

= Hurricane Inez =

Hurricane Inez was a major hurricane that affected the Caribbean , Bahamas , Florida , and Mexico in 1966 . It was the first storm on record to affect all of those areas . It originated from a tropical wave over Africa , and became a tropical depression by September 21 . It moved slowly westward , initially failing to intensify much ; it was upgraded to Tropical Storm Inez on September 24 . The storm strengthened into a hurricane and was quickly intensifying when it struck the French overseas region of Guadeloupe on September 27 . Inez severely damaged the island 's banana and sugar crops , and thousands of homes were damaged , leaving 10 @, @ 000 people homeless . Damage on Guadeloupe was estimated at \$ 50 million , and there were 40 deaths . After entering the Caribbean , Inez briefly weakened before restrengthening , attaining peak sustained winds of 150 mph (240 km / h) on September 28 . That day a Hurricane Hunters flight reported a gust of 197 mph (317 km / h) , which was the highest recorded at the time .

Continuing westward , Inez made landfall as a small hurricane on the Barahona Peninsula of the Dominican Republic . There , the storm flooded many rivers and destroyed over 800 houses . Nationwide , there were about 100 deaths and \$ 12 million in damage . After affecting the country , Inez struck southwestern Haiti , where it was considered the worst hurricane since the 1920s . As many as 1 @, @ 000 people were killed , and 60 @, @ 000 people were left homeless . Damage totaled \$ 20 @. @ 35 million in Haiti , prompting the United States government to send aid for the first time in nearly ten years due to previous mishandling of funds . Inez weakened quickly over Hispaniola , although it reintensified into a major hurricane before striking southeastern Cuba on September 30 . In the country , 125 @, @ 000 people were forced to evacuate , and there were three deaths and \$ 20 million in damage .

The hurricane moved slowly over Cuba for two days before emerging into the Atlantic Ocean near the Bahamas . It was expected to continue out to sea , although it stalled and resumed its previous westward path . In the Bahamas , heavy rainfall and high tides caused flooding , which killed five people and left \$ 15 @. @ 5 million in damage . Hurricane @- @ force winds occurred throughout the Florida Keys , where 160 homes and 190 trailers were damaged . Salt spray damaged crops in the region , and there was \$ 5 million in damage and four deaths . In the Straits of Florida , Inez capsized a boat of Cuban refugees , killing 45 people . In the northern Gulf of Mexico , a helicopter crashed after carrying evacuees from an oil rig , killing 11 people . The hurricane threatened the northern Yucatán Peninsula , and although it remained offshore , Inez produced flooding and caused some power outages . At its final landfall , Inez flooded portions of Tamaulipas and cut off roads to Tampico . About 84 @, @ 000 people were left homeless , and the hurricane destroyed at least 2 @, @ 500 houses . Damage was estimated at \$ 104 million , and there were 74 deaths in Mexico .

= = Meteorological history = =

The origins of Inez were from a tropical wave that formed over the Sahara in central Africa on September 15 from the monsoon . It moved westward in the prevailing winds , exiting the west coast of Africa on September 18 . The precursor to Inez was a disturbance along the northern portion of the wave , which was considered a tropical depression by September 18 in the annual tropical cyclone summary . Tracked by satellites , the system moved to the west @- @ southwest , and was officially classified a tropical depression on September 21 about halfway between the Lesser Antilles and Africa . The system remained weak as it turned toward the west @- @ northwest . A Hurricane Hunters flight indicated some intensification in the system , prompting the National Hurricane Center (NHC) to initiate advisories on Tropical Storm Inez , located about 800 mi (1 @, @ 300 km) east of Martinique . With warm water temperatures , the storm developed a circular area of convection over its center . Inez slowed while curving westward around a ridge to its north and quickly intensified , reaching hurricane status on September 26 .

