

FREE

 GREAT  
WALKS

# MILFORD TRACK



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



Great Walks season:  
24 October 2017 – 30 April 2018



[greatwalks.co.nz](http://greatwalks.co.nz)

Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

# 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/Piopirotahi.

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 guide describes a 4-day hike for independent, non-guided walkers from the head of Lake Te Anau to Sandfly Point in Milford Sound/Piopirotahi during the Great Walks season (24 October 2017 – 30 April 2018).



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

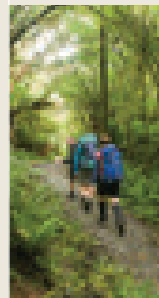
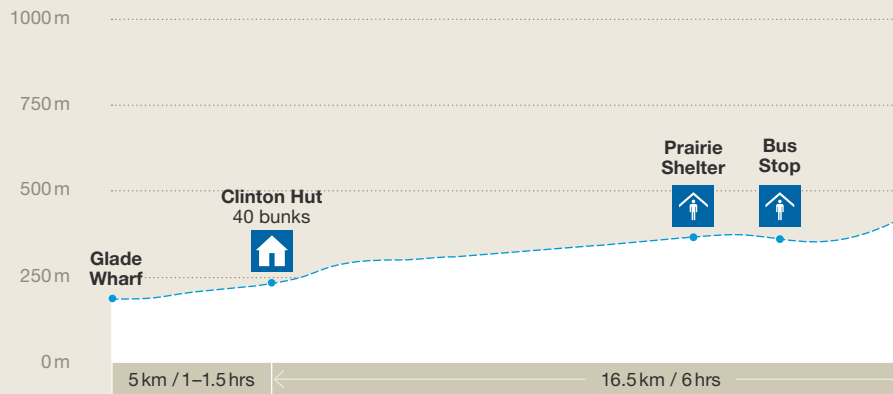


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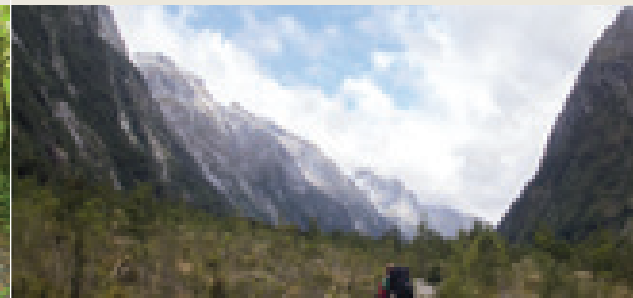


