

El Nino and Totality for Perry County

When it comes to viewing a total solar eclipse, weather is everything. We experienced heavy clouds for the partial annular eclipse on October 14, 2024, and we all know the saying April showers bring May flowers so what's an eclipse chaser to do when most everyone will be dodging clouds? The weather across North America on April 8, 2024, is certainly questionable. The El Nino event that began doesn't change the big picture, but it does introduce some problems that might affect the viewing plans of travelers. Even in a location where clouds are prevalent the sky will darken, animals will have confused nocturnal behaviors, and you will notice your surroundings oddly. The partial eclipse on October 14th came and went and unless you had a pair of eclipse glasses to view the sun most people were oblivious to the event. The total solar eclipse will capture your attention clouds or no clouds. But as we continue to be weather aware and navigate the cloud climatology reports April typically poses cloudy issues for most of the country. The average April cloud cover is lowest in the south, over Mexico and Texas, which is why they are favored destinations for the total solar eclipse. As you travel north the clouds become increasingly heavier, but Missouri is holding its own according to the latest cloud climatology data. Jay Anderson, meteorologist has calibrated NASA satellites with numbers from an El Nino effect possible for April 2024. Jay's research has substantial updates with weather changes regarding this El Nino effect that can be adjusted for satellite deviations. The latest cloud climatology report is based on more than twenty years of data collected from orbit by NASA's Aqua and Terra satellites. This data is not without complications, but for comparison of one region with another, they serve the purpose. Jay shares that El Nino disrupts the global climate- in fact, after the annual cycle of seasons it is the strongest of Earth's climate forcing mechanisms, so the question that is being asked is, "What is El Nino going to do to the cloud-cover prospects in April 2024? While Aqua and Terra haven't been around long enough to give a good answer to that question, other polar-orbiting satellites have, going back to 1979. Jay states that there were some unexpected results interesting to those of us located in Perry County. Along the eclipse path, from Durango in Mexico to the Missouri Bootheel and even as far as Carbondale, Illinois the analysis shows a reduction in cloudiness of 5%-15%. I'll take that! But beyond southern Illinois the impact of El Nino has maybe only improved their cloud chances by 2% except for part of the path near Montreal. This could drive eclipse chasers north of us south to clearer skies in Missouri. If you would like to know more about climatology and the weather surrounding celestial events and the 2024 Eclipse, check out eclipsophile.com. So, get your eclipse glasses and plan to have an extraordinary experience!