

*Plan and prepare*

# MILFORD TRACK



Duration: **4 days**  
Distance: **53.5 km (one way)**



Great Walks season:  
**late October – 30 April**  
(last departure 28 April)



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*



**Te Kāwanatanga  
o Aotearoa**  
New Zealand Government



# MILFORD TRACK

Experience the 'finest walk in the world' as you retrace the steps of early explorers on the world-renowned Milford Track.

Take a journey along valleys carved by glaciers, wander through ancient rainforests and admire cascading waterfalls. You'll follow a historic route through Fiordland National Park, part of Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area, before reaching your final destination, the spectacular Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.

The Milford Track can only be walked in one direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough and the track may be muddy and slippery. Poor weather conditions can make this walk challenging, even in the Great Walks season.

This brochure describes a 4-day hike for independent, non-guided walkers from the head of Lake Te Anau to Sandfly Point in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi during the Great Walks season (late October – 30 April, last departure 28 April).



Outside the Great Walks season (May to October) walking conditions are more hazardous – see the safety information.

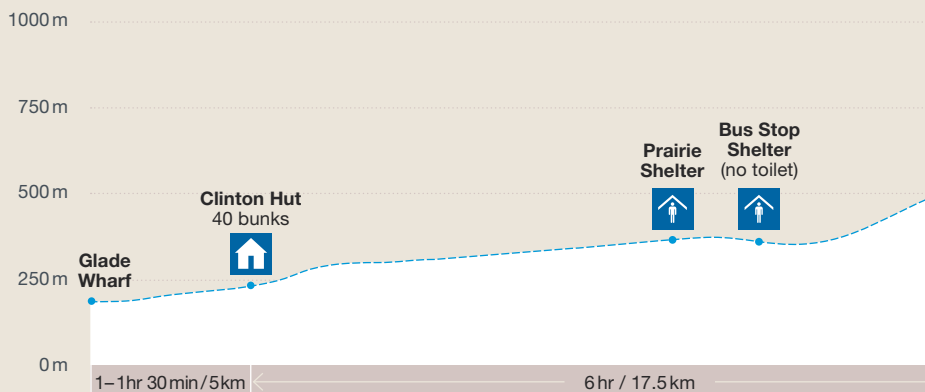


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## Elevation profile & track guide



**Day 1: Glade Wharf to Clinton Hut**



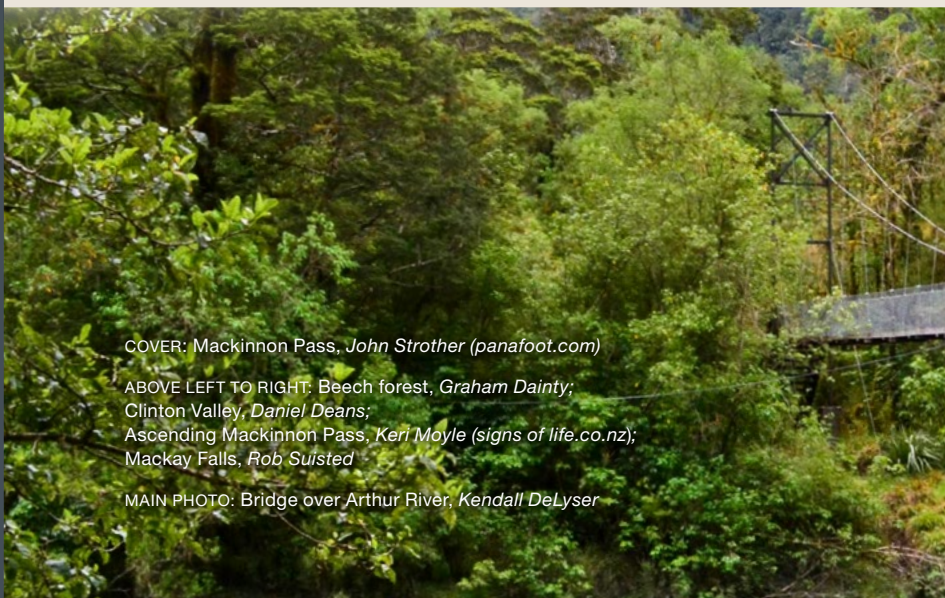
**Day 2: Clinton Hut to Mintaro Hut**

**➤ 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes, 5 km**

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 hikers spend the first night. There is an impressive glow-worm grotto near the hut and if you're lucky, you might hear kiwi calling after dark.

