

Spain, Portugal smash April temperature records

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Mainland Spain and Portugal have broken temperature records for April, officials said Friday, as both nations wilt in an unusually early heatwave that has raised the risk of wildfires.

The mercury hit 38.8 degrees Celsius (101.8 degrees Fahrenheit) in the airport in Spain's southern city of Cordoba on Thursday, beating a previous record of 38.6 C in the eastern city of Elche, national weather office AEMET said.

This "provisional data" must still be confirmed, a process that can take several days, a spokesperson for the agency told AFP.

The highest temperature for all of Spain in the month of April, however, was recorded in 2013 in the Canary Islands off the northwest coast of Africa when the mercury hit 40.2 C.

In neighboring Portugal, temperatures in the central town of Mora reached 36.9C on Thursday, breaking the record of 36 C set in April 1945 in the northeastern town of Pinhao, weather agency IPMA said.

While temperatures started dropping in Portugal on Friday, the scorching heat persisted in much of Spain with the mercury reaching 36C in Cordoba.

The unusually early heatwave has been driven by a mass of very hot and dry air coming from Africa.

The scorching temperatures have prompted warnings about the high risk of wildfires and worsened [drought conditions](#) that have already led some farmers in Spain not to sow seeds this year.

The Spanish government said it would launch its [forest fire](#) monitoring campaign on Friday, a month and a half earlier than usual due to the early arrival of scorching temperatures.

This will involve adding reinforcements to local firefighting teams and the "continuous monitoring of forest fires" across the country, the

interior ministry said in a statement.

Blazes have ravaged some 54,000 hectares (133,400 acres) of land so far this year in Spain, compared with just over 17,000 hectares during the same time in 2022, according to the European Forest Fire Information System.

Last year, Spain experienced its hottest year since records began, with UN figures suggesting nearly 75 percent of its land is susceptible to desertification due to climate change.

Water reservoirs are at half their capacity nationally and the COAG farmers' union says 60 percent of farmland is "suffocating" from lack of rainfall.

Spain is the world's biggest exporter of [olive oil](#) and a key source of fruits and vegetables in Europe.

Experts say [climate change](#) driven by [human activity](#) is boosting the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, droughts and wildfires.

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