



HURRICANES

Did you know?...



- ➔ The deadliest hurricane in U.S. history hit Galveston, TX in 1900. The "Galveston Hurricane" as it was called, killed six thousand people, mostly from drowning, when an eight to fifteen-foot storm surge inundated Galveston Island.
- ➔ The number 1 killer storm in recorded history struck Calcutta in 1737, with 300,000 officially dead.
- ➔ Nearly all deaths associated hurricanes are caused by the storm surge which is the dome of water that forms near the eye just before the storm hits land. In 1969, Hurricane Camille generated a 25 foot storm surge.
- ➔ For the deadliest hurricanes to hit the United States go [here](#).
- ➔ Hurricane Andrew, which hit South Florida and Louisiana in 1992, was the most costly hurricane ever, with an estimated damage of at least \$30 billion.
- ➔ The record for the most hurricanes in a season is 12, set in 1969. Though hurricanes can occur at any time, the official hurricane season in the Atlantic falls between June 1 and November 30. An average year has six to eight hurricanes, which occur mostly in August, September, and October.
- ➔ September is the most active of the hurricane season's months.
- ➔ On the average 6 Atlantic hurricanes occur per year.
- ➔ The hurricane season in North Atlantic is June 1st to November 30th. Over the Western Pacific the tropical cyclone season is never quite over.

- ➔ Different countries have different names like the Philippines is Bagulo, Indian Ocean is Cyclone, Pacific is Typhoon, and Australia is Willy Willy.
- ➔ A hurricane can be up to 600 miles in diameter and can reach eight miles into the air.
- ➔ Many hurricanes produce tornadoes.
- ➔ Storms are given names when they become tropical storms.
- ➔ The average life of a hurricane is nine days. The hurricane is most destructive during its first 12 hours onshore. A typical eye measures 20 miles (32 kilometers) across.
- ➔ Often the right side of a hurricane causes the worst storm surge, winds, and tornadoes.
- ➔ The word "hurricane" comes from Huracan, the god of big winds and evil spirits once worshiped by the Maya people of Central America.
- ➔ Hurricanes often cause between 3-6 inches (75-100 mm) of rainfall in a short period. In 1921 a hurricane deposited 23 inches (584mm) on Texas in a single day.
- ➔ Each second some 2 million metric tons of air are circulated in, up, and out of the hurricane.
- ➔ Every second a hurricane releases as much energy as the explosion of a atomic bomb at Hiroshima.
- ➔ The energy released by a hurricane would, if converted into electricity, power the United States for 3 years.
- ➔ The heat energy released by a hurricane in one day can equal the energy released by the fusion of four hundred 20 mega-ton hydrogen bombs.

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HURRICANE!

Dark clouds fill the sky. It's the middle of the day, but it looks like night. The wind howls. Rain pelts the ground so hard that holes form in the mud. Tree branches bend and crack. Whole trees are uprooted and crash down. Store windows break. The roofs of buildings sail through the air. Electric wires send out sparks and dangle dangerously from broken utility poles. Signs fly across highways. Water floods the streets. You are in the middle of a hurricane - the largest, fiercest storm of nature. How do these storms start, and how can we protect ourselves from them?