**➤ 6 hours, 17.5 km**

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 Pompolona ice field. You'll be dwarfed by the sheer scale of the rock walls towering above on either side as you walk up the Clinton valley, and you'll pass through changing vegetation as you climb higher towards Mintaro Hut.

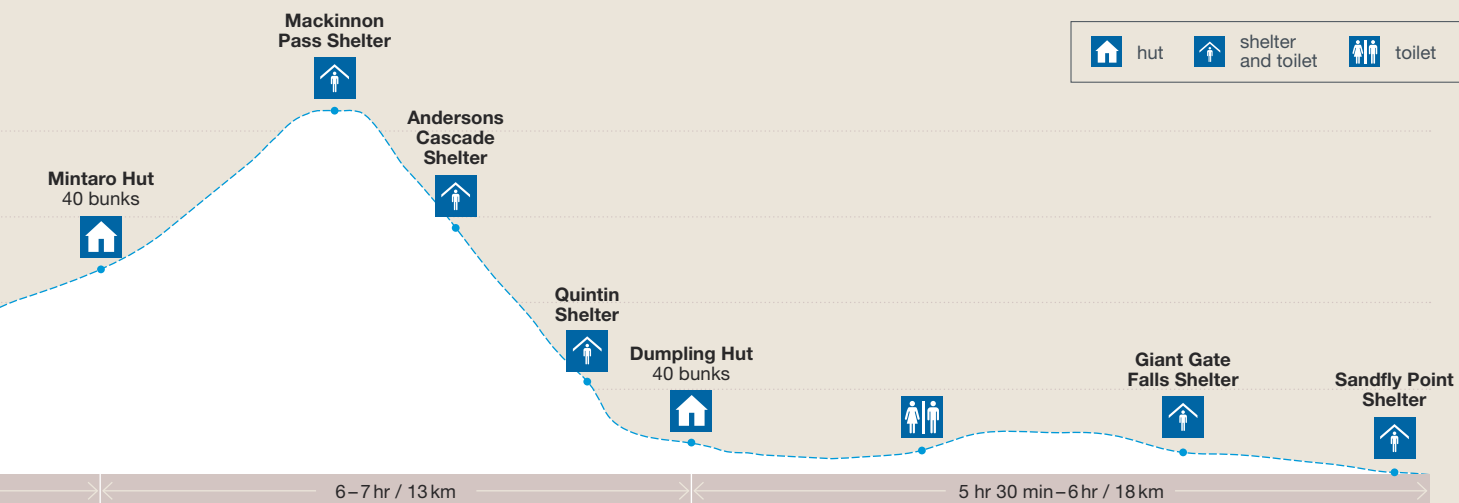


COVER: Mackinnon Pass, *John Strother (panafoot.com)*

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Beech forest, *Graham Dainty*;  
Clinton Valley, *Daniel Deans*;  
Ascending Mackinnon Pass, *Keri Moyle (signs of life.co.nz)*;  
Mackay Falls, *Rob Suisted*

MAIN PHOTO: Bridge over Arthur River, *Kendall DeLyser*





**Day 3: Mintaro Hut to Dumping Hut**

**↗ 6-7 hours, 13 km**

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 Mackinnon Pass Shelter (1154 metres).

