

Are You Dreaming Of A White Christmas?

Here is some historical information on the occurrence of a White Christmas in Indianapolis.

There are several ways to define a White Christmas. For the purposes of our historical look back, we'll include a White Christmas as any day that has either at least a trace of snow on the ground, or experiences at least a trace of snow falling that day. In more general terms, we'll define a White Christmas as any Christmas Day that Indianapolis sees snow.

So what is the chance of at least a trace of snow falling at Indianapolis on Christmas day? Well, snowfall records on Christmas day have been kept in the Indianapolis area since 1871. And in that 143 year period of record, a trace of snow (or more) has fallen 66 times. This could be equated to a 46% chance of at least a trace of snow falling on Christmas Day.

Our other possibility for a White Christmas would be if there was at least a trace of snow already on the ground. This could be old snow from a week ago, or just the day before. Snow depth records don't go quite as far back, and these were started in 1896. And in that 118 year span, there has been at least a trace of snow on the ground on Christmas Day a total of 58 times. This could be equated to a 50% chance of at least a trace of snow on the ground on Christmas Day. The last Christmas that saw snow on the ground in Indianapolis was in 2012, with a trace of snow on the ground. Near blizzard conditions arrived the following day on the 26th however, producing 7.5 inches of snow at the Indianapolis airport.

With both of our possibilities for a White Christmas explored, what then is our final chance? What would our probability be of having either a Trace or more of snow falling, or a Trace or more already on the ground? Since 1871, this has happened in a total of 84 times, where either the snow has fallen or already been on the ground. This gives us an overall probability of just under 60%! Which means that 6 out of every 10 years, on average, will see either some snow falling or some snow already on the ground for Christmas Day. So, much more often than not, there will be at least a few flakes around to greet us come Christmas!

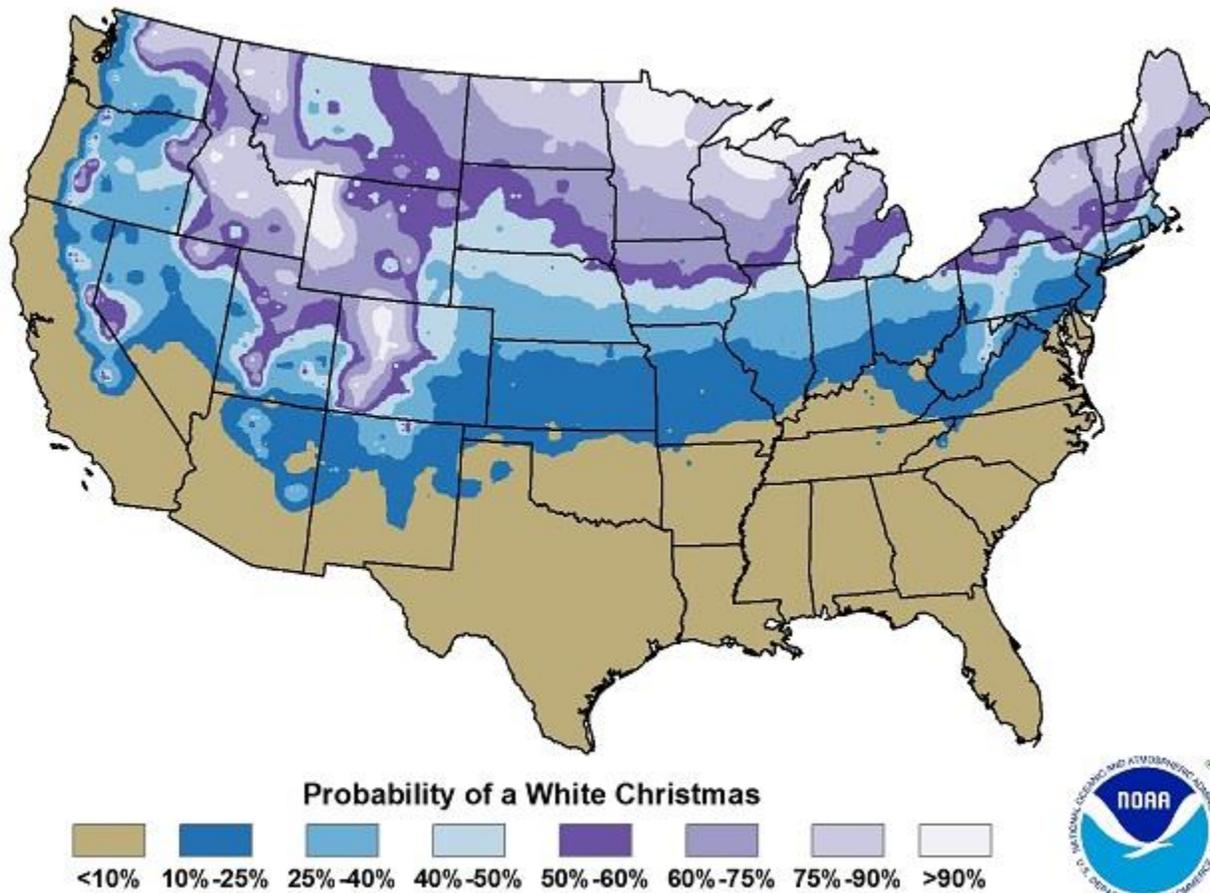
Check back with NWS Indianapolis for your forecast over the next several days as we approach Christmas. Here is the latest [7-day forecast](#) for central Indiana.

Here are a few snow extremes from Christmas Day:

Greatest Snowfall on Christmas Day	Greatest Snow Depth on Christmas Day
5.9" in 1909	9" in 2004
4.4" in 1926	7" in 2002
3.3" in 1890	7" in 1909
2.6" in 2005	6" in 1995
2.4" in 1935	6" in 1935

And a few temperature and precipitation extremes as well:

Warmest Max Temp	Coldest Max Temp	Warmest Min Temp	Coldest Min Temp	Most Precipitation
64 in 1893	-4 in 1983	55 in 1877	-15 in 1983	1.36 in 2005
63 in 1982	7 in 1985	50 in 1889	-5 in 2000, 1878	1.14 in 1957
63 in 1889	10 in 1924	45 in 1982	-4 in 1935, 1924	0.98 in 1982
59 in 1877	13 in 1884	44 in 1888	-3 in 2004, 1980	0.72 in 2006
58 in 1973, 1932, 1891	14 in 1980, 1902	42 in 1940, 1936, 1895, 1891	-2 in 1872	0.61 in 1926



Probability of White Christmas for USA - [Click to Enlarge.](#)

Data prepared by the Indianapolis WFO Climate Services Team