

## SUNSHINE GUIDE TO GREAT SAND DUNES NATIONAL PARK, COLORADO

LOCATION: Great Sand Dunes National Park lies up against the western flank of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in south-central Colorado. The Monument Headquarter is some thirty-two miles northeast of Alamosa. Elevations in the Monument range between about 8,000 to over 14,000 feet above sea level. The Park's chief reason for existence is a collection of some of the largest sand dunes in the world, and definitely the largest in North America. Some of the dunes rise more than six-hundred feet (sixty stories) from base to crest. Kids love it. There is a visitor's center, a campground, and several self-guiding trails. You can hike, climb the dunes, slide back down again, mountain bike several of the trails, cool your burning feet in the streams, and go horseback-riding.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT	9:53	10:47	11:56	13:09	14:12	14:44	14:30	13:38	12:29	11:16	10:12	9:37
HOURS OF SUNSHINE	7:22	7:56	8:40	9:31	10:21	11:32	10:45	10:09	9:42	8:43	7:34	6:52
AREA OF BLUE SKY	55%	53%	50%	50%	48%	59%	52%	54%	63%	64%	59%	57%
LOW FOR MONTH	-8°	-2°	7°	13°	25°	35°	40°	41°	31°	19°	4°	-3°
SUNRISE TEMPERATURE	4°	10°	17°	26°	33°	42°	47°	46°	38°	27°	16°	7°
AFTERNOON TEMPERATURE	35°	41°	48°	58°	67°	77°	81°	78°	73°	62°	47°	36°
HIGH FOR MONTH	45°	50°	57°	66°	74°	84°	86°	84°	80°	71°	56°	49°
FROSTY MORNINGS	99%	100%	97%	75%	27%	3%	0%	0%	6%	57%	95%	99%
AFTERNOONS OVER 90°	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
AFTERNOON HUMIDITY	56%	46%	37%	29%	30%	26%	35%	37%	33%	34%	47%	56%
DRY DAYS	97%	93%	94%	90%	90%	90%	81%	81%	90%	94%	93%	94%
REASONABLY DRY DAYS	97%	96%	95%	94%	93%	93%	84%	83%	91%	95%	96%	97%
5-DAY PRECIPITATION	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.10	0.14	0.12	0.25	0.25	0.15	0.11	0.06	0.04
LIKELY SNOWFALL	3.3"	5.2"	5.5"	3.7"	1.1"	0.0"	0.0"	0.0"	0.1"	2.5"	3.6"	3.8"
SNOWY DAYS	3%	7%	6%	10%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	6%	7%	6%
THUNDER DAYS	0%	0%	1%	5%	20%	22%	40%	38%	15%	3%	0%	0%
FOGGY DAYS	8%	5%	5%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	6%	9%

COMMENTS: Bright sunshine is likely on 75% of the year's daylight hours. This might range from a low of 71% in December, to a high of 78% in June. The year's lowest temperature should be close to -11°, and the highest should be near 88°. Sensible afternoon temperatures (the ones you actually feel) will be up to 4° cooler than actual ones during the warmer months. The most dramatic times to visit are in the early morning and late afternoon hours, when the shadows are their most photogenic and the dunes their most colorful.