

SUNSHINE GUIDE TO CUSTER AND THE SOUTHERN BLACK HILLS, SOUTH DAKOTA

LOCATION: The Black Hills rise from the high plains of southwestern South Dakota and spill over the state border into Wyoming. The highest elevation is Harney Peak, at 7,242 above sea level. Since Rapid City, on the plains at the foot of the Black Hills, is already at 3,247 feet, this only leaves some 4,000 feet of vertical relief. This would be enough to be called mountains back east, but out west it only qualifies as “hills”. This guide applies to the southern part of the Hills, where most of the attractions are located. Elevations range from around 3,500 to 5,500 at most attractions.

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
HOURS OF DAYLIGHT	9:20	10:28	11:54	13:25	14:43	15:24	15:07	14:00	12:34	11:04	9:44	9:00
HOURS OF SUNSHINE	5:20	6:25	7:25	8:12	8:56	10:04	11:06	10:22	8:32	7:08	5:24	4:51
AREA OF BLUE SKY	39%	39%	36%	36%	38%	46%	58%	58%	55%	50%	40%	40%
LOW FOR MONTH	-18°	-11°	-6°	6°	21°	33°	41°	36°	24°	17°	-3°	-12°
SUNRISE TEMPERATURE	8°	12°	18°	28°	38°	47°	52°	50°	40°	30°	19°	12°
AFTERNOON TEMPERATURE	35°	40°	45°	56°	66°	77°	85°	84°	74°	63°	47°	40°
HIGH FOR MONTH	51°	56°	63°	73°	83°	91°	98°	95°	89°	78°	62°	54°
FROSTY MORNINGS	98%	98%	94%	72%	27%	3%	0%	2%	22%	63%	93%	97%
AFTERNOONS OVER 90°	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	12%	29%	27%	10%	0%	0%	0%
AFTERNOON HUMIDITY	58%	57%	52%	44%	46%	47%	39%	35%	37%	41%	53%	59%
DRY DAYS	88%	91%	85%	79%	71%	68%	72%	77%	83%	87%	91%	90%
REASONABLY DRY DAYS	97%	95%	92%	85%	82%	78%	82%	87%	90%	94%	97%	95%
5-DAY PRECIPITATION	0.06	0.08	0.13	0.28	0.46	0.53	0.44	0.27	0.20	0.12	0.07	0.06
LIKELY SNOWFALL	7.8"	8.9"	12.5"	10.1"	1.3"	0.4"	0.0"	0.0"	0.6"	2.5"	6.5"	8.0"
SNOWY DAYS	19%	14%	23%	13%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	13%	17%
THUNDER DAYS	0%	0%	0%	4%	17%	34%	34%	27%	10%	2%	0%	0%
FOGGY DAYS	5%	6%	7%	5%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	6%	5%

COMMENTS: Bright sunshine is likely on 64% of the year’s daylight hours. This might range from a low of 54% in December, to a high of 74% in August. The year’s lowest temperature should be close to -19°, and the highest should be near 100°. Sensible afternoon temperatures (the ones you actually feel) will be up to 4° cooler than actual ones during the warmer months. Attractions in this part of the Park include Mount Rushmore National Memorial, Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, the Crazy Horse Monument, Custer State Park, and much more. The table assumes elevations of around 4,500 feet. Higher elevations will be cooler and wetter, lower ones warmer and drier. There is no shortage of resorts, hotel, motels, guest ranches, restaurants, and other amenities in the many towns in the area. Some, however, may be closed from November through April, or operate on limited hours.