Great Walks season:  
**24 October 2017 –**  
**30 April 2018**

## ELEVATION PROFILE & TRACK GUIDE



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



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

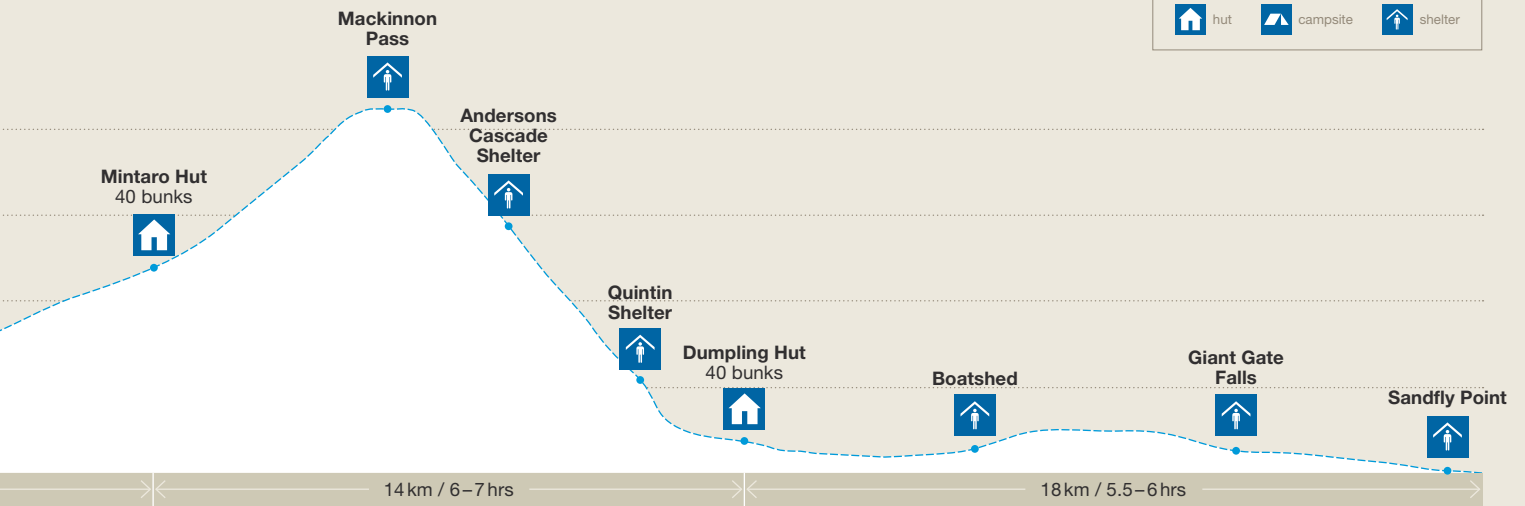
➤ 1 hour – 1 hour 30 minutes, 5 km

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 walkers spend the first night.

➤ 6 hours, 16.5 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 Poppelona 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 will pass through changing vegetation as you climb higher towards Mintaro Hut.





**Day 3: Mintaro Hut to Dumpling Hut**



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

**6-7 hours, 14 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 Dumpling Hut, if the weather is clear, take a moment to admire Sutherland Falls in the distance.

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

From Dumpling Hut, you'll follow Arthur River to the historic Boatshed. Further along the track, you will 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/Piopiotaahi along the way.



COVER: Giant Gate Falls, *Graham Dainty*

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Beech forest, *Graham Dainty*  
Clinton Valley, *Daniel Deans*  
Mackinnon Pass, *stokedforsaturday.com*  
Mackay Falls, *Rob Suisted*

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



Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to help bring native birds back to the beautiful Great Walks.


AIR NEW ZEALAND 

Photo: Sabine Bernert

Conservation story

- 1 Keep an eye out for the rare **whoio/blue duck**. Once widespread around New Zealand, they're now only found in a few locations, including along the Milford Track, thanks to a predator control programme supported by Air New Zealand and Genesis Energy. This has doubled the number of stoat traps and increased possum and rat control over an extra 800 hectares. It's hoped that other wildlife native to the area, such as the mohua/ yellowhead, can also eventually return.

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- 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. Make sure you take a side trip from Quintin Shelter to **Sutherland Falls**, which drop 580 metres (904 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 when 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 the water is metres deep, the crystal-clear water ensures you can see every stone along the bottom and admire trout or native longfin eel/tuna cruising the deep pools.



Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)

