

DIANA NYAD

b. August 22, 1949

LONG-DISTANCE SWIMMER

*“All of us suffer difficulties in our lives.
And if you say to yourself ‘find a way,’ you’ll make it through.”*

**Diana Nyad is a
record-breaking long-
distance swimmer
who swam from Cuba
to Florida.**

Diana Nyad is a record-breaking American endurance swimmer. In 2013 at the age of 64, she became the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida without a shark cage. It took more than 50 hours.

Nyad was born in New York City. Her family traveled internationally and she speaks four languages fluently.

Nyad began swimming competitively in seventh grade. Later in life, she publicly accused her high school coach, an Olympian and Hall of Famer, of molesting her—an experience that has haunted her. Although high school was a turbulent time, Nyad became a champion and was well on her way to the Olympics. Her dreams ended when a heart infection prevented her from competing.

Nyad went back to the sport in college where she began long-distance swimming with a vengeance. “I was swimming every stroke with anger at that man and that sexual abuse,” she told *Out* magazine. Nyad realized she was a lesbian and came out when she was 21.

Nyad set the women’s world record during her first long-distance race in 1970. She gained public attention when she swam around Manhattan in 1975 and again when she swam from North Bimini in the Bahamas to Juno Beach in Florida. Her first attempt to swim from Cuba to Florida, in 1978, was interrupted by dangerous winds. It took five more tries before she made history.

In the 1980s Nyad became a sportscaster for a series of major networks. She hosted her own show on CNBC along with travel documentaries and other programs. She became a longtime contributor to several public radio programs, including the “The Savvy Traveler,” which she hosted.

Nyad has contributed to *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and other major publications. She is a popular motivational speaker and cofounded BravaBody—a company that provides online fitness advice to women over 40.

Nyad has written several books chronicling her life in and out of the water. In her 2015 book, “Find a Way: One Wild and Precious Life,” she discusses what she has learned from swimming. She is the subject of two documentaries, “Diana” and “The Other Shore.”

Nyad was inducted into the National Women’s Sports Hall of Fame and the National Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame and is an International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame honoree. A bronze plaque hangs at Smathers Beach, Florida, the finishing point of her 2013 swim from Cuba.



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