

TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OF FEB 26, 1998, OVER VENEZUELA

Information for Observers

来年の日食が見られる国のうち、ベネズエラでは早々と日食委員会が組織され、さまざまな情報提供を開始しています。既成のツアーに飽きたらず、自主ツアーを計画される方は、ご自分で連絡を取ってみると良いでしょう。以下にベネズエラ日食委員会からのメッセージを掲載します。

INTRODUCTION

On February 26, 1998, there will be a total solar eclipse over Venezuela. The information below is given to help observers plan their trips.

The eclipse path will pass over two large cities : Maracaibo (population 1 million) and Punto Fijo (population 400.000).

Maracaibo may be reached from Miami by a 3 hour plane trip costing between 150-250 US\$. You can also fly to Caracas (the capital of Venezuela, population 3.5 million) and then continue on to Maracaibo.

At Maracaibo you are near the equator (10 deg N), thus the temperature may reach 100 F (37 C) during February at mid day. Dress accordingly.

At Maracaibo or Punto Fijo the eclipse will last 3min 49sec, and the Sun will be at an altitude of 64 degrees. The eclipse will take place at around 2pm local time depending on your location. The width of the shadow is 144 Kms.

Electrical outlets in Venezuela are 110 V, 60 cycles/s.

ECLIPSE PATH

The eclipse path can be consulted in Oppolzer's "Cannon of Solar Eclipses", or in Espenak's "Fifty Year Canon of Solar Eclipses : 1986-2035" (NASA Reference Publication 1178 Revised).

Consult also a Note to The Observatory by Espenak and Anderson (The Observatory, Dec. 1995, p. 328). The path can also be obtained from the following address:

<http://umbra.nascom.nasa.gov/eclipse/predictions/1998-february-26.html>.

For updated information and a copy of the NASA bulletin on the eclipse, contact Espenak at espenak@lepvax.gsfc.nasa.gov.

The eclipse enters from the Pacific Ocean into Colombia, and then continues on into the northern part of Venezuela, which is also the northern tip of South America.

CLOUDINESS AND OBSERVING SITES

Rain over Maracaibo and Punto Fijo, in mm.

	<-----Maracaibo----->			<----Punto Fijo----->
	1992	1993	1994	1975-1989
JAN	0	0	0.9	11
FEB	0.9	0	4.6	14
MAR	0	0	2.3	4
APR	5.3	52.5	26.2	20
MAY	82.0	113.9	22.8	19
JUN	33.4	29.1	1.9	13
JUL	28.0	87.0	5.6	6
AUG	28.5	66.3	70.0	11
SEP	84.3	145.2	118.5	17
OCT	121.7	23.8	41.8	58
NOV	89.6	54.1	89.9	52
DIC	18.4	3.2	48.5	41

What these measurements show is that minimum cloudiness takes place in JAN-FEB, and thus the prospects for observing the eclipse from Maracaibo are excellent. I visited the place in Feb of 1994 and the sky was clear, although if there is some wind there may be some thin haze over the area. Wind is rare.

The second place where prospects are also excellent, is over Punto Fijo on the Paraguana Peninsula, except that the place is rather windy all day. The peninsula is a desert area with desert fauna and flora.

You may also observe the eclipse from Colombia or the Eastern Caribbean islands. However as you move east or west of Maracaibo and Punto Fijo, you get into progressively worse weather conditions.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Observers must be aware that the central path takes place around 40 Kms above Maracaibo. This area is near to the border with Colombia, and thus it is not advisable to be in that area by yourself.

Any place in the Paraguana peninsula is safe for observing. Maracaibo is also safe.

The University del Zulia will set up an observing camp in Maracaibo for those interested in installing scientific equipment. We must emphasize that the facilities of the scientific campground will only be available to those involved in a scientific experiment and supported by a recognized institution. If this is your case we urge you to return the questionnaire given below.

If you are planning to observe the eclipse from some other part in Venezuela, please let us know. We can give advice on any other observing site you may have selected.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

- NAME OF OBSERVERS:
- NAME OF INSTITUTION:
- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT:
- E-MAIL ADDRESS:
- EXPECTED NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN PARTY:
- EXPECTED DATE OF ARRIVAL:
- REQUIRED AREA FOR YOUR EXPERIMENT:
- REQUIRED POWER SUPPLY:
- OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

Send this information at your earliest convenience to ferrin@cida.ve .

This bulletin will be updated with additional information in the near future. It can be obtained via ftp from: <ftp://chivac.cida.ve>, with anonymous login. The password is your e-mail address. The directory is `/pub/eclipse98`, and the file is `eclipse98`. Those using NETSCAPE can access the same information from the URL:
<ftp://chivac.cida.ve/pub/eclipse98>

Members of the National Eclipse Committee: Dr. Ignacio Ferrin (Coordinator) (Universidad de los Andes, ULA), Dr. Francisco Fuenmayor (ULA), Javier Gonzalez (ULA), Lic. Nestor Sanchez, Lic. Ingrid Inciarte, Prof. Jeannette Stock, Prof. Ruben Cadenas, Prof. Pedro Franceschini (Universidad del Zulia), Dra. Gladis Magris and Alberto Dubuc (Centro de Investigaciones de Astronomia, CIDA).