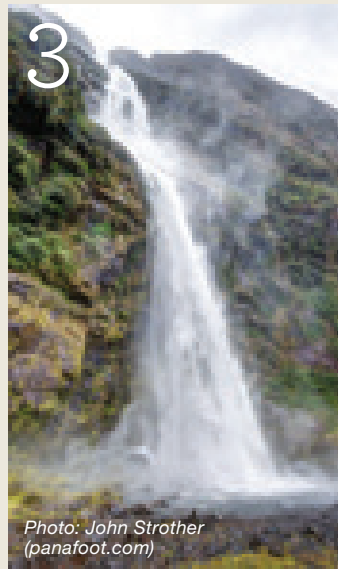


Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



Photo: Shellie Evans



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

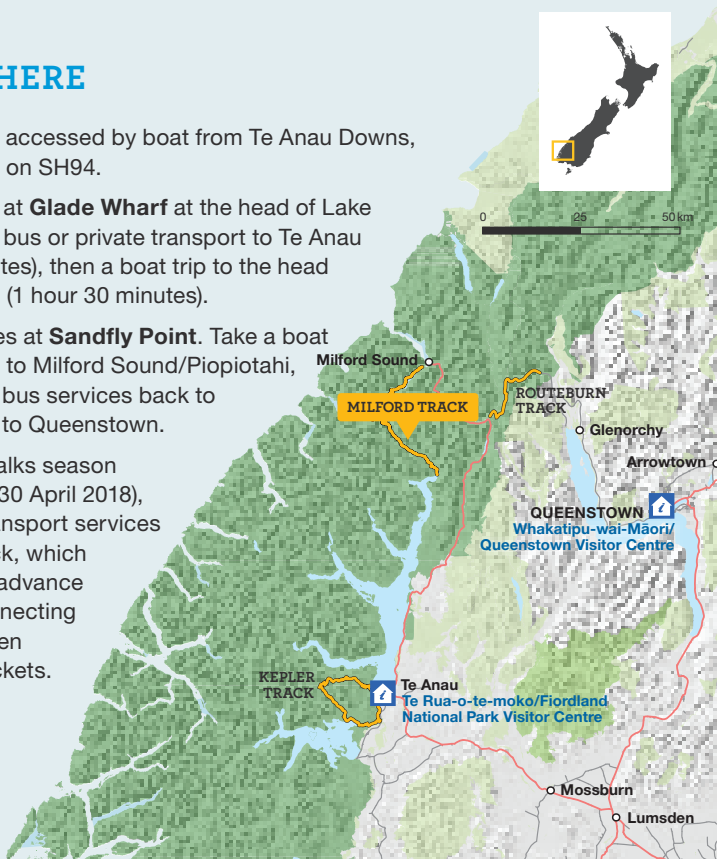
## GETTING THERE

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 30 minutes).
- The track finishes at **Sandfly Point**. Take a boat trip (20 minutes) to Milford Sound/Piopiota, where there are bus services back to Te Anau and on to Queenstown.

During the Great Walks season (24 October 2017 – 30 April 2018), there are regular transport services to and from the track, which must be booked in advance – you can book connecting transport online when booking your hut tickets.

*Refer over page for transport options and services.*



## PLACES TO STAY



Photo: Keri Moyle (signsoflife.co.nz)

DOC operates 3 huts on the Milford Track. These **must be booked well in advance** during the Great Walks season (24 October 2017 – 30 April 2018) to avoid disappointment.

**Camping is not permitted on the Milford Track.**



### Great Walks huts

\$70 per adult per night; 17 years and under free (booking required).

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. Bookings are not required, huts are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the website for details.

## Sign me up! What do I do next?



- 1 Start off at [greatwalks.co.nz/milford](http://greatwalks.co.nz/milford) for more information.



- 2 Book your huts online or at a DOC Visitor Centre.



- 3 Book your transport to and from the track – operators are listed online and in this brochure.



- 4 Buy your food and **pack your bags** – download the Great Walks packing list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



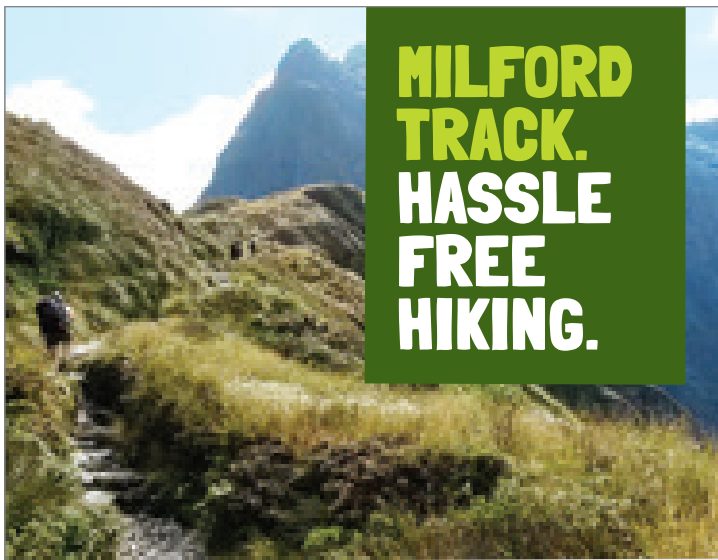
- 5 Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [greatwalks.co.nz/milford](http://greatwalks.co.nz/milford). Make sure you have left your intentions with a trusted contact at [adventuresmart.org.nz](http://adventuresmart.org.nz).



