

As Texas heat breaks records, data show 100-degree days are happening more often over time .....2

News

## **As Texas heat breaks records, data show 100-degree days are happening more often over time**

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Cities in the southern third of Texas this past summer experienced a record or near-record number of days with triple-digit temperatures, but National Weather Service data suggest that making that kind of weather history could become a bigger part of our future.

By comparing the weather data for five cities across the South-Central and Southeast tier of Texas — Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Laredo and Beaumont — it becomes clear that 100-degree days not only happened at historic levels this year but also are happening, on average, more often.

LONE STAR STATS: Which major Texas city has the worst, most destructive weather? Let's break it down

### 100-degree days in Houston

Houston logged 45 days of triple-digit temperatures in 2023, coming up one day shy of the all-time record of 46 set in 2011. The last time city temperatures hit 100 degrees or more was on Sept. 8.

Temperatures at Bush Intercontinental Airport, site of Houston's main weather station, reached 100 degrees for the first time this year on June 19. But 100-degree weather has come to Space City as early as June 2, as it did in 2011, and persisted as late as Sept. 27, as it did in 2005.

According to the National Weather Service's climate data for the Houston area, which goes back nearly 130 years, triple-digit temperatures first arrive, on average, on July 19 and cease by Aug. 10, for an average window of 23 days. But in the past 30 years, as the effects of climate change have become more apparent, that average window has grown to 32 days — starting earlier on July 16 and ending later on Aug. 16.

If you look at all the weather records for Houston, which go back to the 1890s, the average number of 100-degree days annually is four. But if you just look at the past 30 years, that average jumps to eight days, or nine days if you include 2023.

### 100-degree days in San Antonio

San Antonio survived 74 days of triple-digit temperatures in 2023, obliterating the previous all-time record of 59 set in 2009. The last time city temperatures hit 100 degrees or more was on Sept. 10.

Temperatures at San Antonio International Airport, site of the city's main weather station, reached 100 degrees for the first time this year on June 16. But 100-degree weather in the Alamo City has come as early as Feb. 21, as it did in 1996, and happened as late as Sept. 28, as it did in 2005.

According to weather service climate data for the San Antonio area, which goes back nearly 140 years, triple-digit temperatures first arrive, on average, on June 30 and end by Aug. 20, for an average window of 52 days. But that average window has expanded to 61 days in the past 30 years, starting earlier on June 28 and ending later on Aug. 27.

If you go back the earliest San Antonio data from the 1880s, the average number of 100-degree days annually is 10. But if you just look at the past 30 years, that average jumps to 19 days, or 21 days if you include 2023.

### 100-degree days in Austin

Austin edged out San Antonio with 78 days of triple-digit temperatures in 2023, surpassing last year's 68 days but falling short of the all-time record of 90 set in 2011. The last time city temperatures hit 100 degrees or more was on Sept. 9.

Temperatures at Camp Mabry, site of Austin's main weather station, reached 100 degrees for the first time this year on June 9. But 100-degree weather in the state capital has come as early as May 4, as it did in 1984, and occurred as late as Oct. 2, as it did in 1938.

Climate data for the Austin area, which goes back more than 120 years, show that triple-digit temperatures first arrive, on average, on July 9 and cease by Aug. 21, for an average window of 44 days. But in the past 30 years, that average window has increased to 65 days, starting earlier on June 28 and ending later on Aug. 31.

According to Austin's weather records, including the earliest data from the late 1890s, the average number of 100-degree days annually is 15. But if you just look at the past 30 years, that average jumps to 31 days, or 33 days if you include 2023.

#### 100-degree days in Laredo

Laredo outperformed all of the cities listed here with at least 97 days of triple-digit temperatures in 2023 and counting. That's already matching last year's total but still well short of the all-time record of 146 days set in 2011. The last time city temperatures hit 100 degrees or more was on Wednesday.

Temperatures reached 100 degrees in Laredo for the first time this year on March 1. But 100-degree weather in this border town has come as early as Feb. 18, as it did in 1986, and occurred as late as Nov. 17, as it did in 1906.

According to the weather service's climate data for the Laredo area, which go back about 120 years, triple-digit temperatures first arrive, on average, on April 15 and cease by Sept. 19, for an average window of 158 days. But in the past 30 years, that average window has widened by about a week to 166 days, starting earlier on April 10 and ending later on Sept. 22.

If you look at all the weather records for Laredo, going back to the earliest data from the early 1900s, the average number of 100-degree days annually is 69. But if you just look at the past 30 years, that average jumps to 78 days, or 79 days if you include 2023.

#### 100-degree days for Beaumont

Beaumont endured 36 days of triple-digit temperatures in 2023, smashing the previous all-time record of 19 set in 1944. The last time temperatures hit 100 degrees or more in the Beaumont-Port Arthur area was on Sept. 8.

Temperatures in Beaumont reached 100 degrees for the first time this year on July 10. Records show 100-degree weather in this coastal urban hub has come as early as May 27, as it did in 1905, and occurred as late as Sept. 22, as it did in 2005. But weather data also show that Beaumont has gone several years in a row without recording triple-digit temperatures, including from 1971 to 1979 and from 1991 to 1998.

Climate data for the Beaumont-Port Arthur area, which like Laredo go back about 120 years, indicate that triple-digit temperatures first arrive, on average, on July 15 and cease by Aug. 3, for an average window of 20 days. Yet unlike all the other cities listed, Beaumont has seen its average window for 100-degree days become narrowed in the past 30 years to 18 days, starting slightly later on July 18 and ending on Aug. 4.

For Beaumont, going back to the earliest — and sometimes incomplete — data from the early 1900s, we find the average number of 100-degree days annually is one. But in the past 30 years, that average has doubled to two days, or tripled to three days if you include 2023's total.

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