U. S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, WEATHER BUREAU

In Cooperation with the UNM Bureau of Business Research

LATITUDE: 32° 17' N
LONGITUDE: 106° 45' W
ELEV. (GROUND): 3881 Ft.

CLIMATOLOGICAL SUMMARY

STATION: LAS CRUCES
NEW MEXICO

MEANS AND EXTREMES FOR PERIOD OF RECORD: 1931 - 1960

Month	Temperature (°F)							**	Precipitation Totals (Inches)								Mean number of days					Month
	Means			Extremes								Snow, Sleet						Temperatures				
																		Max.		Min.		
	Daily maximum	Daily minimum	Monthly	Record highest	Year	Record lowest	Year	Mean degree days	Mean	Greatest daily	Year	Mean	Maximum monthly	Year	Greatest daily	Year	Precip. .10 inch or more	90° and above	32° and below	32° and below	0° and below	
(a)	30	30	30	30	--	30	--	30	30	30	--	30	30	--	30	--	30	30	30	30	30	(a)
Jan.	56.3	25.2	40.9	78	1942	- 6	1948	750	0.47	0.86	1936	0.6	4.7	1947	4.7	1947	1	0	*	28	*	Jan.
Feb.	62.2	27.7	44.9	82	1957	7	1946	560	0.51	1.90	1956	0.5	10.4	1956	9.0	1956	2	0	*	19	0	Feb.
Mar.	68.5	33.7	51.1	89	1946	13	1939	430	0.30	1.03	1958	0.2	2.7	1944	2.7	1944	1	0	0	14	0	Mar.
Apr.	77.1	41.2	59.3	94	1943	20	1948+	200	0.17	0.62	1941	0	0	--	0	--	*	1	0	3	0	Apr.
May	85.4	49.3	67.3	103	1951	29	1933	10	0.31	0.70	1959	0	0	--	0	--	1	9	0	*	0	May
June	94.1	59.0	76.6	107	1960	37	1945	0	0.53	0.85	1941	0	0	--	0	--	2	28	0	0	0	June
July	93.9	65.2	79.5	109	1951	42	1938	0	1.29	1.55	1955	0	0	--	0	--	3	29	0	0	0	July
Aug.	91.7	63.8	77.8	103	1944	50	1956	0	1.68	6.49	1935	0	0	--	0	--	3	22	0	0	0	Aug.
Sept.	87.0	56.0	71.5	102	1945	30	1945	0	1.22	4.11	1941	0	0	--	0	--	3	11	0	0	0	Sept.
Oct.	77.9	44.0	61.0	93	1932	22	1956	160	0.75	1.19	1955	0	0	--	0	--	2	1	0	2	0	Oct.
Nov.	65.3	30.0	47.7	83	1952+	5	1948	520	0.30	0.73	1935	0.4	5.0	1957	5.0	1957	1	0	0	20	0	Nov.
Dec.	58.2	25.9	42.0	78	1958	1	1953	710	0.48	0.99	1931	0.8	10.3	1931	9.0	1931	2	0	*	25	0	Dec.
Year	76.5	43.4	60.0	109	July 1951	- 6	Jan. 1948	3340	8.01	6.49	Aug. 1935	2.5	10.4	Feb. 1956	9.0	Feb. 1956+	21	101	*	111	*	Year

* Less than one half.

** Base 65° F (estimated).

(a) Average length of record, years.

T Trace, an amount too small to measure.

\+ Also on earlier dates, months, or years.

ϕ Partial year's record considered.

CLIMATE OF LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO

Las Cruces, county seat of Dona Ana County in south-central New Mexico, is located in the Rio Grande valley about 25 miles north of the Texas border. The wide, level valley runs northwest to southeast in this area, with rolling desert land bordering the valley to the southwest and west. About 12 miles to the east the Organ mountains, with peaks above 8,500 feet, form a rugged background for the city. The northwest portion of the valley narrows and is bordered by low hills and buttes.

Las Cruces is the center of a verdant agricultural area, where cotton, truck, and feed crops are grown under irrigation from large reservoirs upstream or from water pumped from wells throughout the valley. New Mexico State University (formerly the College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts) is located on the edge of the city.

This area has one of the longest weather records in New Mexico. Early records, dating back to 1859, were made at Fort Fillmore and later at Fort Selden. Since 1892 a very complete record has been maintained at the university. The most recent 30 years of this record were used in this summary.

The area has an arid continental climate characterized by low rainfall, moderately warm summers, and mild and pleasant winters. With approximately eight inches of precipitation a year, the area is not conducive to the production of dry-land crops. However, since more than half of this moisture normally falls during July, August, and September, considerable forage grows on nearby grazing lands. This summer moisture falls almost entirely in brief but occasionally heavy thundershowers. Prolonged rains are practically unknown. Measurable snow falls on the average of two years out of three, but for a total of less than three inches in the average year. This snow normally melts almost as it hits the ground, so that there is rarely any accumulation. Heavy summer showers may cause some flooding. The 6.49-inch rain falling in a 24-hour period on August 29-30, 1935, was one of the heaviest 24-hour rainfalls recorded in New Mexico. At times hail accompanies summer thundershowers and may do considerable crop damage. There is no record of a tornado ever having occurred in the Las Cruces area.