From here, you'll drop steadily through an attractive alpine garden to the valley floor, passing several waterfalls along the Roaring Burn River before arriving at Quintin Shelter. On the way to Dumping Hut, if the weather is clear, take a moment to admire Sutherland Falls in the distance. From Quintin Shelter you can take a side trip to visit the falls up close.



**Day 4: Dumping Hut to Sandfly Point**

**↗ 5 hours 30 minutes – 6 hours, 18 km**

From Dumping Hut, you'll follow the Arthur River to the historic Boatshed. Further along the track, you reach the dramatic 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.



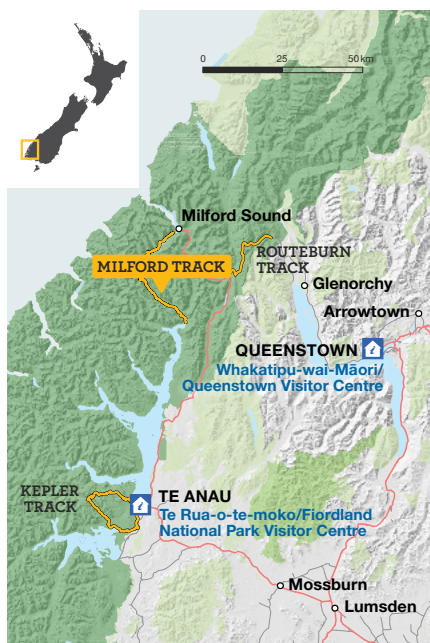


## Getting there

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 (30 minutes), then a boat trip to the head of Lake Te Anau (1 hour 15 minutes).
- The track finishes at **Sandfly Point**. Take a boat trip (20 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 – 30 April, last departure 28 April), there are regular transport services to and from the track, which must be booked in advance – you can use the link in your hut booking confirmation to book your transport.



	Great Walk hut
	Shelter
	Toilet (toilets are also available at all huts and shelters)
	Mile marker
	Great Walk
	Tramping track
	Boat transport
	State highway

**33** As a tribute to the long history of the Milford Track, distances are often still referred to in miles rather than kilometres. Markers positioned every mile are a handy reference to track your progress.



The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

## Places to stay

DOC operates 3 huts on the Milford Track. These **must be booked well in advance** during the Great Walks season (late October – 30 April, last departure 28 April) to avoid disappointment. **Camping is not permitted on the Milford Track.**

### Milford Track Great Walk huts

Visit [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack) for prices.

During the Great Walks season the huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting and cold running water.

A DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide cooking utensils or showers. Outside the Great Walks season facilities are greatly reduced and there are no DOC rangers. Booking is not required, huts are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the DOC website for details.



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)



## Highlights

1

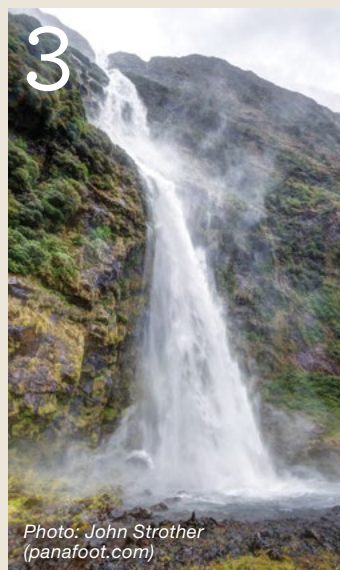
Photo: James Reardon

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to bring birdsong back to our Great Walks.



2

Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



3

Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



4

Photo: Shellie Evans



5

Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

## Conservation story

- 1 You may hear the northern Fiordland tokoeka (southern brown kiwi) along the Milford Track. These kiwi are in decline due to habitat loss, and predation.

DOC and Air New Zealand are working together to control predators in both the Clinton and Arthur valleys. There is now a trapping network covering over 9,330 hectares alongside the Milford Track area. With DOC and Air New Zealand working alongside iwi and other partners, bird numbers in both the Clinton and Arthur valleys are increasing.

