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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SOUTHERN FLORIDA'S WINTER TEMPERATURES

From New England or the Lake region to Florida the average temperature rises nearly 3 degrees Fahrenheit for every hundred miles. In more exact terms, the latitude temperature gradient along the Atlantic coast is 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit per degree of latitude. This is the greatest in the world for such a long stretch. While we in the North are chilled by the prevailing and usually strong northwesterly or northerly winds from the cold continental interior, blowing from the more or less chronic interior high pressure area to the equally prevalent storms near the northern portion of the Gulf Stream, citizens of Florida and our more fortunate neighbors are basking in the sunshine and moderate breezes tempered by the Gulf of Mexico or Gulf Stream, till the tang of winter is all but absent.

If you don't like winter and want to get temperatures as nearly like those of last summer as are readily obtainable, go to southern Florida. Miami's December is like August in central New England. January there is our June, and February is August again. March and April are much warmer, simulating Long Island in summer. Tampa's winter is like our northern May, and its early spring is like our summer. It is some 8 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than Miami in winter, and about 6 degrees cooler in March and April.

So, if you want moderate summer rather than late spring temperatures now, go well south of Tampa, but if you would avoid mid-summer heat, plan to return to the latitude of Tampa by mid-March, and return home in the North by the middle of May.

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