On September 27 , Inez strengthened to reach winds of 120 mph (195 km / h) , making it a Category 3 hurricane on the Saffir @- @ Simpson scale . Later that day , it moved directly over the

island of Guadeloupe . At the time , Inez was a small cyclone , with hurricane @-@ force winds extending 50 mi (80 km) from the center ; meteorologists labeled it as a " micro @-@ hurricane ... because of its characteristic small , tight cloud structure and strong maximum surface wind . " Its structure became disrupted by the island , and the central pressure rose from 961 mbar (28 @. @ 4 inHg) to 970 mbar (29 inHg) , indicative of weakening . However , Inez re @-@ intensified after entering the eastern Caribbean Sea , reaching a minimum pressure of 927 mbar (27 @. @ 4 inHg) south of Puerto Rico on September 28 . The Hurricane Hunters reported sustained winds of 197 mph (317 km / h) at a height of 8 @, @ 000 ft (2 @, @ 400 m) , the strongest winds recorded for the storm . The same flight estimated surface winds between 150 to 175 mph (241 to 282 km / h) near the center . The peak intensity listed in the Atlantic hurricane database is 150 mph (240 km / h) , making Inez a strong Category 4 hurricane .

While near peak intensity , Inez was located about 160 mi (260 km) southwest of San Juan , Puerto Rico , and the eye was tracked by radar from the island . Its increasing outflow caused Tropical Storm Judith to the east over the central Atlantic to dissipate . On September 29 , the small but powerful hurricane made landfall on the Barahona Peninsula , and quickly weakened over land . It briefly moved offshore and struck the southern peninsula of Haiti near Jacmel . The eye emerged into the Windward Passage near Léogâne , although severely weakened . The pressure rose to 987 mbar (29 @. @ 1 inHg) , and the winds decreased to 90 mph (150 km / h) over land . However , Inez quickly re @-@ intensified over water , reaching winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) on September 30 before striking southeastern Cuba near Guantánamo Bay . When Inez was over Cuba , forecasters had difficulty in predicting the storm 's future ; it was expected that the hurricane would move to the north off the east coast of the United States due to a weakness in the ridge to the north . The hurricane drifted west @-@ northwestward within light steering currents , weakening over the high terrain but later moving offshore the southern coast of Cuba . While over water , the eye reorganized , and the cyclone maintained hurricane intensity . Inez eventually turned to a northward drift over central Cuba and emerged into the Atlantic Ocean on October 2 .

Shortly after exiting Cuba into the Atlantic , Inez weakened into a tropical storm , and was moving northeastward through the Bahamas about 24 hours later than forecast . At the time , the storm was expected to continue to the northeast around the Bermuda high . With little outflow and a large , diffuse circulation , Inez did not restrengthen much despite otherwise favorable conditions , potentially due to a nearby trough . The movement slowed , and the 1966 hurricane summary remarked that " Inez probably became nearly stationary closer to the United States mainland than any other storm . " On October 3 , Inez turned to the west @-@ southwest as another ridge strengthened over the western Gulf of Mexico . Over the subsequent few days , the eye moved directly over the Florida Keys from Key Largo to Key West and continued through the Gulf of Mexico while slowly intensifying . On October 7 , Inez brushed the northern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula with hurricane @-@ force winds . By then , the ridge had begun to weaken , allowing the hurricane to turn more west @-@ northwestward . On October 8 , Inez attained a secondary peak intensity of 140 mph (220 km / h) , with a pressure of 948 mbar (28 @. @ 0 inHg) . Briefly threatening the coastline of Texas , Inez turned to the southwest after the ridge again strengthened . On October 10 , the hurricane made its final landfall near Tampico , Tamaulipas , in northeastern Mexico . It weakened rapidly over the region 's high terrain , dissipating on October 11 .

The unusual track of Inez marked the first time on record that a tropical cyclone affected the Lesser and Greater Antilles , Bahamas , Florida , and Mexico . The Associated Press described Inez as the " first to strike the Yucatán Peninsula in many years . " It was also the first to move across the Gulf of Mexico without turning to the north so late in the season , and the 65 advisories issued by the NHC was the highest number at the time . The path taken by Inez was compared to Hurricane Betsy in 1965 , which also slowed and moved erratically due to a strong ridge . Forecasters had difficulty with the hurricane because of its unusual path , as well as the inability to fly the Hurricane Hunters into Inez while it was over Cuba .

