

DEL RIO CLIMATE SUMMARY

Del Rio is located on the Rio Grande River, on the western tip of the Balcones escarpment, in southwest Texas. The elevation is near 1,000 Feet and varies little within the city. Regional agriculture is mainly wool and mohair production to the north and west of Del Rio, with garden crops and livestock to the southeast.

The climate of Del Rio is semi-arid continental. Annual precipitation is insufficient for dry farming; however San Felipe Springs and the Rio Grande provide adequate water for irrigation farming. Over 80 percent of the average annual precipitation occurs from April through October. During this period, rainfall is chiefly in the form of showers and thunderstorms often as heavy downpours, resulting in flash flooding. The small amount of precipitation for November through March usually falls as steady light rain. During some November through March periods, heavy rains and flash flooding have occurred. Average yearly rainfall is near 19 inches. Rainfall extremes vary from **4.34 inches** in 1956 to **37.75 inches** in 1914. Although tornadoes are rare, they have occurred, and have been most often associated with the dissipating tropical storms that have moved inland from the Gulf of Mexico.

Hail occurs in the vicinity of Del Rio about once per year and reaches severe proportions about once every 5 years. Sleet or snow has been observed in some winters, but frequently melts as it falls. A snowfall heavy enough to blanket the ground only occurs about once every four or five years and seldom remains more than 24 hours.

Temperature averages indicate mild winters and hot summers. Average monthly temperatures vary from the **50s** in winter to the **80s** in the summer. Cold periods in winter are ushered in by strong dry north and northwest winds known as Northerners, and temperature drops of as much as 25 degrees in a few hours are not uncommon. Cold weather periods usually do not last more than several days. The **coldest temperature of record was 10 on December 23, 1989**. Temperatures as low as 32 degrees have been recorded as early as October and as late as March. The average occurrence of the earliest freeze in fall is early December, while the average date of the last freeze is mid to late February. The earliest freeze was 32 on October 27, 1913 and the latest freeze was 32 on March 31, 1987.

Hot weather is rather persistent from late May to mid-September, with most days above 90 degrees. Temperatures of 100 degrees have been observed as early as March and as late as October. During June, July and August, afternoon highs exceed 90 over 80 percent of the time, while during September they exceed 90 over 60 percent of the time. Being farther away from the Gulf of Mexico and closer to the hot deserts of the Southwest U.S., afternoon highs can get hotter than other places over South Central Texas. Highs of 100 or higher can easily occur on consecutive days. The record consecutive days of 100 or higher was 50 from June 17 to August 5, 1980. The **highest temperature of record was 112 June 9, 1988**.

The wind direction is mostly east and southeast from spring to early fall, and then becomes mostly northerly during winter with the passage of more cold fronts. In the wake of winter

cold fronts, winds can quickly turn to the east and southeast again, before switching to the north with the passage of the next cold front.

Nighttime stratus develops late at night and toward the early morning hours, as the humidity rises from southeast winds. These clouds on some occasions they persist all day with only a few or no breaks during the late afternoon or early evening. During the winter, these clouds can form easily when moist southeast wind overruns cold air at the surface, bringing drizzle and fog. With dry northwest and north winds, usually clear to fair skies prevail.

The history of Del Rio Climate Locations is listed below.

History of Del Rio Climate Station Locations

November 1905 to June 1914

**Cooperative Station
Ware's Cottage
106 West Martin**

June 1914 to April 1951

**Cooperative Station
Post Office Bldg.
Main and Broadway**

April 1951 to September 1957

**Weather Bureau Office
Administrative Bldg.
Val Verde County Airport**

September 1957 to February 1963

**Weather Bureau Office
Post Office Bldg.
Main and Broadway**

February 1963 to Present

**National Weather Service
Del Rio International Airport**