

# Portugal heat wave heightens risk of wildfires

July 15 2020, by Helena Alves



People arriving at the beach walk past a semaphore system that signals how crowded the beach is at any moment, in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, Wednesday, July 15, 2020. The system uses radar to count people entering the gates to the fenced beach to help beachgoers keep social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Armando Franca)

Portugal is experiencing a heat wave with hot and dry weather, sweltering nights and a heightened risk for wildfires.

Portugal's weather authority, IPMA, is warning that temperatures could rise by an average of five degrees Celsius (nine degrees Fahrenheit) across the country starting Wednesday, with thermometers expected to hit 42 C (107.6 F) in some southern inland areas later this week.

The combination of high temperatures and dry winds from northern Africa will cause what's known as "tropical nights" and increase the likelihood of forest fires, according to IPMA meteorologist Patricia Marques.

In Portuguese capital Lisbon, Wednesday's temperatures of 32 C (90 F) were already causing discomfort even among beachgoers who hit the sand early to avoid the midday heat.

Carlos Valente, a 67-year-old pensioner, said he was hoping to endure the hot and [dry weather](#), but that he would be careful. He said it was fine "as long as we are careful with hydration, drinking water—the sun, as long as we protect ourselves."

With temperatures in Lisbon expected to inch up above 36 C (97 F) on Thursday and Friday, most residents and tourists expressed relief that Portuguese authorities are only requiring the use of masks against the new coronavirus indoors, making them voluntary outdoors.



People arrive at the beach walk past a semaphore system that signals how crowded the beach is at any moment, in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, Wednesday, July 15, 2020. The system uses radar to count people entering the gates to the fenced beach to help beachgoers keep social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Armando Franca)





A woman sunbathes next to overturned deck chairs and sunshades at the beach in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, Wednesday, July 15, 2020. Temperatures are rising in Portugal, with weather authorities expecting to declare it a heatwave later this week. (AP Photo/Armando Franca)



People wearing face masks walk past a semaphore system that signals how crowded the beach is at any moment, in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, Wednesday, July 15, 2020. The system uses radar to count people entering the gates to the fenced beach to help beachgoers keep social distancing due to the coronavirus pandemic. (AP Photo/Armando Franca)

"I have difficulty to breathe, its too hot and I can't imagine wearing it for a long time," Indonesian tourist and Germany resident Assunta Teresia said about the masks.

Portugal has recorded 47,400 confirmed cases of the new virus and 1,676 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic.

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