

Weather and Clothing – What to Wear and What to Pack

The secret to staying comfortable in Douglas/Agua Prieta is wearing layers of clothing appropriate to the season. Four things will affect your comfort: altitude, humidity, sunshine, and temperature.

The altitude of Douglas and Agua Prieta is about 4,000 ft, or “medium altitude.” This means there is about 3% less “effective oxygen.” Humidity levels can range from 5% in winter to 60% during summer monsoons. The combination of medium altitude and lower humidity means it will be easier to become dehydrated.

Water is life. It’s important to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and it’s a good idea to start hydrating a few days before you arrive. We have, on average, 285 sunny days each year; that’s 80 more than the national average. To stay protected from the sun, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts (these are particularly important for desert hikes, even in summer) and a hat if needed. Sunglasses and hats with visors help protect eyes from the glare and are useful even in winter.

Temperature varies from season to season as well as during the day. January weather can vary from 26F to 65F each day, starting out cold and requiring layers of clothing to keep warm, and becoming warm during the middle of the day, necessitating removing layers. As evening comes on, so does the chill, requiring the addition of layers. In the summer (May thru September), the variation can be from 66F in the early morning to over 100F at midday. More layers are needed in the winter season; fewer layers are needed in the summer.

The summer monsoon season officially begins June 15 and runs through September 30. Locals consider the monsoons to have arrived when the dew point exceeds 55 for three days in a row, which usually doesn’t occur until July. After that, there could be a short, daily rain storm for the remainder of the season. Or not.

To Wear *en route* to Frontera:

- Shoes/socks for walking, hiking in desert (warm shoes and socks in winter)
- Durable pants
- Light or medium weight long sleeved shirt (depending upon season)
- Sweater, fleece, or sweatshirt (if winter, otherwise pack in suitcase)
- Jacket (summer or fall weight, depending upon season)
- Hat (for sun protection; warm hat for winter)
- Gloves (depending upon season, or pack)

To Pack: weight and warmth of fabric depends upon the season

- Pajamas (warm for winter)
- Extra socks and underwear
- Long-sleeved t-shirts or turtlenecks are useful in winter
- 1 extra pair of pants
- 2–3 long-sleeved or short-sleeved shirts
- 1 extra pair of shoes
- Light, foldable rain poncho if you go during the monsoon season
- Medications, toiletries in carry-on bag

Plan to wear shirts/tops a couple of times during the week. You don’t need to get extra dressed up for church but save a clean and presentable shirt/top for that occasion. Don’t think fashion; think decent and practical. It can get quite cold at night in the winter so you will benefit greatly by wearing warm layers and having gloves, cap or ear muffs, and a scarf for the Tuesday night vigil.

Jackets with multiple pockets are helpful for carrying sunglasses or regular eyeglasses, small notebooks, pens or pencils, gloves, crushable hats, aspirin or similar, etc. Or, a small, foldable messenger bag or backpack.

TRAVEL LIGHT – a carry-on suitcase or rollaboard and a small personal carry-on item are all you should need for a week. (See also the paragraph about dress on page 11 of the Mission Delegation Manual.)