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## Fair Weather Trends

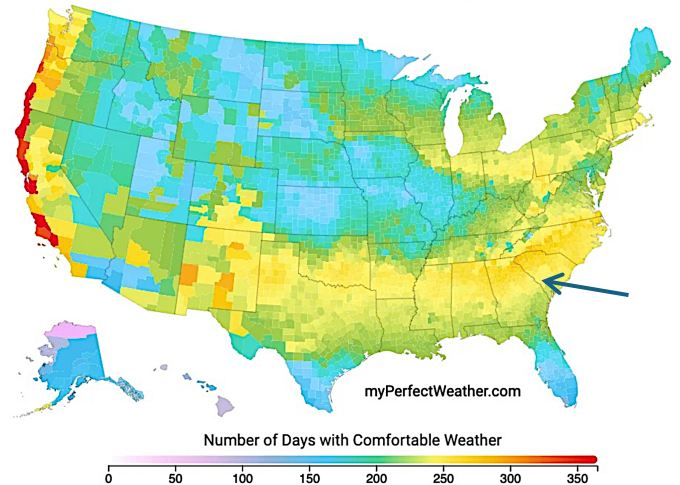
Aiken County residents enjoy about 250 days of comfortable weather annually, with daily high temperatures between 50° F and 85° F.\* Sunny skies give residents plenty of vitamin D. Aiken County experiences all four seasons, but the winters are mild, and snow is rare.

The National Weather Service's 2025-2026 winter outlook for South Carolina favors above normal precipitation and above normal temperatures for most of the state.

The climate is perfect for enjoying the area's outstanding state, county, and municipal parks, as well as six unique natural areas. Read about current park enhancements below.

\* Sources: myPerfectWeather.com and brilliantmaps.com

Number of Days with Comfortable Weather  
with Daily High Temperature between 50°F and 85°F, Daily Maximum Dewpoint Temperature <=65°F



Langley Pond Park is a popular destination for rowing, swimming, fishing, and other water sports.

## Parks and New Creations

Aiken County, the City of Aiken, and the City of North Augusta are on the move with enhancements of local public parks.

Aiken County committed \$429K to build a covered fishing pier that's not only functional, but aesthetic, at Langley Pond Park (left). The pier is expected to be completed next spring along with other minor renovations.

The City of Aiken recently built a "Born Learning Trail" at its Smith-Hazel Park through a partnership with the United Way of Aiken County and a grant from Meta, building a data center in Sage Mill Industrial Park. The trail features interactive activities for skill development and learning for children.

The City of North Augusta is making \$248K in repairs to Living History Park following damage from Tropical Storm Helene. The project will restore historic character to park structures reflecting the era from 1735-1785. Olde Town Preservation Association is the park's governing nonprofit.

## New Laboratory Will Foster Mentorships

The University of South Carolina Aiken has announced plans for a 5,000 square foot laboratory addition to its Sciences and Engineering Building. The \$4 million laboratory will include three wet lab spaces for biological materials and chemicals. The lab is part of a larger \$8.2 million grant from the State.

The External Collaborative Applied Research Center (ECARC) will enable students and faculty to interface with current and retired scientists and engineers from the U.S. Department of Energy's Savannah River National Laboratory in Aiken, as well as with other industry professionals.

USCA recently rebranded its logo and visual look as part of a broader, aggressive initiative to attract even more students from outside the area. Already, the University has students from 38 countries, 36 states, and all 46 counties in South Carolina.





## Around the World in Eighty Tastes

Aiken County residents are enjoying a flurry of new restaurant openings featuring a variety of cuisines, including French, Caribbean, Mexican, Latin, Mediterranean ... even two new taverns and two new coffee shops. The County has more than its fair share of aspiring restaurateurs eager to share their creativity. Here's a partial list of new food and beverage options.



### Aiken

- ✓ [Island Taste](#) in downtown Aiken features bold, spicy Caribbean cuisine with African and European influences.
- ✓ [Laziza Mediterranean Grill](#) on the Southside, expanding from their spot in Augusta, GA, specializes in Greek cuisine.
- ✓ [7 Brew Coffee](#) on the Southside recently opened with a lot of fanfare, generosity, and community engagement.

### Midlands

- ✓ [Langley Tavern](#) features pub food in a sporty setting with seven televisions, pool tables, a game room, and arcade.
- ✓ [El Jimador](#) near Exit 11 of I-20 is part of a South Carolina family's regional chain featuring authentic Mexican cuisine.

### North Augusta

- ✓ [Bistro 55](#) reopens with a new life and new owners featuring cuisine of Greece, Italy, France, and Spain.
- ✓ [Brinks Tavern](#) in downtown offers Louisiana-Creole dishes in a setting that's both casual sports bar and fine food.
- ✓ [Caribou Coffee](#) near Exit 5 of I-20 is the first location in South Carolina for this national chain.

## Local Schools Make The Grade



Aiken County Public School District had a lot to celebrate with the November 3 release of the South Carolina School Report Card for the 2024-2025 academic year. The report provides an in depth overview of school performance across the state. Of note, 45% of the schools in the district improved one proficiency level.

Seven schools earned an Excellent proficiency rating and no school rated Unsatisfactory. Elementary schools rating excellent included Aiken, Belvedere, East Aiken, Hammond Hill, and Millbrook. North Augusta Middle School and Aiken Scholars Academy (a high school) also rated Excellent proficiency.

The Aiken Scholars Academy this year was ranked in the top ten high schools across the nation by U.S. News & World Report. Housed on USCA's campus, it is a public high school developed to serve Aiken County's academically gifted students. The school accepts 50 students annually through a rigorous application process. It opened in 2018 and celebrated its first graduating class in 2022. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and has membership with College Board.

## In Case of Emergency

Aiken Regional Medical Centers, located three miles west from downtown Aiken (right), is expanding services to grow alongside the community. ARMC broke ground on November 13 to initiate construction of its second freestanding emergency room.

ARMC opened the ER at Sweetwater (Exit 5 in North Augusta) in 2022 and served 12,000 patients in its first year. The demand warranted construction of a second facility on Martintown Road closer to downtown North Augusta.

The \$17 million, 12,000 square foot facility will offer radiology, imaging, labs, and emergency services in 13 examination rooms. It is expected to be ready for patients around the clock next fall.

Reportedly, fewer than 5% of the patients treated at ARMC's Sweetwater facility need to be transported to the hospital, highlighting the value of local emergency services.



Aiken Regional Medical Centers main hospital is expanding operations through free standing emergency centers.