

# Illinois Weather Trivia for April

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## April 1

- 1920: April snowfall across central Illinois averages less than an inch. However, in April of 1920, Springfield received 8.2 inches of snow, and Champaign reported 8 inches. These both stand as the snowiest April on record for these cities.

## April 2

- 1964: A tornado touched down in Montgomery County, 4 miles east southeast of Farmersville, and moved northeast into Christian County, passing just northwest of Morrisonville. The Lone Elm School lost its roof, but only one of the 25 people inside was injured.
- 1975: A very late-winter storm paralyzed parts of the Chicago metropolitan area, with up to 20 inches of heavy, wet snow. The storm dumped snow across west central through northeast Illinois; further south, freezing rain fell as far south as Peoria. Fifty deaths were reported; most were from heart attacks, overexertion while shoveling snow, and abandoning stalled vehicles.
- 2006: An outbreak of 25 tornadoes occurred across central and southeast Illinois. While most of these were of F0 or F1 intensity, one strong tornado tracked across Macon County southwest of Decatur. Several homes and businesses were damaged in Taylorville and Pana; two tornadoes moved across southern parts of Springfield, affecting nearly the same locations as the March 12 tornadoes.

## April 3

- 1974: The most violent tornado outbreak in U.S. history began on this date and continued into the early morning hours of April 4. A total of 148 tornadoes were noted in 13 states in the central and eastern U.S., [including 12 in Illinois](#). This outbreak killed 307 people and produced \$600 million in damage. In central Illinois, the strongest tornado of this outbreak moved across Macon County, affecting the west and north sides of Decatur in the early afternoon. This tornado killed one person and produced \$3.4 million damage, destroyed 52 homes and severely damaged 110 others. Tornadoes were also reported in Logan, McLean, Champaign, Vermilion, Ford, and Edgar Counties.

## April 4

- 2007: A blast of cold air affected much of the Midwest for several days between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. Because temperatures in March were exceptionally warm, crops and fruit trees were much further along than usual. The [repeated lows below freezing caused significant damage](#) as a result. Approximately 90% of the peach crop across the state was lost, along with 70% of the apple crop. The combined losses to these fruit crops were approximately \$22 million.

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## April 5

- 1988: Severe thunderstorms moved across the northern 2/3 of the state. Baseball size hail at Galesburg caused \$10 million damage to 700 cars and many homes. In East St. Louis, a wind gust of 77 mph and golfball-size hail was reported. Winds at Bloomington's airport gusted to 75 mph, causing the control tower to be evacuated. Other strong winds included 70 mph at Taylorville and 69 mph at Decatur. Extensive damage was reported due to the storms.

## April 6

- 1872: A tornado touched down near Bogota, southwest of Newton in southeast Illinois. The tornado, estimated at F3 intensity, destroyed barns, homes, and timber. Three people were killed in homes about a mile apart.
- 1988: High winds affected Illinois, with the northeast part of the state hit hardest. In Chicago, 97 windows were blown out of the Sears Tower, and the state's oldest tree, estimated to be 700 years old, was blown over. Wind gusts reached 75 mph at the Chicago lakefront, 60 mph in Bloomington, and 59 mph at Decatur.

## April 7

- 1948: A violent tornado in northeast Illinois touched down 2 miles northwest of Manteno, and tracked into Indiana. Three people were killed north of Grant Park, with 25 injured. Other strong tornadoes in the area moved from near Coal City to Braidwood, and from Calumet City into Indiana. Further south, 2 strong tornadoes occurred across the northern parts of Champaign and Vermilion Counties.
- 1982: Record cold occurred across central Illinois. Peoria's record low of 14 degrees tied the month's record, first set in 1920. Champaign's low of 16 degrees broke the city's April low temperature record.
- 1998: Severe thunderstorms moved across central Illinois during the afternoon hours, producing nearly two dozen tornadoes. Many of these tornadoes were in Mason County, with the town of Bath receiving the worst damage. Further east, a tornado in Moultrie County touched down south of Cadwell, and moved to Bourbon in Douglas County. 9 homes were damaged or destroyed, as well as numerous outbuildings. Ahead of the tornado, the town of Arthur received softball size hail.

