

Roll Cloud

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Roll Cloud Latest News

A rare roll cloud appeared over Portugal's coast recently, surprising beachgoers as strong winds hit during an ongoing extreme heatwave.

About Roll Cloud

- A roll cloud is a **low, horizontal, tube-shaped**, and relatively **rare type of arcus cloud**.
- Roll clouds usually **appear to be "rolling" about a horizontal axis**.
- They **usually appear** at an altitude of **2,000 to 7,000 meters**, and **continue to curl visibly**.
- They are more **often seen in areas with complex terrain and changeable weather**—both in the **mountains and on the coasts of the oceans**. For example, in the **Alps, around Japan, Scotland, and northern Australia**.
- **During severe weather**, roll clouds can be **confused with funnel clouds**, as the roll cloud will **show clear signs of rotation along the horizontal and vertical axes, like a tornado**.

- Roll clouds are **helpful to meteorologists** because their **appearance sometimes heralds bad weather** —strong winds, thunderstorms, storms, or even tornadoes.
- A **sharp, rapid roll of clouds can indicate a storm** is about to intensify, while a **smooth movement can mean calmer weather**.
- **Along the edge of a thunderstorm**, they can **serve as a precursor to more active and serious weather** in the immediate future.

What is an Arcus Cloud?

- An **arcus cloud** is a **low, horizontal cloud formation** that typically **forms along the leading edge of a thunderstorm outflow or cold front**.
- There are **two main types** of arcus clouds: **Shelf Cloud and Roll Cloud**.
 - Roll clouds and shelf clouds are found near the leading edge of thunderstorms and form **when relatively cool air, from the storm's downdraft, forges ahead into the warm, moist air that's feeding the storm**.
 - The **main difference** between roll clouds and shelf clouds (both are called arcus clouds) is that a **roll cloud is detached from the parent thunderstorm**, whereas a **shelf cloud is affixed to the base of a cumulonimbus cloud**.

Source: **IE**

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