

Had enough of the heat? Baltimore once hit 90 degrees 25 days in a row.

By Victoria Stavish

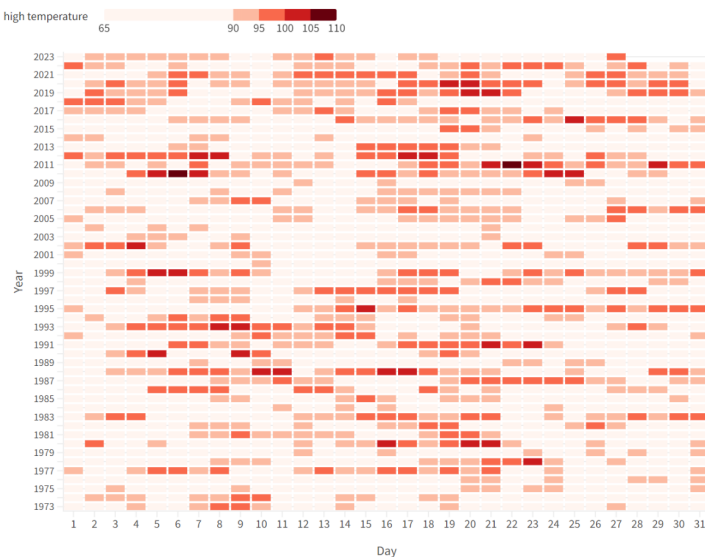
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/maryland/baltimore-city/bs-md-ci-heat-wave-data-20230728-kbbuygdhn5fx7bonscgomxmn6a-story.html>

Baltimore's warmest month is going out like it came in: With a **heat wave**. Saturday is expected to be the **fourth straight day** the temperature reaches at least 90 degrees. Stretches like this have happened nearly every year for decades — this would be the 71st time since 1940 there's been a streak of at least four days — but climate change is making them more likely, experts say.

Past summers have seen as many as 25 consecutive days when the temperature hit 90 degrees. So far this summer, the longest stretch has been seven, from July 2 to July 8, followed by a four-day span from July 11 to July 15. AccuWeather considers three or more straight 90-degree days in Baltimore to be a heat wave.

July in Baltimore

During the area's hottest month, streaks of 90+ degree days are common and happen nearly every year.



Source: [National Weather Service](#), [National Centers for Environmental Information](#) • Victoria Stavish/The Baltimore Sun
Note: Temperatures for July 22, 2023 onward are from NWS while historical data is from NOAA

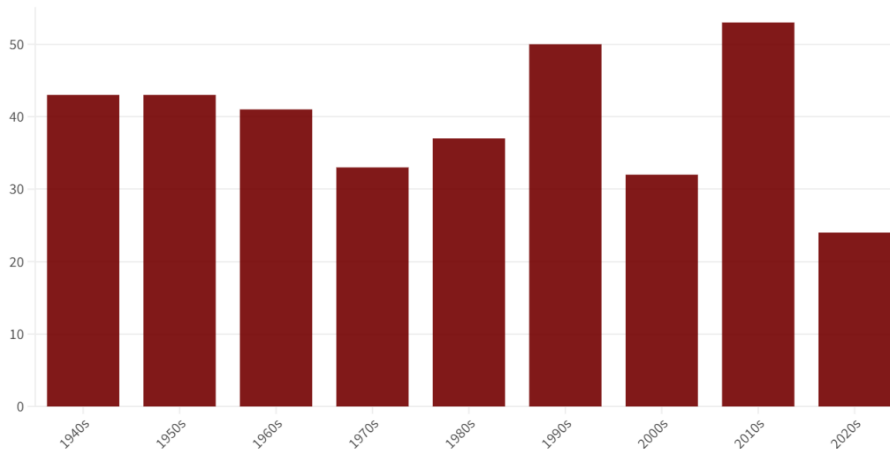
• A Flourish heatmap

While far from the longest, the current run has been severe. Baltimore saw a high of 97 degrees and a heat index of 106 degrees on Thursday. The wave is expected to peak on Friday, with temperatures reaching 100 degrees and the heat index reaching 110 degrees. Sunday is predicted to be slightly cooler, peaking at a temperature of 93 degrees and a heat index of 103, according to The National Weather Service. The heat index combines the air temperature with humidity levels to measure how hot it feels.

While it's rare for a year to pass in Baltimore without stringing together at least three consecutive 90+ degree days, spates of them have become more common. Of the 12 years since 1940 that have had seven or more such stretches, eight of those occurred in the 21st century and six of them in the past decade.

Number of streaks of three or more 90+ degree days by decade

AccuWeather considers present-day Baltimore to be in a heat wave if the temperature reaches 90 degrees at least three days in a row.



Source: [National Centers for Environmental Information](#), [National Weather Service](#) • Victoria Stavish/The Baltimore Sun

• A Flourish chart

During Baltimore's first heat wave this month it was warm globally: July 3 and 4 broke the record for the hottest days on earth, according to estimates from University of Maine's [Climate Reanalyzer](#). According to the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service, the first three weeks of July were the warmest three-week period recorded on earth.

"The probability that we're going to have 90 degree days in the summer is going to become increasingly likely," said Matt Fitzpatrick, Professor and Associate Director for Research at The University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. "That doesn't mean we can't have a cool day; it doesn't mean we can't have a cool month."

The 25-day heat streak in 1995, which lasted from July 12 to August 5, was deemed responsible for at least nine deaths, [poor air quality](#), the derailment of a Baltimore Metro train and harmed poultry, soy and corn businesses.

During the oppressive streak, residents flocked to water and snowball stands, and Daisy, a female rhino at what was then called The Baltimore Zoo, waded into her pool for the first time in three years.

During extreme heat it's important to stay hydrated, limit time outside and take precautions if you do go outside. The young and elderly are at highest risk, especially those in areas with less tree coverage and more pavement.

While heat stroke and heat exhaustion are common heat-related illnesses, pre-existing chronic conditions can be exacerbated during heat waves, causing an excess in hospitalizations due to heat that are often undercounted, said Jaime Madrigano, associate professor at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

A recent report by the Center for American Progress estimated that in neighboring Virginia, heat events resulted in almost 7,000 additional emergency department visits and nearly 2,000 additional heat-related hospital admissions each summer.

What more frequent and intense heat waves could do to numbers like those, Madrigano suggested, means they're no longer just a summer problem, but something decision makers need to be thinking about year-round.

"We also need to think long term about how we make our community more resilient," Madrigano said, "just thinking a lot about our infrastructure, about our buildings, about housing and energy. We sort of need to plan for a hotter future."