## April 8

- 1999: Several tornadoes touched down across central Illinois, as a complex of severe thunderstorms moved across the region. In Hancock County, the town of Hamilton had significant damage, with 144 homes destroyed or damaged by a tornado of F3 strength. Two radio and TV towers were also destroyed. Damages totaled to about \$10 million. In far southeast Cass County, one person was killed in Ashland, when a tornado hit a trailer park.

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Damage in Ashland was estimated around \$1.8 million. Further east, another tornado destroyed a trailer north of Cisco, killing a second person.

### April 9

- 1953: The first radar image of a tornado was detected by equipment at the University of Illinois Airport, south of Champaign. Studies of the radar pictures from that day showed that a tornado of significant size and intensity could be detected, identified by a hook shape on the southwestern edge of a thunderstorm.
- 1982: The second of two late-season snowstorms affected much of Illinois over a 3-day period ending on this date. The heaviest snowfall was reported from near Peoria southwest to Macomb, with up to 7 inches of snow. Snowfall in excess of 5 inches was found in a wide area extending from Quincy east to Bloomington.
- 2015: Eleven tornadoes occurred across Illinois; 6 of the tornadoes in north central Illinois came from a single supercell thunderstorm. A [violent tornado](#), EF4 strength, tracked across portions of Lee, Ogle, DeKalb, and Boone Counties. This tornado caused two fatalities in Fairdale, and was the first violent tornado in northern Illinois in 25 years.

### April 10

- 1997: An April winter storm in parts of central Illinois began during the morning hours on this date and continued into the 11th. The heaviest snowfall was reported in an area from Galesburg to the north side of Peoria to north of Bloomington. Snowfall totals included 13.5 inches in Galesburg, 11.5 inches in Chillicothe, 11 inches in Minonk, and 6 inches at the Peoria Airport. Snowfall quickly tapered off to the south, with little or no snowfall from Lincoln southward.

### April 11

- 1965: A [violent tornado in northeastern Illinois](#) took the lives of 6 people near Crystal Lake. In a single subdivision, 45 homes were destroyed and 110 had major damage. The tornado touched down near Crystal Lake, and ended 2 miles north of Wauconda. \$1.5 million damage was reported. A separate tornado in Lake County started as a waterspout on Druce Lake, and moved east to near Gurnee.
- 1994: Very heavy rainfall led to flash flooding across central Illinois on the 11th and 12th. Rainfall totals ranged as high as 5-1/4 inches in less than 6 hours. Two people drowned while trying to drive across flooded roads in Sangamon and Montgomery Counties.

### April 12

- 1903: A tornado touched down 2 miles southeast of Lincoln, and moved northeast to Waynesville. The tornado peaked at F2 intensity. No deaths were reported. Another tornado

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touched down in Douglas County, 4 miles northeast of Atwood, killing a mother and baby.

- 1945: A family of small tornadoes moved across Adams County, accompanied by downburst winds. Damage in Quincy was reported to be \$2.2 million, with significant damage to the business district, including the loss of the courthouse dome.
- 2012: Widespread temperatures in the 20s occurred on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Because of the unseasonably warm weather over the previous few weeks, many crops and plants were growing well ahead of schedule. These were significantly damaged by the freezing temperatures.

### April 13

- 1981: Severe thunderstorms were widespread across Illinois during the afternoon and evening hours. Widespread damage was reported due to hail and wind. The largest hail, 3 inches in diameter, fell at Princeton, in Bureau County. Farmer City, in DeWitt County, had a wind gust of 70 mph. The storms also spawned several tornadoes in the central third of the state. One fatality resulted during the storms. At Kincaid, in Christian County, lightning struck a telephone line, traveled into a house, and blew up a phone, killing the person who was talking on the phone at the time.
- 1998: A microburst produced winds around 80 mph in Girard, in northern Macoupin County. Damage occurred in a 6 to 8 block area. Power lines were downed, and fallen trees and limbs damaged several homes and a car.

