

Milford TRACK



Department of Conservation

**GREAT
WALKS**

Duration:
4 days

Distance:
53.5 km



Get out
& **WALK**
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Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

This season, soak up the celebrations of 125 years of history on the ‘finest walk in the world’, as you retrace the steps of early explorers on the world-renowned **Milford Track**.



Follow this historic route through Fiordland National Park, part of Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Take a pilgrimage along valleys carved by glaciers and through ancient rainforest, before reaching your final destination: the spectacular Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

- Keep a sharp eye out for blue duck/whio riding rapids on the Clinton and Arthur Rivers—their blue-grey feathers provide perfect camouflage amongst the rocks.
- Spot freshwater eels from the impressive 72 metre-long suspension bridge crossing the Clinton River.
- Marvel at the many waterfalls, particularly in rain. Fiordland National Park is known for its high annual rainfall, which makes its streams, rivers and waterfalls even more spectacular.

“Perfect weather, great friends made along the way and views of a lifetime. Truly the world’s finest walk.”

Lindsay, United States



Track guide



The Milford Track can only be walked in one direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections may be steep, rough or muddy. Winter conditions make the track more challenging—see safety information. This guide describes the 4 day easy hike for independent, non-guided walkers travelling from the head of Lake Te Anau to Sandfly Point in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

Day 1: Glade Wharf to Clinton Hut

5 km, 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes

After a boat cruise from Te Anau Downs (1 hour 15 minutes), take a leisurely walk through beautiful beech forest along the banks of the Clinton River to Clinton Hut, where all walkers will spend the first night. There are great swimming holes near the hut and the option of a short walk around the wetland boardwalk.

Day 2: Clinton Hut to Mintaro Hut

16.5 km, 6 hours

A gradual climb follows the Clinton River to its source, Lake Mintaro, at the base of the renowned Mackinnon Pass. Past Hirere Falls you will get your first view of Mackinnon Pass, and the impressive Pampolona ice field. Take in the sheer scale of the rock walls towering above on either side as you walk up the Clinton Valley. The vegetation changes as you near the hut, reflecting the higher altitude and heavier rainfall.

Day 3: Mintaro Hut to Dumpling Hut

14 km, 6–7 hours

Climb to Mackinnon Pass and the memorial to explorer Quintin McKinnon, with exceptional views of Lake Mintaro and the Clinton Canyon along the way. The memorial is a great place to take in the awe-inspiring panoramas, before reaching the highest point of the track and McKinnon Pass Shelter (1154 metres).

From here, the track to Dumpling Hut drops steadily through an attractive alpine garden to the valley floor, passing several waterfalls before arriving at Quintin Shelter. En route to Dumpling Hut, take a moment to admire Sutherland Falls in the distance. See optional side trip.

Day 4: Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point

18 km, 5 hours 30 minutes – 6 hours

From Dumpling Hut, the track follows the Arthur River to the historic Boatshed. Further along the track, you will reach the impressive Mackay Falls and intriguing Bell Rock. Admire the man-made rock cuttings alongside the Arthur River and Lake Ada, before spending the last 3 km on a smooth, wide track constructed by a prison labour gang between 1890 and 1892. A short boat ride from Sandfly Point will take you to your journey's end, with world famous views of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi along the way.

Optional side trip

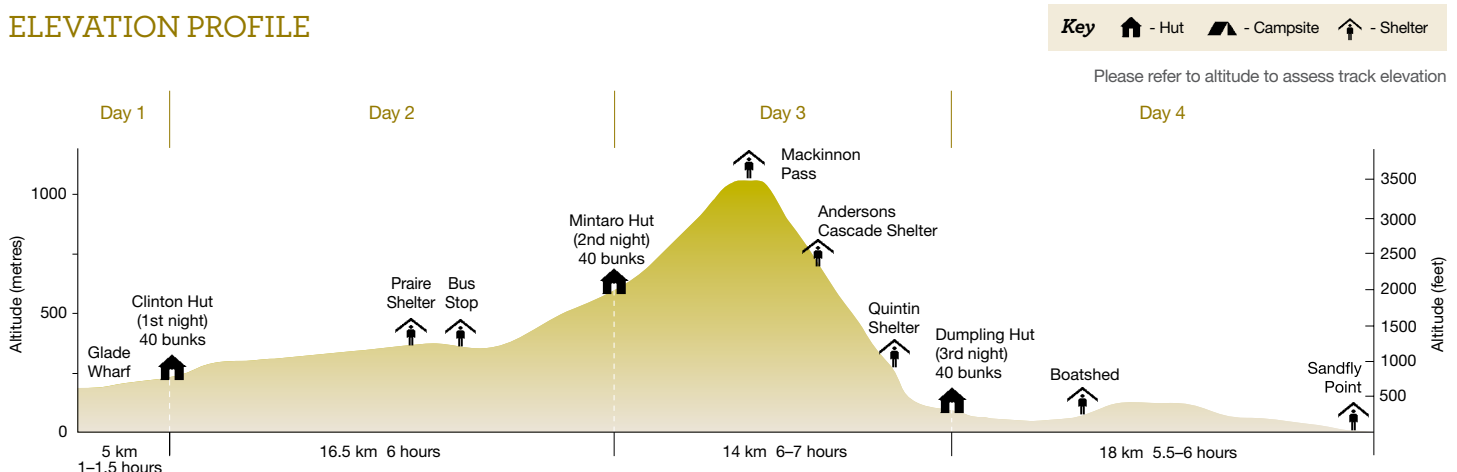
Day 3

Sutherland Falls
1 hour 30 minutes return
from Quintin Shelter

► *The largest waterfall in New Zealand drops 580 metres in three leaps from Lake Quill. Leave your pack at the shelter but don't forget to take your raincoat, as the falls generate a lot of spray!*



