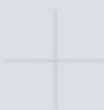


SOLACE^{GLOBAL}



LATEST

TRAVEL ADVISORY





TRAVEL ADVISORY • 15 MAY 2018

2018 Atlantic Hurricane Season to Begin in June

KEY POINTS

- The annual Atlantic hurricane season is set to officially begin in June and ends in November.
- Typically, the August to October period contains the most devastating hurricanes.
- The 2017 season was the fifth-most active season since records began in 1851.



SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

Environmental: The annual Atlantic hurricane season begins in June and runs through November, although hurricanes have occurred outside of this period. Hurricanes originate in the Atlantic basin, which includes the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and the Gulf of Mexico, the eastern North Pacific Ocean, and, less frequently, the central North Pacific Ocean. The most impactful hurricanes are usually experienced between August and October each year.

How is a Hurricane Formed?

Hurricanes begin as tropical disturbances in warm ocean waters with surface temperatures of at least 26.5 degrees Celsius. These systems of low-pressure are fed by energy from the warm seas. If a storm reaches wind speeds of 61km/h, it becomes known as a



tropical depression. A tropical depression becomes a tropical storm when its sustained wind speeds reach 63km/h and then becomes a named storm (the first of the season will be storm Alberto). When a storm possesses wind speeds reaching 119km/h, it becomes a hurricane. Hurricanes generate energy on an enormous scale, drawing energy from warm, moist ocean air and release energy through thunderstorms. Hurricanes spin around a low-energy centre or the ‘eye of the storm’. This area is usually 32 to 48km wide and is home to significantly calmer conditions. The eye of a hurricane is surrounded by an ‘eye wall’, the area with the strongest winds and rain.

Defining a hurricane -The Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale (from the US National Hurricane Center):

Category	Sustained Winds	Types of Damage Due to Hurricane Winds
1	64-82 kt 119-153 km/h	Very dangerous winds will produce some damage: Well-constructed homes could have damage to roof, tiles, and gutters. Large tree branches may snap and trees with shallow roots may be toppled. Damage to power lines could lead to power outages lasting several days.
2	83-95 kt 154-177 km/h	Extremely dangerous winds will cause extensive damage: Well-constructed homes could sustain major damage to their roofs. Many shallowly rooted trees are likely to be uprooted and block numerous roads. Near-total power loss is expected to last from several days to weeks.
3 (major)	96-112 kt 178-208 km/h	Devastating damage will occur: Well-built homes may incur significant damage. Many trees will be uprooted, blocking numerous roads. Electricity and water will be unavailable for several days to weeks after the storm passes.
4 (major)	113-136 kt 209-251 km/h	Catastrophic damage will occur: Well-built homes can sustain severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and/or some exterior walls. Most trees will be snapped or uprooted, and power poles downed, isolating residential areas. Power outages will last weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.
5 (major)	137 kt or higher 252 km/h or higher	Catastrophic damage will occur: A high percentage of homes will be destroyed, with total roof failure and wall collapse. Fallen trees and power poles will isolate residential areas. Power outages will last for weeks to possibly months. Most of the area will be uninhabitable for weeks or months.

Hurricane Damage

A hurricane is damaging in a series of ways. Firstly, a hurricane creates a devastating storm surge that can reach six metres high and extend 161km on making landfall. Approximately 90 per cent of all hurricane-related deaths are caused by storm surges. Tornadoes, torrential rains, flooding, and landslides may follow a hurricane.

The 2017 Hurricane Season

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was most the joint fifth-most active hurricane season since records began in 1851. The 2017 season was hyperactive and featured 17 named storms, 10 hurricanes, and six major hurricanes (above category 3); the highest number of hurricanes since 2005. Last year’s hurricane season in the Atlantic started earlier than usual, with the first system forming in April while the last storm dissipated in November. 2017 was only the second year after 2007 to feature two Category 5 hurricanes to make landfall at that intensity. Most of the damage reported was attributed to Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria and was the costliest season on record – around US\$282 billion worth of damage in total. Thousands in the region, notably in Puerto



TRAVEL ADVISORY • 15 MAY 2018

Rico, continue to live without electricity and other basic utilities.

Predictions for 2018

The impact of a hurricane season is difficult to predict. However, scientists estimate that as sea temperatures warm due to climate change, more damaging storms are predicted to occur. A study by Colorado State University suggests that there could be 14 named storms in 2018. At least seven of these are predicted to reach hurricane intensity, three of which could reach major hurricane strength (category 3-5). This would represent an above average year (the 1950-2017 average for named storms was 11) but potentially less active than the 2017 hurricane season.

SECURITY ADVICE

HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL RISK



Travellers are advised to pay close attention to all weather updates during the June to November period and ensure they have hurricane plans in place. If authorities issue evacuation instructions, it is vital that this is followed immediately.

If and when a hurricane makes landfall, it is advisable to avoid low lying areas because of the increased chances of flooding from storm surges and heavy rain. It is also advised to cover windows with storm shutters and make any alterations to accommodation to ensure protection, such as sandbagging doorways to protect against flooding. If seeking cover, a room without windows is a preferable choice. If flooding occurs, or could occur, the mains power system should be switched off. It is also important to keep a radio in your presence, in order to receive updates and establish when it is safe to leave shelter. Torches should be used, rather than lamps or candles, to prevent unintended fires. If your place of shelter is being destroyed around you, getting in the bath, or under a mattress can offer additional protection.

Food supplies should consist of non-perishable items and be enough to support each group member for at least three days. One gallon of water per person per day is also recommended. Travellers should ensure they have access to an emergency medical kit. It is also advisable that families and loved ones are informed of your current position and kept regularly updated so that they can seek to send assistance in case they lose contact with you. Travellers who are on holiday should follow the instructions of the hotel authorities as they will have their own hurricane plans and formalities.

Travellers may wish to use travel-tracking technology with an intelligence feed to stay updated of storm and security-related events. Travellers utilising air travel in the region should contact their airline to understand what impact any hurricane has on planned flights.

For more information, and to follow the path of any storm, see the United States' National Hurricane Centre website at:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/>.



Solace Global remains available to provide the full range of Travel Risk Management services to clients. Solace Global is also able to provide comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, and evacuation services.

For further details please contact +44 (0)1202 795 801 or email sgr@solaceglobal.com