

Q&A with pro-surfer and Olympic medallist Bianca Buitendag



By [Ruth Cooper](#)

19 Aug 2021

Pro-surfer Bianca Buitendag recently made history as one of the two women, and only SA athletes, to bring home medals for South Africa from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. As this was the first time surfing has been included as an official sport in the Olympics, it was quite an achievement that Team South Africa could stamp their name in this new Olympic arena.

We got in touch with Bianca Buitendag to chat about her experience competing in the Olympics, her thoughts on women in surfing and her future plans.





Image: Supplied





Image: Supplied

❑ ***Congrats on winning silver at the Tokyo Olympics! What was this experience like and how has this changed things for you going forward?***

It was an unforgettable experience. Really tough to put into words. It has been one of the most amazing weeks of my life.

❑ ***What do you attribute your success to?***

Grace and the God that has a plan with my life.



Swimmer Tatjana Schoenmaker and surfer Bianca Buitendag both win silver at Tokyo Olympics

27 Jul 2021



❑ ***What advice would you give to women wanting to compete and succeed in the surfing industry?***

Hold tight! And push through. It has more to do with perseverance and grit than skill.

❑ ***What still needs to change when it comes to supporting women in the sporting and, particularly, surfing arena? A lot has changed for the good in the last five years, but there are still lots of opportunities for improvement. I hope the sport's inclusion in the Olympics will attract more attention and cause traction for the generation of women surfers to come.***Image: Supplied

❑ ***Are there any female figures who have had a particularly positive influence on your life?***

All the female figures closest to me have had a huge impact on my life. My mom and grandmother have both overcome immense personal tragedies that have created strong personalities. They are a 'force to be reckoned with'.

❑ ***What do you love most about being a woman?***

Giving those who underestimate us a huge surprise.

❑ ***Where's your favourite surf spot?***

Around home, in the Garden Route, we have some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. So the stretch of coastline -

about 50km either side of where I live.



Image: Supplied

■ ***What's your hidden talent?***

Avoiding cooking.

■ ***What's next?***

I am involved in an NGO in George called Life Community Services, and we are in the process of fundraising for a primary school building to be constructed next year. More info at www.lifecommunity.co.za/life-village/

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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