Des Moines Climate

1878-2025: December

Updated 1/1/2026

Temperature

Highest Daily Maximum:	74	December 15, 2021
Lowest Daily Maximum:	-12	December 24, 1983
Highest Daily Minimum:	54	December 4, 2001
Lowest Daily Minimum:	-22	December 23, 1989
Highest Daily Average:	61	December 8, 1946
Lowest Daily Average:	-15	December 24, 1983

Top Ten Warmest

1.	39.5	1889
2.	37.4	2023
3.	36.2	2015
4.	35.8	1931
	35.8	1923
6.	35.2	1965
7.	34.9	1881
8.	34.8	2021
9.	34.7	2006
10.	34.6	1891

Top Ten Coldest

1.	9.8	1983
2.	11.5	2000
3.	13.4	1985
4.	15.1	1963
5.	16.5	1919
6.	16.7	1917
7.	16.8	1989
8.	16.9	1909
9.	17.7	1924
10.	18.0	1945

Number of Years with Max of 60 degrees or Higher: 48 (32% of the years)

Number of Years with Max of 50 degrees or Higher: 127 (86% of the years)

Number of Years with Max of 40 degrees or Higher: 146 (99% of the years)

All Decembers have had at least 1 day with a high above freezing: 1983 had the fewest with 4.

Number of Years with Min of 10 degrees or Lower: 139 (94% of the years)

Number of Years with Min of 0 degrees or Lower: 101 (68% of the years)

Number of Years with Min of -10 degrees or Lower: 38 (26% of the years)

Precipitation

Wettest Day: 1.79” December 13, 2015

Highest 3-day total: 3.78” 12 – 14, 2015

Highest 7-day total: 3.78” 8 – 14, 2015

Highest 14 - day total: 4.81” 11 – 24, 2015

Top Ten Wettest

1.	5.44	2015
2.	3.72	1931
3.	3.43	1982
4.	3.18	1911
5.	2.90	1941
	2.90	2007
	2.90	2018
8.	2.87	1945
9.	2.83	2009
10.	2.65	1973

Top Ten Driest

1.	0.01	2002
2.	0.09	1903
3.	0.11	1890
4.	0.12	1976
5.	0.20	1910
	0.20	1979
7.	0.22	1946
8.	0.25	1922
	0.25	1958
10.	0.27	1950

Number of Years with at least one day where 0.50” of Precipitation fell: 69 (47% of the years)
Number of Years with at least one day where 1.00” of Precipitation fell: 16 (11% of the years)
Number of Years with at least one day where 2.00” of Precipitation fell: 0 (0% of the years)

Snowfall

Snowiest Day:	17.0”	December 26, 1888
Highest 3-day total:	17.0”	24 – 26, 1888
Most Snow on Ground:	18”	December 23, 1961

Top Ten Snowiest			Top Ten Least Snowiest		
1.	30.3”	2000	1.	Trace	2002
2.	28.2”	2009	2.	0.1”	1889
3.	23.9”	1961	3.	0.2”	2023
4.	22.4”	1904	4.	0.4”	1979
5.	22.0”	1977	5.	0.5”	1975
6.	19.6”	1897	6.	0.6”	1906
	19.6”	1983		0.6”	1912
8.	19.0”	1911	8.	0.8”	1933
9.	17.8”	1925	9.	0.9”	1896
10.	17.1”	2020	10.	1.0”	5 different years most recently 2001

Monthly Normals (1991-2020)

Average Maximum Temperature	35.9
Average Minimum Temperature	19.5
Average Daily Temperature	27.7
Average Precipitation	1.58”
Average Snowfall	7.9”

If you have any questions or comments, please send them to jim.w.lee@noaa.gov.

Temperature and precipitation records for Des Moines began in August of 1878. Snowfall records did not begin until December 1884.