

# A Cold Tradition for Turkey Day on Nantucket

*On Thanksgiving morning, people will gather on Children's Beach to walk, run, & swim into the waters of Nantucket Harbor at the 23rd annual Cold Turkey Plunge.*

NANTUCKET, MA, UNITED STATES, November 25, 2024 / EINPresswire.com/ -- More than two decades ago, the [Nantucket Atheneum](#) was chosen as the beneficiary of a fundraising effort that has become such a beloved island tradition. Even during the pandemic, participants continued to do it from homes around the world.



A thousand Plungers wait on Nantucket's Jetties Beach for the countdown.

This November 28, more than 1,000 people will again gather on Children's Beach, rain or shine, wearing coats and costumes over their swimsuits, towels in hand, ready to walk, run, swim, and dive into the chilly waters of Nantucket Harbor at the 23rd annual Cold Turkey Plunge.

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*Dir. of Development Maggie O'Reilly*

The Cold Turkey Plunge is fun for the brave participants and for the many spectators who are too chicken to “Freezin’ for a Reason,” and it raises tens of thousands of dollars for the Nantucket Atheneum’s Weezie Library for Children and the many free programs they offer year-round. This year’s fundraising goal is \$125,000, and Director of Development Maggie O'Reilly says they are well on their way to reach that number.

According to O'Reilly, who was interviewed by Janet Forest in a series of three Atheneum podcasts ( [nantucketatheneum.buzzsprout.com](#) ), there were 195 people Plunging the first year. Last year, 1,100 Plungers participated. and hundreds more watched. The tradition of holding the Cold Turkey Plunge on Children's Beach Thanksgiving morning has only been interrupted three times. In 2018, high winds, frigid temperatures, and ice

in the harbor caused organizers to postpone it to the following morning. And due to COVID limitations during 2020 and 2021, organizers had to get creative—in place of an in-person event, they encouraged a remote “Plunge Your Way” effort. It was successful and continues to be part of the Cold Turkey Plunge for people who are unable to travel to Nantucket to join the crowd at Children’s Beach Thanksgiving morning. Fun videos of people “Plunging” from Vermont, Georgia, Marblehead MA, and even from Beacon Hill in Boston can be watched on Instagram at #plungedayyourway.

During Forest’s podcast interview, O’Reilly credited the success of the Plunge in part to how quick it is for participants, explaining that it takes “about four months to plan it, about 4 hours to host it, and...about 4 minutes to Plunge it.”

Atheneum staff works closely with the Town of Nantucket to ensure the event is safe: police handle crowd control; the Harbormaster and her crew are present along with USCG; lifeguards are in the water on paddleboards; and there are EMTs and an ambulance on-site.

Advance registration to be a Plunger can be done at the Atheneum website at [nantucketatheneum.org/turkey-plunge-2024](https://nantucketatheneum.org/turkey-plunge-2024) for \$35 per person: registration the day of the event is \$50. Prizes are awarded at the event for the top 3 fundraisers, as well as for Best Costume, Youngest Plunger, Oldest Plunger, and Farthest Traveled. Anyone not on-island Thanksgiving Day who wants to participate may Plunge from afar, as long as it is done outside the week of Thanksgiving. Organizers ask remote Plungers to register and to post a photo or video tagged #Plunge- DayYourWay.



Barbara & Owen Ray Bring a Turkey to the Cold Turkey Plunge



Participants can plunge independently or in groups, often in costume.



Anyone too chicken to do the Cold Turkey Plunge can support a Plunger by donating (this QR code leads to the webpage; scroll down to see participants).

Access to Children's Beach is restricted until 9 am on Thanksgiving morning. Participants enter the water at 10 am sharp—there's a countdown. Only registered participants wearing Plunge bracelets may gather on the sand: spectators watch the event from the Children's Beach path and field. Parking at the beach is extremely limited, so plan to park downtown and walk to the beach to view, cheer on the Plungers, and to offer thanks for the Atheneum's many public programs and services by donating.

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Insider's Guide to Nantucket

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