

How to Predict the Weather Without a Forecast

4. Other

Long before technology was developed to predict the weather, people relied on observation, patterns and folklore to avoid being caught off-guard by the elements. Once you practice these methods and become attuned to the sky, the air, and animal behaviors, it's possible to predict the weather quite reliably.

Look for a red sky. Remember the rhyme: "Red sky at night, sailor's delight; Red sky at morning, sailors take warning." Look for any sign of red in the sky (not a red sun); it will not be a bold orange or red the majority of the time, but that depends a little on where you live

- If you see a red sky during sunset (when you're looking to the west), there is a high pressure system with dry air that is stirring dust particles in the air, causing the sky to look red. Since prevailing front movements and jet streams weather usually move from west to east, the dry air is heading towards you.
- A red sky in the morning (in the East, where the sun rises) means that the dry air has already moved past you, and what follows behind it (on its way towards you) is a low pressure system that carries moisture.

Look for a rainbow in the west. This is the result of the rising sun's morning rays from the east striking moisture in the west. Most major storm fronts in the Northern Hemisphere travel west to east, and a rainbow in the west means moisture, which can mean rain is on its way. On the other hand, a rainbow in the east around sunset means that the rain is on its way out and you can look forward to sunny days.

Remember: *Rainbow in the morning, need for a warning*

Gaze at the moon. If it is reddish or pale, dust is in the air. But if the moon is bright and sharply focused, it's probably because low pressure has cleared out the dust, and low pressure means rain.

- A ring around the moon (caused by light shining through cirrostratus clouds associated with warm fronts and moisture) can indicate that rain will probably fall within the next three days.
- Remember the proverb: *Circle around the moon, rain or snow soon*

Take a deep breath. Close your eyes and smell the air. Plants release their waste in a low pressure atmosphere, generating a smell like compost and indicating an upcoming rain

- Swamps will release gasses just before a storm because of the lower pressure, which leads to unpleasant smells.
- A proverb says *Flowers smell best just before a rain*. Scents are stronger in moist air, associated with rainy weather.

Check for humidity. Many people can feel humidity, especially in their hair (it curls up and gets frizzy). You can also look at the leaves of oak or maple trees. These leaves tend to curl in high humidity, which tends to precede a heavy rain.

- Pine cone scales remain closed if the humidity is high, but open in dry air.
- Under humid conditions, wood swells (look out for those sticky doors).