

2026-27 El Niño Weather Predictions

A Summary of Resources

Summary: El Niño is Here

According to NOAA's [Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#), El Niño conditions have officially arrived in the Pacific Ocean and are expected to get stronger as we head into the winter of 2026–27.

What is Happening Now?

Scientists have confirmed this based on several factors:

- **Warmer Waters:** Ocean temperatures across the central and eastern equatorial Pacific are currently higher than average.
- **Wind Patterns:** Changes in wind patterns above the ocean surface are consistent with an El Niño pattern.
- **Climate Systems:** Data from both the ocean and the atmosphere, when looked at together, confirm that the event has started.

What to Expect

- **Strengthening:** Models predict that this El Niño will continue to intensify through the upcoming winter.
- **High Strength:** There is a 63% chance that this will be a “very strong” event—potentially one of the most powerful since records began in 1950.
- **Impacts:** While a stronger El Niño makes certain weather outcomes more likely, it is important to remember that it does not guarantee specific weather impacts for every location.

What are El Niño and La Niña?

From the NOAA [website](#): El Niño and La Niña are climate patterns in the Pacific Ocean that can affect weather worldwide. This [video](#) from Ocean Today explains how it works.

The Basics: The ENSO Cycle

Under “normal” conditions, trade winds blow toward the west, pushing warm water toward Asia and allowing cold, nutrient-rich water to rise up near South America. El Niño and La Niña are two opposing climate patterns that disrupt this balance, usually lasting 9 to 12 months and occurring irregularly every two to seven years.

Pattern	What happens	Weather impact
El Niño ("The Little Boy")	The trade winds weaken, allowing the warm water to flow back east toward the Americas.	The Pacific jet stream shifts south. This often makes the northern U.S. and Canada warmer and drier, while the southern U.S. becomes wetter with more flooding. El Niño can affect our weather significantly .
La Niña ("The Little Girl")	The trade winds become extra strong, pushing even more warm water toward Asia. This causes more cold, nutrient-rich water to rise near the Americas.	The jet stream moves north. This typically brings drought to the southern U.S. and heavy rain or snow to the Pacific Northwest and Canada. Winters in the South are usually warmer and drier, while the North is cooler and wetter. It can also lead to more intense hurricane seasons.

This information is provided by [NOAA](#) and the [Climate Prediction Center \(CPC\)](#), part of NOAA. Weekly updates are available [here](#). A probabilistic strength forecast is available [here](#). Send email to <mailto:ncep.list.ens0-update@noaa.gov> to receive email notifications.

