



## Climate



### Voyageurs Has a Variable Climate

From warm, sunny summers to crisp, cold winters, the climate at Voyageurs National Park provides a favorite season for everyone. Here, weather varies greatly from season to season, day to day, and sometimes hour to hour. Visitors must be prepared for a range of temperatures and wet or dry weather at any time of year. Significant temperature changes of 50 to 60° F within a few days occur in most years.

### Sun and Snow

When is the best time to visit Voyageurs National Park? It all depends on what you like to do! The continual change of seasons provides recreation activities for all visitors. If you prefer warm days with little rain, records show mid- August as a good choice. January is best for powdery snow and a thick layer of ice.

Located in the Midwest along the Canadian border, Voyageurs National Park experiences a continental climate. Without an ocean nearby to regulate temperature, air masses determine the region's weather.

The most influential air mass affecting the weather at Voyageurs National Park is the Polar Continental (cP). This air mass brings in cold air from the sub- arctic regions of Canada. Because cold air cannot hold much moisture, the winter air is often dry. So where does all the snow come from? As winter temperatures occasionally rise above 0- 10 degrees Fahrenheit, enough moisture is taken up by the atmosphere. When temperatures begin to sink, air cannot hold the extra moisture and it falls to the ground as snow.

The polar air is temperate during June, July, and August, when the land and lake areas to the north are warmed daily by 16 hours of intense sunshine. Then periods of fine, mild weather prevail, interspersed by days or nights of showers and occasional three or four days of cloudy, rainy weather. The frost- free season averages 120 days from June to mid- September.

Eventually, cold air returns and in late November the water surfaces turn to ice. During December, January, and February, temperatures drop and occasionally fail to rise above zero for a week or more. This creates a late winter ice thickness of 15 to 36 inches. Thick ice requires much heat for its melting. The average ice- out date is May 3, with the earliest being April 10 and the latest on May 22.

Annual precipitation (rain and snow) averages 25- 28 inches in the park. The major source of precipitation is moist air from the Gulf of Mexico during the summer, when about 40%- 45% of precipitation falls. Average snowfall ranges from 55 to 70 inches, but is highly variable. The first measurable snowfall occurs by late October in most years and the last in late April or early May.

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**Average  
Temperatures  
and Precipitation**

**Prepared by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.**

| <b>Month</b> | <b>Average High °F</b> | <b>Average Low °F</b> | <b>Precipitation in Inches</b> |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| January      | 11.9                   | -10.4                 | .9                             |
| February     | 20.9                   | -5.0                  | .7                             |
| March        | 32.1                   | 8.9                   | 1.1                            |
| April        | 49.1                   | 27.0                  | 1.6                            |
| May          | 63.1                   | 37.9                  | 2.5                            |
| June         | 73.6                   | 49.1                  | 4.0                            |
| July         | 78.7                   | 53.7                  | 4.4                            |
| August       | 76.1                   | 51.1                  | 2.9                            |
| September    | 61.8                   | 41.3                  | 3.1                            |
| October      | 53.9                   | 33.2                  | 1.9                            |
| November     | 33.3                   | 17.6                  | 2.4                            |
| December     | 18.7                   | -0.3                  | 1.0                            |