ELEVATION PROFILE





GETTING THERE

The Milford Track is accessed by boat from Te Anau Downs, 27 km from Te Anau on SH94.

- **The track starts** at Glade Wharf at the head of Lake Te Anau. Take a bus or private transport to Te Anau Downs, then a boat trip (1 hour 15 minutes).
- **The track finishes** at Sandfly Point. Take a boat trip (15 minutes) to Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, where there are bus services back to Te Anau and on to Queenstown.

During the Great Walks season (late October to late April), there are regular transport services to and from the track, which **must be booked in advance**—you can book connecting transport online when you book your hut tickets.

Te Anau has a full range of accommodation, transport and equipment suppliers.

Refer to the back of the brochure for transport options and services.

This map is intended as a **general guide only**. For up-to-date track, route, hut and safety information visit www.doc.govt.nz and/or your local DOC Visitor Centre **before you travel**.



Plan and prepare

It is **important** to plan and prepare your trip and be well equipped on a Great Walk.

Before you go, know **The Outdoor Safety Code**—5 simple rules to help you stay safe:

1. Plan your trip
2. Tell someone
3. Be aware of the weather
4. Know your limits
5. Take sufficient supplies



- Book your trip well in advance including your accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of the track.
- Safety is your responsibility—leave your trip details with a trusted contact. See adventuresmart.org.nz.
- Weather on the track is changeable, so be prepared and check the forecast before you go. See metservice.com.
- A good level of fitness is required to walk the track. You can expect to walk up to 7 hours a day, depending on your fitness and weather conditions; and carry a pack of up to 15 kg for the whole length of the track.
- The right outdoor clothing, gear and equipment will greatly improve the enjoyment of your trip. Pack all necessary equipment, your own food and drinks (including an extra day's supply) and personal effects.
- Food and drinks are not available for purchase at Great Walks huts and campsites.

Milford Track safety

- This track is not recommended for children under the age of 10 due to the exposed mountainous environment and often adverse weather conditions.
- Fiordland National Park lies in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather patterns. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can occur at any time of the year.
- While the track can be walked year round, outside of the Great Walks season (late October to late April), facilities are reduced and visitors will need to be well equipped and experienced for winter conditions including the risk of avalanche: see doc.govt.nz/avalanche.
- The Milford Track is complex avalanche terrain and the risk of avalanche can extend into December. During the Great Walks season DOC manages this risk to a low level and walkers may be flown (at their cost) over dangerous sections.
- For detailed safety information and a comprehensive gear list, see **Plan & Prepare** at greatwalks.co.nz.

PLACES TO STAY



The Milford Track huts during the Great Walks season have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting and cold running water, and a DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide cooking utensils or showers.

\$54 per adult per night; 17 years and under stay free.

Camping is not permitted on the Milford Track.

Bookings are **essential** during the Great Walks season (late October to late April). Great Walks huts **must be booked in advance**.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS

Visit the Great Walks website or contact your nearest DOC Visitor Centre for further information and bookings.

P: 0800 NZ GREATWALKS (0800 694 732)

E: greatwalks@doc.govt.nz

W: greatwalks.co.nz

▶ Book online greatwalks.co.nz

Bringing back the birdsong

An intensive predator-control programme is boosting native birdlife along the Milford Track, enhancing the experience for walkers, and encouraging other native wildlife to return.

With funding from Air New Zealand, the numbers of stoat traps have doubled and possum and rat control is being conducted over an additional 800 hectares.

Around 70 brown teal/pāteke have already been released into Arthur Valley, with another release planned for summer 2014. It's hoped that eventually other wildlife native to the area, such as takahē, can also be returned home.



Cover image:
Mackinnon Pass.
Photo: Rob Suisted (naturespic.com)

Page 2:
Giant Gate Falls.
Photo: Graham Dainty

Quote: rankers.co.nz

Page 3:
Ascending Mackinnon Pass.
Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

This page:
Pāteke release, Arthur Valley.
Photo: Graham Dainty

AIR NEW ZEALAND 

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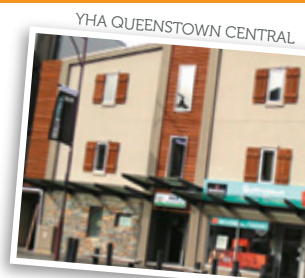
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YHA Queenstown - For a longer pre and post adventure, YHA has two centrally located Queenstown hostels perfect for walkers.



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