

13 SPACE STATION DESCRIPTIONS

1. The station looks as though it was built in a series of concentric rings, some wide and some narrow. The metal gleaming in the starlight and the lights of ships has a slightly greenish cast to it. Short, thick docking arms, floating umbilicals, and other connections reach out and down from the outermost ring, while others are almost hidden 'beneath' the station. The circular section in the middle has a dome rising above it of the same gray-green metal as the rest of the station.
2. Upon entering the station, you arrive in a concourse wide enough for eight human-sized beings to walk abreast, and about twelve feet high. The outer wall is plain except for the occasional thick window looking out to the docked ships. However, the inner curving wall is riddled with booths, kiosks, and display windows. The booths are mostly offering ship services such as repairs, refueling, or equipment sales. A few places are offering prepared foods, and spicy smells tempt your nose.
3. The frequent kiosks have digital interfaces where owners can make appointments at businesses or order items to be delivered to their ships; one screen even has a running list of ships that are hiring and people looking for work. In between other businesses, windows have bright displays for establishments found further into the station – ones selling garments, boots, jewelry, food, entertainment, massages, medical services, specialized equipment, and more. Most are digital, but a few have compartments set into the wall with physical goods on display.
4. Past the outer ring of repair contractors and ship suppliers is another, slightly smaller, ring; here about five human-sized being would have room to walk, though the ceiling is the same 12-foot height. This ring is filled with vendors who cater to ship passengers and crew. The outer wall has display windows at intervals. On the inner wall, many small shops set in alcoves sell items that might be of interest to those who have only a few minutes off their ships: convenience items; personal gear such as handlights, gloves, or small tools; sweets and snacks in long-fresh packaging to grab on the way back to a ship; packaged intoxicants; chips for personal readers with holovids or musical performances; and other things.
5. The next ring is quite wide and holds the housing areas. Most of the housing is general and is run by the hospitality staff of Bayashima Center, but one section is a luxury area run by an elegant matron and her family. The two walkways passing through the housing ring each have offices at which travelers can book rooms and other amenities. The most common type of room is one shared by two people, with its own hygiene unit. Other areas have one-person rooms, or communal rooms with many tiny sleeping cubicles around a shared common area and a multi-person hygiene unit. There are even a few larger room; these may be shared by a family or group (depending on the social organization of a species) or may be taken by a single larger being. Amenities available include laundry services, reservations for time in the station's gym, and appointments for use of a steam room. This ring also includes a well-equipped medical center for visitors and inhabitants and the common cafeteria.

6. Although the station has several private enterprises serving a variety of food, it also has a cafeteria. Since most housing arrangements include meals while on the station, the majority of guests (and long-term inhabitants) eat here. The serving line is automated; touch screens at the entrance show the day's choices and provide a place for customers to present their housing chips in lieu of payment. Robotic serving arms assemble the orders along a sliding belt and they are delivered to each customer in turn. The food is flavorful but the variety is somewhat limited due to a heavy reliance on hydroponics for the primary food supply.
7. To the inside of the housing ring is a ring with eating establishments and shops. Shops include clothing vendors (from practical shipsuits to exotic garments); suppliers of footgear, hats, jewelry, and other accessories; electronics stores (selling everything from personal readers and entertainment collections to concealable security and listening devices); a small health clinic for those who don't need (or don't want) the medical center; and places selling curios from across the trade lanes.
8. Below a portion of the housing area is the gym. Its arc matches the ring on the main level, so it is arranged for individual or small group exercising rather than large participatory activities. The ceiling is high enough to give space for some climbing bars and walls, and two areas have adjustable-gravity mats for floor exercises. In between are machines for single or double exercise. Each apparatus (with both mechanical and digital components) is configurable for a wide range of body types and activities.
9. At one end of the gym is a line of minimalistic hygiene units; at the other are two steam rooms. The steam rooms are very popular with certain species and time must be reserved at one of the customer desks in the housing area. From the outside the rooms look merely like large hygiene units, but the interiors appear to be made of wood and have a slightly spicy smell. One room is configured with tiered bench seats while the other is entirely open. Electronic controls allow those inside to send a spray of water onto heated ceramic tiles to add steam.
10. The repair and supply areas on the lower level are obviously built through more than one of the rings that divide the upper level, although evidence of the ring structure can be seen in supporting beams and trusses. Although the spaces are larger and taller than those on the main level, they are still not big enough to hold any ship bigger than the smallest run-about. The various supply and repair companies use these small two-person craft to reach ships near the station, and individual jet packs to maneuver around a vessel. Different companies specialize in different aspects of repair (such as electronics, hull, engines, etc.), so a ship with extensive damage might contract with several groups.
11. A single station cannot possibly stock every part that could be needed by all the ships that might call; instead the engineering section has a full inventory of raw materials and an impressive variety of machining tools. The experienced crew has successfully manufactured the needed parts every time they were called upon to do so, and they are confident they can make anything that might be wanted for a repair.

12. The entire center of the lower level is taken up by the Hydroponics and Environmental sections of the station. The vast majority of the food used for both guests and station residents is produced in this hydroponics facility. (The station's eating facilities almost never serve meat, but very few customers are aware of that as an excellent plant-based substitute is produced.) Near that are the water purification and storage system, and the waste recycling and disposal system. Each system is highly automated, primarily run by a controller at a station checking digital readouts. However, secure access hatches are provided in case of emergencies, and favored personnel may receive a tour of the hydroponics unit with administrative permission.
13. Another large part of the lower level contains the Power and Maintenance sections. The power core is carefully secured by controlled access corridors which include emergency airlocks. Although these can be engaged manually, their primary function is to block off the core area if some type of disaster requires an emergency jettison. On a less tense note, the maintenance staff is in charge of keeping everything else running on the station, from the electrical and mechanical systems to the digital advertising windows in the main concourse.