= = Preparations = =

In Guadeloupe , which was the first area the hurricane affected , residents evacuated to schools set up as shelters . Pan American World Airways canceled flights to the region . When Inez was near peak intensity , the NHC warned residents in southern Haiti and the Dominican Republic of the danger posed by the hurricane . The agency emphasized that the eye was visible on radar to calm tension of an unexpected change in track . In general , hurricane warnings were issued 24 hours in advance , with the exception of southeastern Florida due to the hurricane 's slowing track . Overall , 250 @, @ 000 people evacuated along the path of Inez . At Guantánamo Bay , officials ordered residents at the naval base to evacuate to storm shelters . Large ships at the port there were moved to Jamaica before the storm struck . Throughout eastern Cuba , Premier Fidel Castro ordered about 125 @, @ 000 people to evacuate in low @-@ lying areas , mostly in Oriente Province . United States Air Force tracking stations in the Bahamas were secured or moved to safer locations . Residents in the Florida Keys boarded up windows and store fronts , and hundreds of people evacuated to a shelter in Key West . In southeastern Florida , government offices and schools closed .

Along the Yucatán peninsula , about 15 @, @ 000 people were evacuated from the coastal city of Progreso , in a region that seldom experiences hurricanes . In the northern Gulf of Mexico , a helicopter crashed after evacuating workers from an oil platform about 65 mi (105 km) south @-@ southwest of Morgan City , Louisiana , in otherwise calm conditions ; 11 people died , including the pilot . When Inez was approaching its final landfall , the United States Weather Bureau issued hurricane warnings from Brownsville to Port Isabel , Texas , with gale warnings northward to Corpus Christi . At least 2 @, @ 000 people evacuated from Port Isabel alone , and many shrimp boats were secured . In the Tampico area where Inez made its final landfall , over 31 @, @ 000 people evacuated to higher grounds .

= = Impact = =

Overall , Hurricane Inez killed about 1 @, @ 000 people , mostly on Hispaniola , and caused over \$ 200 million in damage . Crop damage was less than other storms of similar magnitude , due to Inez 's small size and its occurrence late in the season .

= = = Caribbean and Bahamas = = =

When Inez struck Guadeloupe , a station on the island reported sustained winds of 80 mph (130 km / h) , with gusts to 94 mph (151 km / h) , before communications failed . Rain on the island reached 6 @. @ 5 in (170 mm) . The high winds destroyed the roofs of thousands of houses , leaving 10 @, @ 000 people homeless . There was heavy damage to both the banana and sugar crops , described as " flattened " by the St. Petersburg Times . The storm flooded a power plant in Pointe @-@ à @-@ Pitre and downed many power lines , causing power outages . The Associated Press described the hurricane as having " virtually leveled a whole district of Pointe @-@ à @-@ Pitre " . Hundreds of people were injured , although because of damaged hospitals and the power outage , most only received makeshift treatment . Inez left 40 people dead and \$ 50 million in damage on the island . Strong winds also affected nearby Antigua , and damage was reported from that island to Dominica .

In the United States Virgin Islands , a station on St. Croix reported 45 mph (72 km / h) gusts . When Inez passed south of Puerto Rico , its rainbands produced gusty winds along the island 's southern coast , reaching 50 mph (80 km / h) in Peñuelas . On Isla de Mona , wind gusts were estimated at 80 mph (130 km / h) . Flooding occurred in southern Puerto Rico , and high winds damaged 20 houses .

Hurricane Inez struck the Dominican Republic near peak intensity . Along the Barahona Peninsula , more than 800 homes were destroyed , and nationwide about 5 @, @ 000 people were left homeless . There was heavy damage to the country 's cotton industry , as well as the coffee , sugar cane , and cocoa crops along the Barahona Peninsula . In the capital city of Santo Domingo , heavy rains flooded hundreds of homes along the Ozama River , forcing thousands to evacuate . High

seas there damaged a portion of a seawall . Many rivers along the Barahona Peninsula were also flooded . Throughout the country , Inez killed about 100 people , including 55 in Juancho , and left \$ 12 million in damage .