- 2 Take your camera to capture the stunning panoramas from **Mackinnon Pass** across ancient valleys carved by glaciers.
- 3 Fiordland's many streams, rivers and waterfalls are especially spectacular after rainfall. Take a side trip from Quintin Shelter to see **Sutherland Falls**, which drop 580 metres (1904 feet) from Lake Quill.
- 4 In the alpine section of the Milford Track you will be in for a special treat between November and February. Flowering plants such as the **Mount Cook buttercup**, mountain daisy and the dainty gentian almost steal the show from the expansive vistas.
- 5 Enjoy the emerald waters of the **Clinton River**. Even when it is metres deep, the crystal-clear water allows you to see every stone on the bottom and admire trout or native longfin eel/tuna cruising the deep pools.



## What do I do next?



Start off at [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack) for more information.



Book your huts online at [bookings.doc.govt.nz](http://bookings.doc.govt.nz).



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – go to 'What to take' on the webpage for a list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack).



Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Te Anau) to pick up your **tickets** and official **track guide**, and chat with the friendly staff for the latest weather forecast and track conditions.



**All set!** Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on [facebook.com/docgovtnz](https://www.facebook.com/docgovtnz).

### For in-depth local knowledge, visit:

Fiordland National Park  
Visitor Centre

Phone: +64 3 249 7924

Email: [greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz](mailto:greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz)

[www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks](http://www.doc.govt.nz/great-walks)

This information was accurate at the time of printing. For the latest information on DOC's policies and facilities, visit [www.doc.govt.nz](http://www.doc.govt.nz).

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This publication is produced using paper sourced from well-managed, renewable and legally logged forests.

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Photo: Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

## Safety on the Milford Track

- Go to [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack) for detailed safety and planning information.
- This track is not recommended for children under the age of 10.
- Parts of the Milford Track are exposed, steep, slippery, rough and muddy. Day four is an 18-km walk to meet the early afternoon boat. This track is not suitable for all walkers.
- Fiordland National Park is in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can happen at any time of the year.
- Walkers should come well equipped and prepared for all weather conditions. Check [weather.niwa.co.nz/parks](http://weather.niwa.co.nz/parks) for the most up-to-date forecast.
- The Milford Track has complex avalanche terrain, and the risk of avalanche can extend into summer. During the Great Walks season, DOC manages this risk to a low level. Walkers may be flown (at their cost) over dangerous sections.
- Check [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack) or contact the DOC Visitor Centre in Te Anau for track conditions and weather warnings before your walk.

### Your safety is your responsibility



You are strongly recommended **NOT to attempt this track** between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season).

The winter environment in Fiordland National Park is very cold and wet, with ice, snow, avalanches and short daylight hours.

DOC is unable to manage any hazards outside the Great Walks season. Bridges are removed, as floods and avalanches occur on these tracks during winter.

To attempt the track in winter conditions, you need to be very experienced in backcountry winter navigation, have river crossing expertise and appropriate alpine skills and equipment. **Hut facilities are greatly reduced** – with no cooking gas, limited water and no hut wardens or emergency hut radios.

For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at [www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack](http://www.doc.govt.nz/milfordtrack).

## Care for the Milford Track



### Protect nature

Keep your distance and don't feed wildlife. Feeding wildlife is harmful to them. Follow any rules restricting fires, vehicles or boats. No dogs or unpermitted drones allowed.



### Keep New Zealand clean

Take all rubbish with you. Use toilets where provided. You can find them at all huts and shelters.



### Be prepared

Stay safe in the outdoors by following the Land Safety Code.

- ▶ Choose the right trip for you.
- ▶ Understand the weather.
- ▶ Pack warm clothes and extra food.
- ▶ Share your plans and take ways to get help.
- ▶ Take care of yourself and each other.



### Show respect

Respect others, respect culture. Respect others by keeping common areas in the hut clean and tidy. Minimise noise when others are sleeping. Book and pay for your accommodation to help maintain the track and facilities.



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