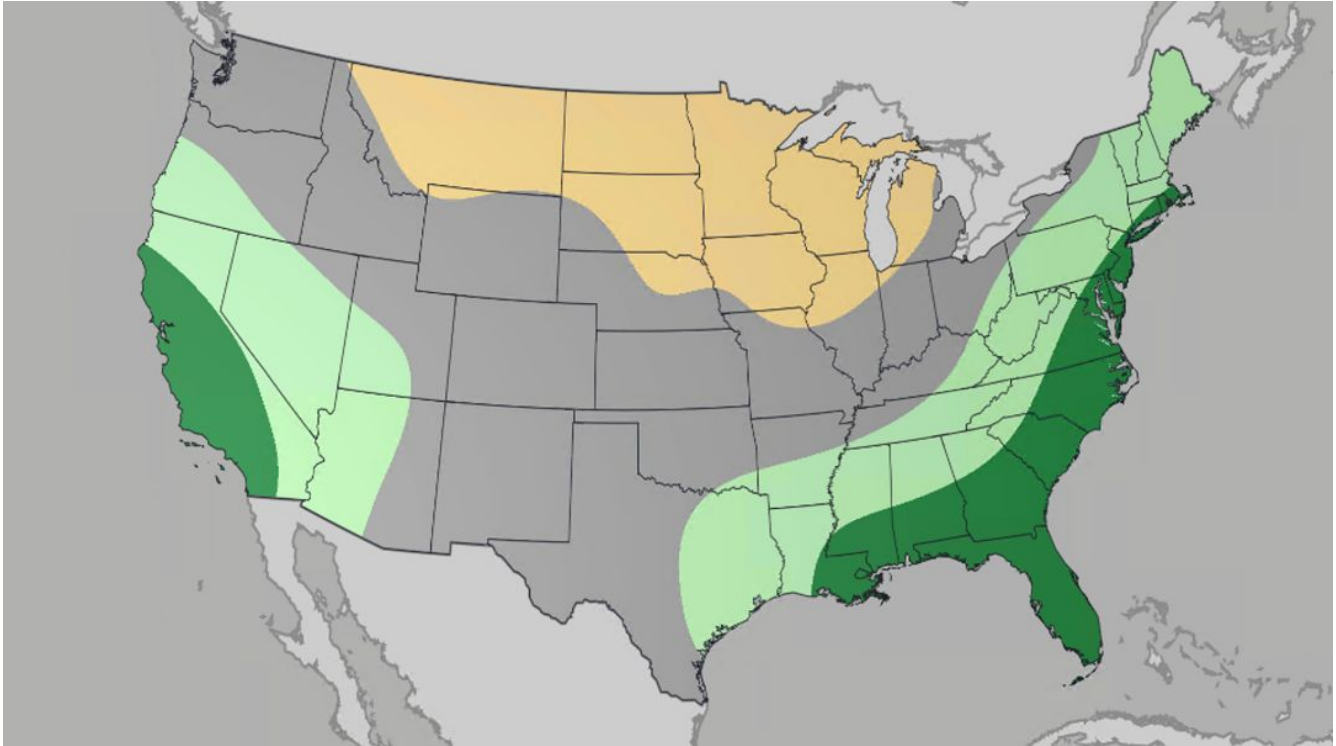


Winter outlook: El Niño could fuel Southern snow threat into early 2027

 weather.com/2026/09/11/news/weather/december-january-february-winter-outlook-is-in-see-who-gets-snow

Jennifer Gray, Sara Tonks

September 11, 2026



How will El Niño impact how your winter feels?

Winter brings to mind the holiday season, cozy nights by the fireplace and chilly temperatures — but could El Niño flip the switch on the season? Much of the country could see above-average warmth, but there is one region that could see even chillier temperatures than usual. Meteorologist Caitlin Kaiser has an early look at what winter will feel like for you.

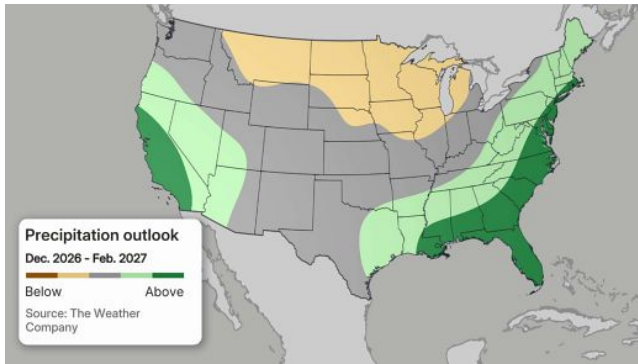
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How will El Niño impact how your winter feels?

This winter, [El Niño](#) could deliver parts of the Rockies and Sierra their best, most consistent snow in years, while a lack of cold air could mean early-season Northeast storms are mostly rain and little snow.