In neighboring Haiti , high winds downed power lines and radio towers , which cut outside communication . High rainfall led to flash flooding between mountain ranges , in a location nicknamed the " valley of death " ; there , the Weather Bureau remarked that " local winds ... may well have exceeded 160 mph (260 km / h) " . Thousands of homes were either destroyed or lost their roof . The Haitian government reported over 1 @, @ 000 deaths in the weeks after the storm . The United States government reported that the hurricane " killed no more than 50 " in Haiti , and " nor was there a real emergency , " due to president François Duvalier misusing previous aid . The U.S. assessment was incorrect , as the 1966 annual tropical cyclone summary in the Monthly Weather Review indicated 750 deaths in Haiti , mostly in Jacmel . President Duvalier considered the hurricane the " worst storm ... since the 1920s . " In the country , 1 @, @ 000 people were injured and 60 @, @ 000 were left homeless , and damage was estimated at \$ 20 @. @ 35 million . Throughout Hispaniola , about 1 @, @ 500 people were seriously injured , and many people were still recovering from Hurricane Flora in 1963 .

A station at Guantánamo Bay reported winds of 138 mph (222 km / h) when Inez moved ashore in Cuba , and rainfall reached 12 in (300 mm) . Tides were 10 ft (3 @. @ 0 m) above normal there . The hurricane knocked down trees and power lines , and many roofs were damaged on the naval base . In the city of Guantánamo , the hurricane destroyed 500 houses . High winds heavily damaged the country 's sugar and coffee crops . When Inez re @- @ entered the Gulf of Mexico , it threatened northwestern Cuba and produced 12 in (300 mm) of rainfall . High waves and strong winds affected the coastline . In La Habana Province , flooding forced 21 @, @ 000 people to evacuate , mostly in low @- @ lying areas . One building was destroyed in Havana . Nationwide , Inez injured at least 38 people , and caused five deaths , three of which occurred after Inez moved southwestward from the Florida Keys . Damage totaled \$ 20 million .

In the Bahamas , the hurricane dropped heavy rainfall over three days , reaching 14 @. @ 31 in (363 mm) in Nassau . There , Inez spawned a small tornado that produced winds of over 100 mph (160 km / h) , killing one person and injuring three . High tides flooded portions of Nassau . Two waterspouts were reported in Freeport . Wind gusts in the archipelago reached 90 mph (140 km / h) at West End , Grand Bahama , and sustained winds reached 64 mph (103 km / h) in Freeport . Five people died throughout the country , and damage was estimated at \$ 15 @. @ 5 million .

= = = United States = = =

In the Straits of Florida , high waves from Inez overturned a 24 ft (7 @. @ 3 m) blockade runner carrying Cuban exiles to Miami . Ten of the passengers escaped on a damaged raft , but the only survivor was the captain ; 45 people died due to the boat capsizing . High waves also disabled three ships and beached a Coast Guard boat near Miami ; a lifeguard and people on the beach assisted in rescuing the crew of nine Coast Guardsmen amid rough seas .

When the hurricane moved across the Florida Keys , it dropped light rainfall , reaching 4 @. @ 80 in (122 mm) near Kendall . Inez was considered a " dry hurricane " , and about 1 in (25 mm) of the precipitation that fell was largely in the form of sea water spray . Light rainfall occurred in Miami , where strong winds damaged crops due to salt spray onto local vegetation . During its passage , Inez produced above normal tides , reaching 5 ft (1 @. @ 5 m) above normal on Big Pine Key . Inez produced strong winds while it was intensifying , and the strongest winds occurred after the passage of the eye . The highest sustained winds were 98 mph (158 km / h) on Plantation Key , and peak gusts were 120 mph (190 km / h) in the Dry Tortugas . On Big Pine Key , sustained winds were estimated at 150 mph (240 km / h) , with gusts to 165 mph (266 km / h) . On the Florida mainland , the highest gusts were 92 mph (148 km / h) at Flamingo . The winds damaged smaller tree limbs and uprooted some trees . About 20 % of the local avocado crop was blown off trees , although most was salvageable . Winds and salt spray severely damaged vegetables in southern Dade County , including up to 80 % losses of tomatoes in some farms . Power outages

were reported in Key West . In the Florida Keys , the hurricane damaged 160 homes and 190 trailers . Statewide , damage totaled \$ 5 million , and there were four deaths ; three were elderly people who died of heart attacks while installing shutters , and the fourth was a teenager who was swept by large surf . Inez was the last hurricane to threaten the Miami metropolitan area until Hurricane David in 1979 , and the last hurricane to strike the Florida Keys until Hurricane Kate in 1985 .

