

Sequoia and Kings Canyon

National Parks
National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Sierran Weather

John Muir called the Sierra Nevada a "Gentle Wilderness," which it is indeed! Though the mountains can be harsh on the ill prepared, they offer superb weather for the backpacker, camper and day hiker. Precipitation comes mostly in the

wintertime, and the temperature extremes are generally mild when compared to many other mountainous habitats. The low humidity helps to make even the extreme temperatures more comfortable.

AVERAGE TEMPERATURES & EXTREMES

LOW ELEVATIONS Foothills/Potwisha	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Extreme Low	25	30	30	38	46	47	53	54	45	44	33	24
Average Low	33	36	44	51	56	61	66	69	59	52	44	32
Average High	57	57	67	78	84	89	94	98	89	81	66	55
Extreme High	71	75	83	89	96	108	109	105	101	91	88	75

MIDDLE ELEVATIONS Giant Forest/Grant Grove	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Extreme Low	8	11	5	21	32	33	43	40	31	30	15	9
Average Low	21	20	28	34	42	46	50	53	46	41	32	23
Average High	38	40	48	58	66	71	77	81	71	63	42	38
Extreme High	48	55	65	73	78	88	86	90	82	71	66	47

THE LOW ELEVATIONS Foothills/Potwisha

The Mediterranean climate of the foothills is characterized by mild, wet winters and hot, dry, summers. Precipitation usually occurs from January to mid-May and averages about 26

inches. Rain in the summer is rare. During the winter, low-hanging clouds often drift in from the west obscuring the countryside for several days at a time.

THE MIDDLE ELEVATIONS Giant Forest/Grant Grove

Warm daytime and cool evening temperatures characterize summer in the middle elevations. Occasional afternoon thundershowers can be expected. Much of the 40-45 inches of yearly precipitation comes during the winter. As a result, a deep blanket of snow often covers this

area from December to May, but sub-zero temperatures are rare. Lodgepole Campground, normally has temperatures 10 to 15 degrees colder than the average middle elevation in the fall and winter.

Cedar Grove

Cedar Grove is closed in the winter due to hazardous road conditions, but the summer temperatures are generally hotter than those of

other middle elevations, at times reaching the high 90s. However, a constant breeze makes it quite pleasant.

THE HIGH ELEVATIONS 9,000 feet and above

Summer weather in the High Sierra is remarkably pleasant by mountain standards, but you can expect an occasional thundershower. Be prepared with a good waterproof jacket and lightweight groundcloth or plastic that can be rigged as a tent.

Nighttime temperatures in the summer often drop into the low 30s, occasionally dipping into the 20s. For the backpacker, a three-season sleeping bag usually is a nice compromise to achieve warmth without sacrificing bulk or weight. There are also wide swings in daytime temperatures and layered clothing is a necessity.