- 6 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.



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



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*\*Terms & conditions apply.*



**For bookings or enquiries**

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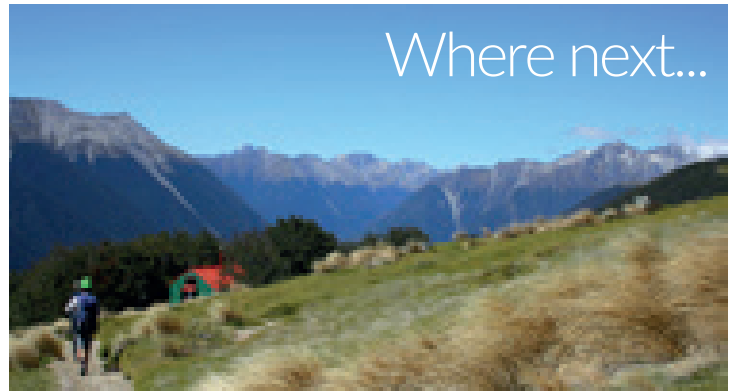


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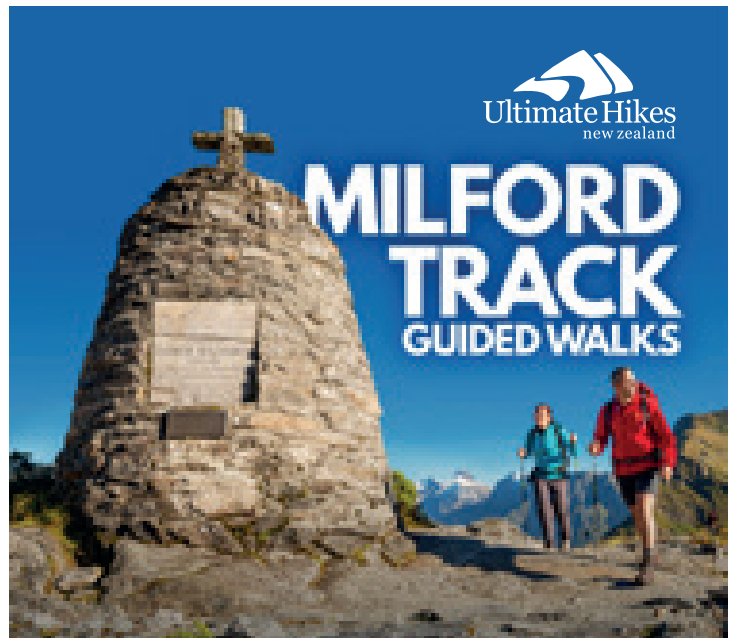
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


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Kepler Track. © Daniel Deans


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Department of Conservation

# Visitor Centres

DOC visitor centres are located nationwide and are staffed by DOC rangers with in-depth local knowledge about conservation places and activities. Visit them to plan and prepare for your outdoor adventures.

[doc.govt.nz/visitorcentres](http://doc.govt.nz/visitorcentres)



**Department of Conservation**  
Te Papa Atawhai

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

New Zealand Government

## Know before you go

It is **important** to plan your trip thoroughly to ensure you stay safe, and have a great time. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 simple rules to help you #makeithome.

- 1. Plan your trip.** Travel times vary greatly in New Zealand, so carefully planning your route is essential. Seek local information about what to take, and allow enough time for the journey. Book accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of track early.
- 2. Tell someone your plans.** Safety is your responsibility. Leave your intentions – including your trip details and emergency contact information – with a trusted contact. It could save your life if things go wrong. Head to [adventuresmart.org.nz](http://adventuresmart.org.nz) for more information.
- 3. Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand weather is very changeable. Plan for the worst, expect the best. Check [metervice.com](http://metervice.com) for the most up to date info.
- 4. Know your limits.** Always follow the track markers and signposted tracks. