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The “Climatic” Climate of Toledo, Ohio

It’s cold & snowy in the winter, rainy and usually cool in the spring, and who knows what summer will bring. This is the tale of the climate of my hometown of Toledo, Ohio. Toledo is a city of about 400,000 people located right where Ohio, Michigan and Lake Erie come together; furthermore, it is also located about 65 miles east of where Ohio, Michigan, & Indiana meet. Each season brings its own type of weather, yet each season can never make up her mind (her because Mother Nature is a woman) whether to bring “traditional” Ohio weather or whether to be unusual. No two springs in Toledo are ever the same; in addition, the same is true for winter, summer, and fall. Fall is probably the easiest season to predict.

Almost every fall in Toledo is the same. No matter the summer weather, each fall starts relatively warm in September, and ends up very cold by the time December rolls around. The only thing that is unpredictable is how fast the cold air arrives. There are some falls in which it is still t-shirt and shorts weather even into early November, yet there are others in which a heavy jacket is needed as early as early October. Whereas the rate of temperature drops can vary each fall, the amount of cloudiness and precipitation rarely does.

Once October comes along, the overcast days become much more numerous; moreover, it is rare to get a nice sunny day this late in the year. This is because the winds are coming out of the north from Canada, and the winds pass over Lake Michigan to the northwest, which picks up moisture from the lake, and it drops it right on Northern Ohio. If the air is cold enough, it falls as snow and not just rain. These chilly winds not only cool down the air and bring precipitation, but it makes it feel very raw outside. By the time fall is over, it has already snowed several times, and it is time for old man winter to make his “unwanted” visit.

To sum up the winters in Toledo, think about this. Old man winter is like most in-laws. When both first come to visit you, you have no problem with them. However, both wear out their welcome mat in a hurry; moreover, you are just so happy when they both finally leave. Whereas the in-laws might only stay a few days, old man winter is in no hurry to leave once he arrives in Toledo, and the weather he brings makes one long for spring all winter long. Snow that seems to fall by the foot, freezing cold temperatures, northerly winds that can make one's body think it is well below zero and ice storms late in winter which wreak havoc on trying to commute around the city. Once late April comes along, old man winter finally leaves and spring at last arrives with its mixed bag of weather.

Toledo springs are all almost the same. The temperature doesn't warm up until late April; furthermore, it has happened where jackets are still required until late May! All springs have rain; moreover, it's not the nice drizzle rain, but the rain that brings flooding. Every spring it happens where it rains so much that the whole town is flooded (sometimes it floods simply because the ground is still frozen over from the previous winter). Every once in a while, Toledo has a nice spring where it warms up quickly and the flooding rains don't come, which normally leads to a dry summer.

There are two types of summers in Northern Ohio, either hot and dry, or cool and rainy; moreover, it usually depends on what kind of weather the preceding spring had. If the spring was warm and dry, then summer will be the same; furthermore, if spring was cold and wet, then summer will also be cool and rainy. During the summers that are hot and dry, the weather is usually very quiet. There are a few stretches during which there isn't a cloud in the sky for days. If there are no clouds in the sky, then there is no possible way for it to rain; in addition, there are some years in which Toledo has very little rain. The only reason why Toledo doesn't go through a drought is because of its close proximity to Lake Erie. Thankfully, Lake Erie is able to keep those types of summers bearable, especially when the wind blows off of Lake Erie). Even if the weather is hot and dry, Toledo's close proximity to Lake Erie does cause the humidity to be higher on some days. Wet and cool summers are a different story.

A wet and cool Toledo summer is not very fun; moreover, it is a double whammy. When it rains in the summer, it rains on most days and it rains a lot; also, when it is cool, it is very cool. In fact, there are some days in the summer in which a sweatshirt or a light jacket is needed to stay warm! In these kinds of summers, the winds traditionally come from the north off of Lake Michigan (Toledo is well east of Lake Michigan, but it still influences the weather especially in the winter) and rarely from the southwest. These conditions can make predicting the weather during summer a challenge.

As one can see, northern Ohio has a little bit of everything during all 4 seasons from cool autumns, cold and snowy winters, to unpredictable springs, and marginal summers. However, it's the weather that makes Ohio such a unique place because one can find all types of weather here and rarely does Toledo experience a natural disaster.