### April 14

- 1980: A late-season, 3-day snowstorm produced a total of 7.3 inches of snow in Springfield, with 6.1 of those inches falling on this date.
- 1994: Rivers across central Illinois were at significant flood levels due to the heavy rain from the 11th. At Danville, the Vermilion River crested at a record 31.6 feet, nearly 14 feet above flood stage. Damage to the water treatment plant there was estimated at \$10 million.

### April 15

- 1992: Numerous thunderstorms moved across east central Illinois over a 4-hour period. Villa Grove, in Douglas County, received 2-1/2 inches of rain, causing the Embarras River to overflow. Several streets in towns were under 3 feet of water, and many basements were flooded. Damage from the flooding was around \$10,000.

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- 1998: Two tornadoes touched down in Clay County, in southeast Illinois, as a severe thunderstorm moved across the area. Most of the damage was in the Flora area. 60 to 70 moving railroad cars were blown off the tracks. 40 to 50 condominiums were damaged or destroyed, along with several frame houses and a couple mobile homes. A tornado also touched down north of Flora, then moved to Richland County before lifting. Overall damage was over \$2 million.

## **April 16**

- 1961: A late season snowstorm dumped 5 to 6 inches of snow in parts of central and northeast Illinois, with drifts up to 6 feet. Thousands of cars were stranded; the occupants were forced to take shelter overnight in nearby homes, gymnasiums, armories, and roller rinks.
- 2006: Easter Sunday brought another round of tornadoes to central and southeast Illinois. Ten tornadoes were reported primarily south of I-72, with the strongest tornadoes affecting areas along the Effingham/Jasper County line around Wheeler. In Macon County, several homes were damaged near Oakley by a thunderstorm downburst producing winds to 110 mph. By the end of April, a total of 50 tornadoes had already been reported across central and southeast Illinois for the year to date.

## **April 17**

- 1922: A violent tornado touched down a few miles north of Ogden, in eastern Champaign County, then moved eastward through Vermilion County. Two people were killed north of Ogden. Another tornado touched down in southeast Effingham County and moved across Jasper and Clark Counties. One person was killed, and 25 injured.
- 1963: A violent tornado, close to F5 strength at times, moved across Kankakee County before continuing into Indiana. The worst damage was in Bourbonnais, Bradley, Exline, and in populated areas north of Kankakee. Several houses completely disappeared. Fifty injuries were reported in Illinois, with one death.
- 1982: Two late-season snowstorms earlier in the month led to an April record snowfall of 13.4 inches at Peoria. The normal April snowfall is just under an inch.

## **April 18**

- 1880: A violent tornado, estimated at F4 intensity, touched down north of Rockford near Rockton, moving northeast to near Beloit, WI. Two farms were swept away in Illinois, killing one person in Illinois near the state line.
- 1996: Severe thunderstorms moved across central Illinois, producing large hail in many locations, as well as one tornado. This tornado moved across the southeast part of Decatur during the late evening, producing \$1.5 million damage and injuring 9 people.

## **April 19**

- 1927: Illinois' 10th deadliest tornado outbreak on record took a path across the central part of Illinois, killing 21 people. The first tornado touched down near Hardin, traveling

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northeast through Carrollton, then skimmed the south side of Springfield. At Carrollton, a teacher was killed as she held the door of the school shut, saving the lives of her students. The second tornado, peaking at F4 intensity, touched down on the southeast edge of Springfield, then moved on to affect the towns of Riverton, Buffalo Hart, Chestnut, and Cornland. In Buffalo Hart, only three houses were left standing, while the northern half of Cornland was leveled. The tornado track was 65 miles, ending in Ford County.

- 1996: [Illinois' largest 1-day tornado outbreak](#) occurred during the afternoon and evening hours. In central Illinois, 20 tornadoes moved across the area. One severe thunderstorm spawned several tornadoes from west of Jacksonville, to just west of Springfield, through Decatur and Urbana, and east to Ogden. The Decatur area, which had also been hit by a tornado the night before, sustained about \$9 million damage, with 27 people injured. Further east, up to \$11 million damage occurred in Urbana, where 30 homes were destroyed and 80 more were damaged. Another tornado moved through Ogden, destroying 68 homes and numerous other businesses and public institutions. One person was killed just east of Ogden, when a semi was overturned on I-74. Strong tornadoes were also reported in Mason and southwest McLean Counties.