Waxing the skis? Before you circle opening day, here's what this winter actually has in store, and it depends quite a bit on which mountain range you have on your list. The Weather Company just released its winter 2026-27 outlook, and it's a tale of two very different seasons.

Key takeaways



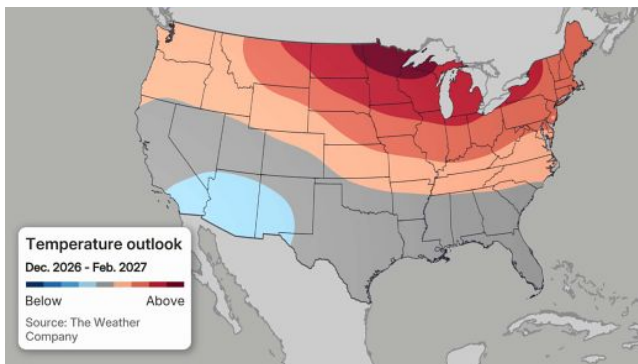
December 2026 through February 2027 precipitation outlook

The Southern Rockies and Sierra are this winter's jackpot. An active storm track should deliver frequent, reliable snowfall from Lake Tahoe to the Wasatch and Colorado Rockies. This is a big step up from last year's inconsistent and lack-luster season.

Northeast resorts face a rain-versus-snow gamble. A stormier pattern is expected along the East Coast, but without enough cold air behind it, especially early in the season, a lot of that precipitation may fall as rain instead of snow.

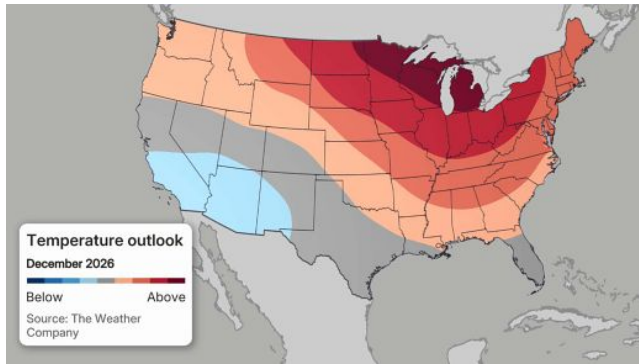
A strong El Niño is driving the forecast. It's pushing the jet stream north and setting up a warmer, drier winter from the Midwest into the Northern Rockies and Cascades.

"Compared to last winter, resorts from California to Colorado are expected to enjoy much more consistent, reliable snowfall," notes The Weather Company meteorologists.



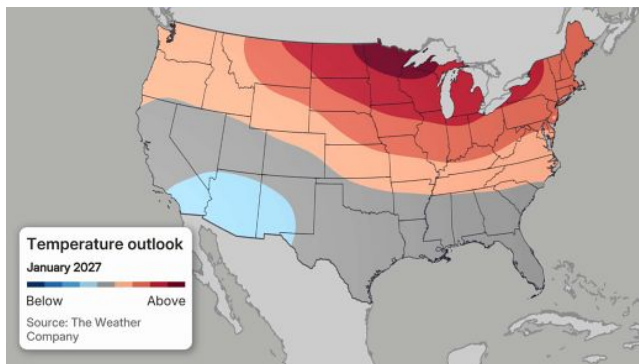
December 2026 through February 2027 temperature outlook

Month-to-month temperatures



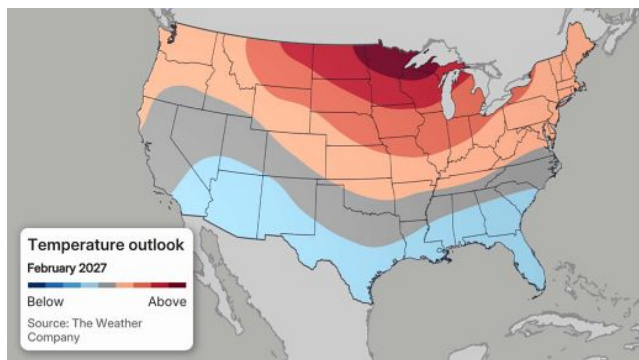
December 2026 temperature outlook

December: Our meteorologists are confident that winter will open on a warm note. Much-above-average temperatures are likely from the Central Appalachians into New England. The areas that could see the greatest departure from average will be found across the Midwest and Great Lakes, where they will get an unusually warm start to winter.



January 2027 temperature outlook

January: Much of the northern half of the country will stay above average as we approach mid-winter, keeping snowfall potential limited even as storms roll through. The exception could be the Deep South, where we are expected to be cooler than average. [Southern snow or ice](#) anyone?



February 2027 temperature outlook

February: This is when we should start to get some cooler air into northern latitudes. The Northeast should see improved access to cold air, setting up a stronger, colder finish to winter with a more favorable storm track. But the Great Lakes and Midwest still trend warmer, which could spell a bleak season for some of the resorts in the Midwest and Northern Rockies.