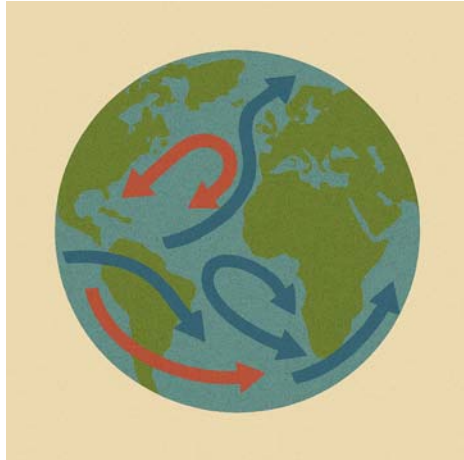


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How Ocean Currents and El Niño Influence Weather Around the World

Did you know that the ocean doesn't just sit still? Huge rivers of water, called ocean currents, flow through the oceans. These currents move warm and cold water around the planet, and they play a big role in our weather.

Warm ocean currents carry heat from the equator toward the poles. Cold currents move cooler water from the poles toward the equator. These movements help balance Earth's temperatures. For example, the Gulf Stream, a warm current in the Atlantic Ocean, brings warmer air to parts of Europe.

Ocean currents don't just move water—they also affect the air above them. When warm water meets the air, it heats the air and makes it rise. This can create clouds and storms. Cold water cools the air and can lead to drier weather. That's why places near warm currents are often rainy, and areas near cold currents are drier.

One special ocean event called El Niño happens every few years in the Pacific Ocean. During El Niño, warm water builds up along the coast of South America. This extra-warm water changes weather all over the world.

El Niño can cause heavy rains and flooding in places like California and South America. At the same time, it can bring droughts (very dry weather) to countries like Australia and Indonesia. Farmers, fishermen, and weather experts all keep an eye on El Niño because it can affect crops, animals, and even wildfires.

Scientists study ocean currents and El Niño using satellites, buoys, and special ships. This helps them predict weather changes and prepare for things like storms or dry spells. Understanding how the ocean and atmosphere work together is a big part of predicting our planet's weather.

So, next time you watch a weather report, remember—some of the changes in your local weather may have started thousands of miles away, out in the ocean!