### April 20

- 2000: Severe thunderstorms rolled west to east across central Illinois throughout the morning hours. These storms produced tornado touchdowns near Illiopolis and Forsyth, and another tornado tracked from near Oreana to Argenta. This latter tornado lifted the roof off a home 2 miles northeast of Oreana, and part of a roof in Argenta was lifted off. Earlier in the morning, the storms produced winds up to 85 mph in Cass, Tazewell and Menard Counties, causing damage to buildings, trees and power lines. In Tazewell County, a radio tower in Groveland was blown over, causing \$500,000 damage, and near Washington, an airport hangar was destroyed, damaging 3 planes.
- 2004: A [strong tornado \(F3 intensity\)](#) moved across the town of Utica, near LaSalle-Peru in north central Illinois. This tornado destroyed several homes, a machinery building, and a tavern. The roof of the tavern collapsed, killing eight people inside; many of these people had come into town from nearby mobile homes, seeking sturdier shelter. The tornado dissipated on a steep bluff on the northeast side of town. Another tornado developed shortly afterward, crossing I-80 near Ottawa. Several other tornadoes developed across north central and northeast Illinois, affecting areas around Joliet and Kankakee.

### April 21

- 1967: [Northern Illinois was struck by 17 tornadoes](#), including several in the Chicago metropolitan area. One violent tornado moved through Belvidere, killing 24 people and injuring another 450, including 13 deaths at the local high school. Damage to Belvidere totaled about 420 million, including destruction of 400 cars at the Chrysler plant. A marriage certificate from Belvidere was found south of Milwaukee, WI. A school bus south of Harvard was ripped in half, as driver and students hid in a ditch. A second violent tornado touched down in Elgin and moved northeast to Lake Zurich, causing \$10 million damage. A third violent tornado touched down near Palos Hills and moved across the south side of Chicago to Lake Michigan. This tornado struck during Friday rush hour, and many of the 33 deaths and 500 injuries occurred in vehicles stopped at traffic lights. Over \$50 million damage was reported from the tornado outbreak.

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- 2002: A tornado moved across Wayne County, in southeast Illinois. The tornado passed through the southern part of Fairfield with F3 intensity winds. One person was killed in a mobile home west of Wayne City. 42 people were injured, 13 critically. A total of 35 homes were destroyed, and 16 received major damage.

## **April 22**

- 1888: An early evening tornado hit the south edge of DuQuoin, injuring three people. A two story brick building was leveled, and barns lost their roofs. A train engineer saw the funnel approach the town, and was able to stop the train in time to let the tornado pass.
- 1963: A tornado caused a path of destruction from Illiopolis (far eastern Sangamon County) eastward to Decatur. One man was carried 200 yards; he died from his injuries several days later. The storm also produced two inch diameter hail in Decatur. The tornado's path was nearly identical to the tornado which affected the area on April 19, 1996. Another tornado moved from Oreana to southeast of Philo, with a third tornado touching down just east of Tuscola and moving east into Indiana.

## **April 23**

- 2013: Due to excessive rainfall and snow melt earlier in the month, [record flooding was in progress along the Illinois River](#). Peoria set its all-time record river stage of 29.35 feet on this date. Records were set upstream at Henry (32.81 feet) the previous day, and downstream at Havana (27.78 feet) and Beardstown (29.80 feet) on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The previous flood of record for most of these locations occurred in May 1943.