When Inez was making its final landfall in Mexico , its outer circulation reached southern Texas , producing winds of 22 mph (35 km / h) and trace rainfall . Tides reached 3 @. @ 1 ft (0 @. @ 94 m) above normal in Corpus Christi , and 10 ft (3 @. @ 0 m) waves caused \$ 5 @, @ 000 in damage to piers .

= = = Mexico = = =

While the hurricane was off the north coast of the Yucatán peninsula , Inez produced sustained winds of 69 mph (111 km / h) , with gusts to 81 mph (130 km / h) , in Mérida . The winds cut power and knocked down trees in Progreso , as well as nearby cities . High waves destroyed a dock in Telchac Puerto . Heavy rainfall flooded streets in Mérida , although damage was not severe .

At the hurricane 's final landfall , a station in Tampico reported sustained winds of 115 mph (185 km / h) , with gusts to 127 mph (204 km / h) before communications were cut . Inez dropped heavy rainfall upon moving ashore , causing flooding . In Soto la Marina , Tamaulipas , rainfall totaled 10 @. @ 12 in (257 mm) . In northeastern Mexico , more than 3 @, @ 000 people were stranded by flooding after dozens of rivers and streams rose above their banks , forcing some families to hold onto trees . The floods washed out roads around Tampico and cut communications and the water supply . In Tamaulipas , 15 people died while trying to deliver supplies to residents along the Tambesi River . Throughout the country , the hurricane left about 84 @, @ 000 people homeless , and destroyed at least 2 @, @ 500 houses . Agricultural damage totaled over \$ 80 million , and property damage was estimated at \$ 24 million in Tampico and Ciudad Madero alone . Overall , Inez killed 74 people in Mexico .

= = Aftermath = =

In the days after the storm struck Guadeloupe , there was a food shortage . Officials quickly cleared roads and worked to restore the damaged banana crop . Charles de Gaulle visited the island , and the French population unified to provide assistance to the island . In late October 1966 , the French government set up a relief fund for Guadeloupe totaling \$ 34 million (? 170 million francs) . The government initiated plans to rebuild the island to withstand the winds of strong hurricanes . The United States Agency for International Development flew 20 @, @ 000 pounds of blankets and clothing to the island . Due to the heavy damage in Hispaniola , VMM @- @ 365 , a United States Marine Corps helicopter division , spent 454 hours and flew 740 sorties to provide 186 @, @ 676 tons of relief supplies to Haiti and the Dominican Republic . The division also helped evacuate 142 hospital patients . The Dominican Air Force also assisted in transporting injured people from outlying areas to Santo Domingo . The country deployed 5 @, @ 000 troops to send food , medicine , and clothing to the storm @- @ damaged areas in the interior , as well as Barahona Peninsula . The Holy See sent \$ 2 @, @ 000 to assist the residents affected by the storm in Haiti . After a nearly ten year boycott due to the actions of Haitian president François Duvalier , the United States provided a \$ 1 @. @ 3 million loan to the country to help rebuild infrastructure and provide education . Industrialist Clint Murchison gave \$ 50 @, @ 000 in flour and food from a mill he owned in the country . The United States also sent vaccines and 4 @, @ 360 pounds of food .

In Cuba , sailors on the USS America (CV @- @ 66) spent about 1 @, @ 700 hours to assist Guantánamo Bay in recovery . The sole survivor of the sinking boat carrying Cuban exiles was tried in a military tribunal . The man was held responsible for the 44 boat deaths and was quickly executed . The United States Coast Guard deployed boats , helicopters , and airplanes to find victims of the boat capsized in the Straits of Florida . In the United States , the price for lettuce and

tomatoes rose due to Inez 's crop damage in Florida and reduced crop output in California . The country 's military sent helicopters and planes to join the Mexican Air Force , as well as trucks by land , to deliver tons of supplies , including food , clothing , and medicine to flood @-@ affected areas in Tamaulipas . In the weeks after the storm , many residents had minimal food access , and some areas remained flooded . Conditions in Tampico , located near where the storm moved ashore , gradually returned to normal . Heavy rainfall in Mexico restored reservoirs , which assisted future crop growing .

The name Inez was retired and will never again be used for an Atlantic hurricane name .