

## Microclimates

Contributed by Adam Miller  
Monday, 30 April 2007  
Last Updated Tuesday, 01 May 2007

"The coldest winter I ever spent was a summer in San Francisco."

-- famous quote often attributed to, but never said by, Mark Twain

The Bay Area is known for its diversity, a characteristic that some out-of-towners may not realize extends to its climate. This area is known for its "microclimates" -- geographic zones that are very close to each other in distance, but very different in annual weather patterns.

For example, the Stanford campus is located on the leeward side of the Santa Cruz Mountains and enjoys a warm, dry climate most of the year. Summers can be hot, so pack appropriate clothing and plenty of sunscreen.

By stark contrast, the city of San Francisco does not see traditional California summer weather. In June, the fog rolls in and blankets the city in cool, overcast, misty weather. The sweatshirt and warm jacket sales in San Francisco are off the charts because so many travelers arrive in shorts and t-shirts and are quite surprised to experience summer in San Francisco. The pattern extends down the coast, so if you head to Half Moon Bay, Pacifica, or other coastal location, be sure to pack some warm clothes. Polar fleece is invaluable for such trips.