## **April 24**

- 1880: Several tornadoes affected parts of central and southwest Illinois. One tornado of F4 intensity touched down near Jerseyville and killed one person along an 18 mile path. Another F4 tornado passed just north of Carlinville and lifted near Atwater, destroying 50 buildings. Six people were killed in Christian County by an F5 tornado, which tracked from 9 miles southwest of Taylorville to near Sharpsburg. A fourth tornado touched down a few miles southeast of Springfield and moved northeast to Dawson.
- 1961: A tornado traveled a 75 mile path across west central Illinois. The tornado touched down southeast of Quincy, moving through Winchester (Scott County), before lifting southwest of Springfield. Three people were injured at Winchester, and many buildings were damaged.

## **April 25**

- 1986: Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across central Illinois. High temperatures of 92 degrees at Peoria and 90 degrees at Springfield both tied April records.

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## April 26

- 1994: Severe thunderstorms worked their way across Illinois during the evening hours. These storms produced hail as large as golf balls, as well as damaging winds. In east central parts of the state, brief tornado touchdowns were reported near Arcola and Cooks Mills, producing over 1/2 million dollars in damage.

## April 27

- 1971: A strong tornado in Franklin County, in southern Illinois, moved through Thompsonville. This tornado destroyed 8 homes, 3 commercial buildings, and 5 trailers. One person was killed, with 20 injured.
- 1984: A strong tornado touched down 8 miles southwest of Plainfield, in northeast Illinois, and lifted just southeast of town. This tornado damaged 43 homes, of which 14 were nearly destroyed. Large wooden beams were driven into nearby homes. One person was killed.

## April 28

- 1956: A tornado touched down northwest of Litchfield, damaging the roofs of two farm houses and threw 2-ton grain bins for 100 yards. Two people drowned when a boat was overturned on a lake.
- 1996: Strong winds between 40 and 50 mph, with gusts over 60 mph, caused damage across a large area of central Illinois. Numerous trees and power lines were blown down, with some damage occurring to buildings. In Charleston, part of the roof was blown off a high school. At Pana, a window was blown out of a building and the roof of that building sustained some damage. In Macon County, a tree fell onto a car in Forsyth.
- 2017: Two rounds of significant rain occurred in southern Illinois, one from the 28-29<sup>th</sup>, and the other from the 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. Rainfall totals of 5 to 8 inches were widespread, with some 8 to 10 inch totals near Carbondale and Carmi. The highest rainfall totals were 11.75 inches at Johnston City and 11.27 inches at Carterville. [Major flooding occurred](#) on portions of the Mississippi, Big Muddy, and Little Wabash Rivers as a result.

## April 29

- 1947: A tornado damaged several homes and destroyed a tavern and several garages in the western part of Kingston Mines, in southern Peoria County. The tornado was seen by thousands of people in Pekin, where debris would soon rain down. A second tornado hit Kingston Mines about 15 minutes later, destroying the post office, barns, and 2 taverns, one of which lost its roof in the previous tornado.
- 1998: A series of severe thunderstorms developed over Logan and McLean Counties, mainly along I-55, causing flash flooding. Lincoln recorded 4 inches of rain in 3 hours. Most of the flooding was in an area from Lincoln to Ellsworth. Over 1,000 buildings in Logan County sustained water damage. Damage was estimated around \$1.5 million.

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### April 30

- 1962: A squall line moved from St. Louis northeast to Chicago. The area from Hardin to Springfield to Hoopston was greatly affected, as was the area from Pontiac to Joliet to Chicago. The southern end of the squall line experienced winds of 55 to 90 mph, while the northern end had winds of 65 to 110 mph with unofficial gusts to 135 mph. At Rantoul, two people were killed by falling debris. In Springfield, a boy was killed when a chimney fell through a school roof.
- 1997: A line of severe thunderstorms moved across Illinois during the afternoon and evening hours. Several tornadoes, most of them weak, were produced, as well as strong winds gusts as high as 70 mph. The most damaging tornado occurred in Fulton County, when two separate thunderstorms merged. In the town of Fairview, several homes were damaged, with two people injured. In Middle Grove, the tornado destroyed two mobile homes and damaged 25 houses. The tornado then took an intermittent northeast track across Fulton, southeast Knox, western Peoria, and Stark Counties. Other tornadoes touched down in Macon, McLean, Adams, Hancock, and Montgomery Counties.