Summer temperatures are moderately warm: daytime readings reach 90° or higher during an average 101 days a year. Since the daily temperature range generally exceeds 30°, even midsummer nights bring appreciable cooling. Winters are mild and sunny. In the coldest month, daytime shade temperatures generally range between 50° and 60°; and on only 13 days in the 30 years summarized has the temperature failed to rise above the freezing mark. Nighttime temperatures fall below freezing more than half the time from November through February, but only once in 30 years and twice in 62 years has the temperature dropped below zero. Located in the sunny Southwest, the area normally experiences from 75 per cent to 80 per cent of the sunshine possible each day, and winters are usually bright and clear. Humidities are characteristically low, averaging slightly less than 50 per cent for the year and ranging from about 60 per cent in early morning to less than 30 per cent during warmer hours. Winds are usually light, probably averaging around 10 miles per hour throughout the year. Late winter and spring are windiest; occasionally, during this season moderately strong winds result in some blowing dust. Evaporation from a free-water surface, as recorded in a Class A evaporation pan, averages about 90 inches a year--or more than 10 times the average rainfall. Las Cruces has an average growing season of 201 days: from April 10, the average date of the last spring freeze, to October 28, the average date of the first fall freeze.

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Average Temperature (°F)

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Ann'l
1931	41.2	46.8	49.8	58.6	67.4	77.5	78.6	75.0	74.4	63.2	46.9	38.0	59.8
1932	36.2	32.4	48.2	58.7	67.2	74.0	80.2	78.5	69.2	58.4	46.8	38.4	57.4
1933	40.0	41.8	53.0	55.4	63.0	74.1	80.2	77.2	74.5	61.6	48.0	41.0	59.2
1934	36.4	46.6	51.8	62.0	71.2	75.8	81.8	80.2	72.2	62.6	49.1	43.6	61.1
1935	43.8	44.2	53.0	60.0	63.1	77.0	81.4	78.6	68.5	60.7	46.6	41.7	59.9
1936	39.8	46.1	52.2	60.2	69.9	77.1	79.3	77.2	70.2	58.6	46.7	42.4	60.0
1937	37.3	44.6	48.7	58.4	67.5	75.2	79.8	79.1	72.8	61.6	49.2	43.2	59.8
1938	42.1	48.2	52.0	58.4	66.8	75.2	74.1	76.0	69.2	62.0	43.8	42.9	59.2
1939	40.4	37.8	51.8	59.8	67.5	76.0	78.8	76.2	71.6	58.4	48.6	44.6	59.3
1940	38.3	45.2	52.8	58.4	68.3	74.8	79.0	76.2	72.8	60.4	46.0	46.3	59.9
1941	42.6	48.8	49.8	55.4	68.6	73.6	77.4	76.0	71.8	60.9	49.0	43.0	59.7
1942	42.8	43.6	48.6	58.8	65.4	76.2	79.2	76.7	69.9	60.0	51.6	45.2	59.8
1943	42.7	48.4	53.2	62.6	68.0	76.8	78.9	80.8	70.8	58.7	47.8	41.7	60.8
1944	39.0	45.6	49.6	55.4	65.0	73.6	78.6	77.1	68.7	62.3	45.5	40.3	58.4
1945	42.0	46.3	49.2	55.8	65.5	72.3	80.1	78.9	70.4	59.8	48.1	39.4	59.0
1946	37.5	42.4	51.6	63.5	65.9	79.0	79.5	79.4	73.8	61.2	45.5	43.3	60.2
1947	38.2	45.6	51.2	57.3	69.0	73.5	80.6	77.0	71.4	61.8	44.8	38.0	59.0
1948	38.0	44.7	47.5	61.2	69.3	77.9	80.0	78.7	71.6	59.9	42.1	42.0	59.4
1949	36.2	44.1	52.3	59.1	67.6	77.7	80.1	77.2	72.5	58.6	51.4	40.0	59.7
1950	43.5	48.7	53.0	61.3	66.0	78.3	77.9	76.3	70.3	65.3	50.0	45.0	61.3
1951	38.9	44.0	50.1	57.8	68.2	74.2	82.4	78.8	72.3	63.5	46.5	43.9	60.1
1952	46.1	43.8	46.4	59.7	68.7	78.8	79.3	79.8	72.3	60.5	46.4	40.1	60.2
1953	45.6	44.2	53.4	59.8	63.1	78.6	80.7	77.5	69.9	59.6	50.4	36.4	59.9
1954	43.6	48.9	51.7	64.6	69.0	76.2	80.4	77.1	73.8	63.3	50.2	42.6	61.8
1955	39.4	40.9	51.8	59.2	66.7	74.9	77.3	76.9	72.1	61.5	48.8	45.4	59.6
1956	45.4	41.6	52.0	56.9	69.7	80.7	79.1	75.8	71.7	62.2	44.6	41.4	60.1
1957	46.2	54.3	52.8	59.0	65.1	77.0	81.4	78.1	70.0	59.6	46.5	43.8	61.1
1958	40.6	48.5	48.9	60.0	70.6	81.1	81.4	79.2	72.2	60.7	50.3	43.5	61.4
1959	44.5	46.4	50.8	61.7	67.9	79.6	80.2	78.4	71.8	61.4	47.8	43.9	61.2
1960	39.2	43.0	55.8	61.1	68.4	80.5	78.7	78.9	73.4	60.8	51.3	39.7	60.9