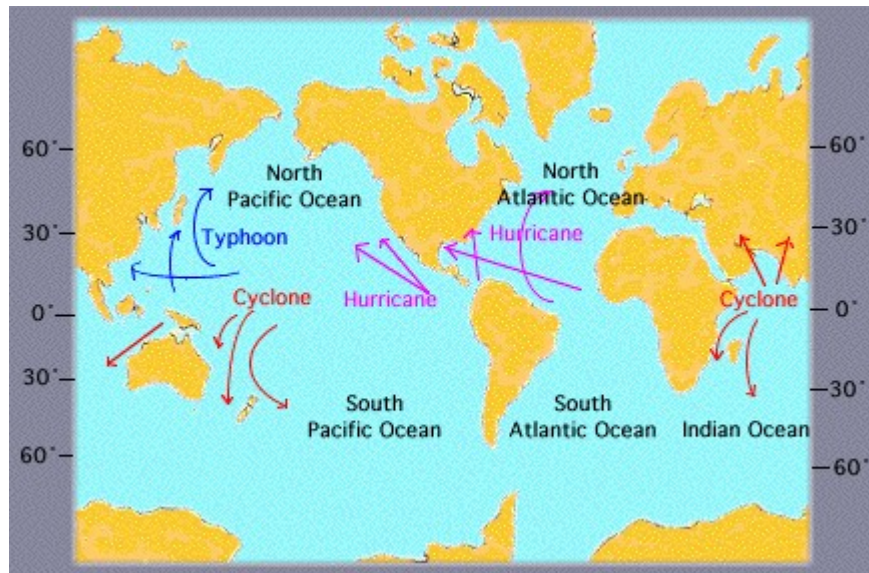


WHAT ARE HURRICANES?



The air that surrounds the earth is always moving (for a visual demonstration, click [here](#) - cool!). It swirls, blows, sinks, and rises. In summer and early fall, great masses of air sit over the warm, tropical oceans. If a mass of air gets warm enough and picks up a lot of moisture, it can start swirling. When this happens, a hurricane, or "one-eyed monster" is born. A hurricane is a storm with winds of 74 miles per hour or more.

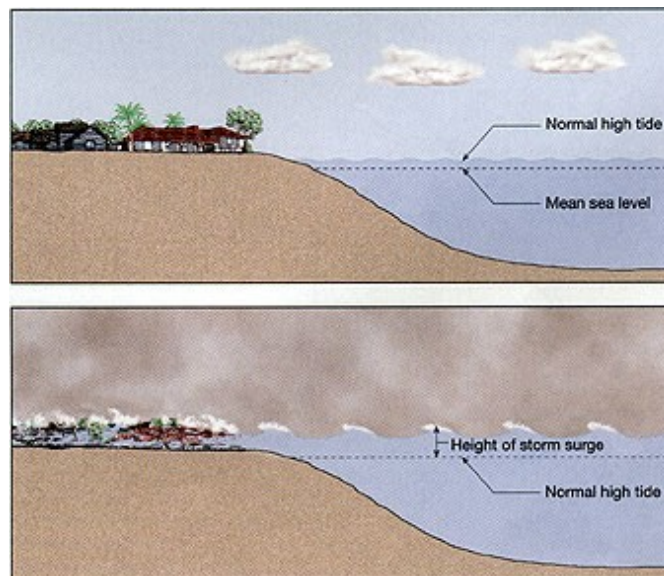
Hurricane is just one name for a strong **tropical** (*near the equator*) cyclone. When the same kind of storm occurs in the western North Pacific Ocean, it's called a *typhoon*. In the southwest Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, the storms are called *cyclones*. Hurricanes turn counter-clockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere.



WHY ARE HURRICANES DANGEROUS?

As hurricanes move over land, strong winds and heavy rains pound the area for hours. Buildings can come crashing down. Tree branches, telephone poles, and even whole roofs can fly through the air like bullets. In just a few hours, neighborhoods can be completely destroyed. Hurricanes can bring serious hazards. These hazards include heavy rains, high winds, storm surge, rip tides, and tornadoes that can cause damage to houses that are in the path of a hurricane. Even when the hurricane has not yet made landfall (when the hurricane reaches land), its effects can be dangerous.

Storm surge pushes seawater on shore during a hurricane, flooding towns near the coast. A storm surge is a **tropical** (*near the equator*). As a hurricane moves over the ocean, the ocean may rise 10 feet or more above its normal level. Huge waves crash along the coast and move inland, destroying everything in their path and causing massive flooding.



Heavy rains cause flooding along the coastal areas as well as inland. Flooding is the major cause of hurricane related deaths.