14, 2026, after the vehicle came back from orbit. After 14 orbits and about 22 hours in space, its Starship spacecraft came down over Texas and was caught by the launch tower's giant "chopstick" arms. It was the 15th test flight of the world's biggest and most powerful rocket system.

"We caught a Starship and now, everything changes," SpaceX spokesman Dan Huot said.

> ***A spacecraft you can catch, refuel and fly again works more like an airliner than a disposable rocket, and that's what could bring launch costs down sharply.***

It wasn't flawless: the superheavy booster missed its catch and exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. The real test comes when this ship flies a second time.

The economics matter more than the spectacle. A spacecraft you can catch, refuel and fly again works ***more like an airliner than a disposable rocket,*** and that's what could bring launch costs down sharply.

Read online: https://worldbusinesswatch.com/future-industries-report/13/421/spacex-catches-a-starship-back-from-orbit-for-the-first-time.html

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