Total Precipitation (Inches)

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Ann'l
1931	.81	1.14	.18	.88	.06	.42	2.25	3.48	1.65	.18	.83	1.38	13.26
1932	.25	.68	.02	.06	.65	1.42	.70	1.56	1.39	1.14	0	.96	8.83
1933	.25	.43	0	.26	.05	1.56	.45	1.06	.24	.22	.19	0	4.71
1934	T	.25	.45	.01	.20	.03	1.72	.35	.40	.68	.22	.31	4.62
1935	.19	.29	.10	.10	1.07	.25	.38	7.41	.90	.42	.90	.66	12.67
1936	.98	.29	.13	.07	.70	.14	1.53	1.35	2.12	.40	1.02	.77	9.50
1937	.01	.52	.71	0	.31	.71	.67	.85	1.40	1.42	.03	.38	7.01
1938	.55	.34	.15	.02	.03	1.02	3.65	.29	2.53	.06	.08	.55	9.27
1939	.68	.05	.15	.04	T	.31	.72	.75	1.27	.80	.72	.28	5.77
1940	.11	.65	.03	.22	.65	1.75	1.46	.68	1.73	.73	.63	.58	9.22
1941	1.36	.39	1.26	1.04	.73	.90	2.35	2.28	7.53	.97	.31	.48	19.60
1942	.21	.48	0	.82	0	.47	1.04	3.04	1.06	1.61	0	1.07	9.80
1943	.48	0	.38	.04	.52	1.02	1.30	.94	1.24	0	.57	1.06	7.55
1944	.63	.94	.19	.01	.39	.62	1.23	2.65	.63	1.06	1.01	.41	9.77
1945	.25	.05	.16	.06	T	T	1.49	1.92	.25	1.55	0	.04	5.77
1946	.82	.03	0	.01	.36	.29	.14	2.16	2.42	.12	.15	.64	7.14
1947	1.11	.05	.48	T	.19	.49	.28	2.38	0	0	.60	.50	6.08
1948	.18	1.43	.16	.07	.04	.86	.07	.46	.39	.37	0	1.13	5.16
1949	1.85	.46	.07	.06	.79	.15	1.14	.73	2.37	.88	T	.51	9.01
1950	.11	.48	T	T	.06	.25	2.41	.51	1.14	.38	0	0	5.34
1951	.31	.38	.16	.42	.02	0	1.47	.96	0	.74	.08	.51	5.05
1952	T	.72	.71	.56	.16	1.07	1.11	1.22	.37	0	.19	.12	6.23
1953	0	.68	.41	.03	T	.28	1.31	.33	T	.57	T	.20	3.81
1954	.07	.30	.10	0	.82	.26	.72	1.34	.96	1.25	0	T	5.82
1955	.66	0	.39	0	.15	.08	3.17	.59	.01	2.10	.11	T	7.26
1956	.18	1.04	0	.02	T	.52	.86	1.35	.09	.28	T	.44	4.78
1957	.32	1.48	.53	.02	.34	T	.81	2.66	.50	1.82	.85	T	9.33
1958	.86	1.38	1.84	.21	.29	.39	.90	3.30	3.42	1.06	.36	0	14.01
1959	.05	.17	T	.04	.72	.53	.56	2.81	T	.83	.05	.18	5.94
1960	.73	.16	.16	T	.01	.13	2.86	1.00	.58	.77	.08	1.25	7.73

STATION HISTORY

Precipitation records were begun by the U.S. Army at Fort Fillmore, about seven miles southeast of Las Cruces, in September 1851 and were continued there until May 1861. Recordings were resumed at Fort Selden, 14 miles northwest of Las Cruces, in November 1865 and continued until February 1877. In August 1878 the station was moved to La Mesilla, two miles southeast of Las Cruces, and continued until July 1882. In January 1886 the station was returned to Fort Selden and maintained until September 1890. All these records were made by the Army. In January 1892 a temperature-and-precipitation station was established at the State University and has continued on the campus since. From 1892 until 1908 the station was known as Las Cruces or Mesilla Park; from 1908 to April 1959, as Agricultural College. The weather records have been maintained under the supervision of J.C. Overpeck since 1923. Indications are that there were differences in elevation of less than 50 feet at the various locations.