



Are you Dreaming of a White Christmas?



As the highly anticipated holiday season approaches, residents of Iowa have become accustomed to seeing a white covering on the ground and rooftops for Santa to land his sleigh. This year, there is potential that the ground may be brown when the calendar strikes December 25th. Is this unusual?

It must be noted, that for all the following statistics a white Christmas is defined as one where there is at least one inch of snow depth on Christmas morning.

Here is some data for Des Moines:

A white Christmas has occurred on 53 of 127 years, which is about 42% of the time. Last year, Des Moines tied its record for the most consecutive white Christmases and could break it if there happens to be a white Christmas this year.

Most consecutive white Christmases at Des Moines:

1. 4 2007-2010, 1960-1963, 1918-1921
4. 3 1983-1985, 1940-1942, 1909-1911
7. 2 Numerous occasions

Des Moines has been a bit spoiled with white Christmases in recent years. The past three years have reached all-time top ten Christmas snow depths.

Highest snow depths at Des Moines on Christmas morning:

1. 17 inches - 1961
2. 13 inches - 1909
3. 12 inches - 2000
4. 8 inches - 2009, 1895
6. 7 inches - 2008, 1985, 1983, 1945
10. 6 inches - 2010, 1951, 1925, 1919

Falling snow always adds to the aura of Christmas Day. Des Moines has received measurable snowfall on 26 of 127 years, which is about 20% of the time.

Highest Des Moines Christmas Day snowfalls:

1. 4.1 inches - 1909
2. 3.5 inches - 1895
3. 3.4 inches - 2009
4. 3.2 inches - 1899
5. 3.0 inches - 1896
6. 2.3 inches - 1957
7. 2.0 inches - 1962
8. 1.5 inches - 1941
9. 1.0 inches - 1996, 1884

Here is some data for Waterloo:

A white Christmas has occurred on 68 of 116 years, which is about 59% of the time. Last year, Waterloo moved up the record books, moving into a tie for fourth place all-time for the most consecutive white Christmases.

Most consecutive white Christmases at Waterloo:

1. 8 1983-1990
2. 5 1959-1963, 1902-1906
4. 4 2007-2010, 1967-1970, 1918-1921

Waterloo has also received quite a bit of snow in recent years. Two of the top five Christmas snow depths on record have come within the last three years.

Highest snow depths at Waterloo on Christmas morning:

1. 14 inches- 2010, 1951
3. 13 inches - 2000
4. 12 inches - 2008, 1909
6. 11 inches - 1961
7. 10 inches - 1934
8. 9 inches - 1985, 1969, 1942

Waterloo has received measurable snowfall on 22 of 117 Christmases, about 19% of the years.

Highest Waterloo Christmas Day snowfalls:

1. 7.0 inches- 1951
2. 4.7 inches - 1945
3. 4.0 inches - 1996
4. 3.0 inches - 1957
5. 2.0 inches - 1903
6. 1.5 inches - 2009, 1993, 1935
9. 1.4 inches - 1962
10. 1.2 inches – 1910

