

Georgia's Climate

THE COCORAHS 'STATE CLIMATES' SERIES

Georgia's Climate is Peachy!

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Georgia is one of the largest states east of the Mississippi River, and has elevations ranging from sea level along the coast to a peak height of 4784 feet at Brasstown Bald in far northern Georgia in the southern Appalachian Mountains. The location of Georgia in the southeastern United States puts it in the path of many different types of weather systems, leading to a wide variation in weather across the year that is suitable for raising many different crops, including our world-famous peaches.

The climate along the Georgia coast is warm and humid for much of the year, although occasionally cold temperatures and even snow will reach the coastal areas. The influence of the ocean can be seen in the development of thunderstorms and showers near the coast as the sea breeze develops over the day. During the tropical season (June through November), tropical storms and hurricanes can contribute to copious rainfall amounts as they pass through the area. Even though Georgia's coast has not had a direct hit by a hurricane since 1900, we know that there were three major hurricanes in the 1800's, so the likelihood of an eventual direct landfall is high. Even when the eye of the storm does not come onshore, however, significant flooding can cause damage and the potential for injury to people and animals in the flooded areas.

The central part of Georgia is the inland coastal plain and the Piedmont area, which stretches from southwest to northeast through the central part of the state. This area is the driest part of the state (in some places less than 45 inches per year) and the least populated, but many of Georgia's crops are grown in this area due to the availability of good soils and water resources. It is also the hottest part of the state in summer and temperatures above 100 degrees F are not uncommon in summer months.

The northeast section of Georgia is the most mountainous region. Flow of humid air up the slopes of the mountains leads to rainfall values of over 80 inches per year on the south-facing mountain ridges, although less is seen in valleys and in areas sheltered from the moist winds. Snow and ice storms are also the most frequent in this northern part of the state. Because of the steep slopes of the mountain valleys, flash floods sometimes occur in the summer months when thunderstorms develop over the mountainous areas and inundate local rivers with several inches of rain in just a few hours.

If you would like to know about Georgia's "peachy" climate, please come and visit our web page at <http://climate.engr.uga.edu> or call us at 706-542-6067. We would love to hear from you!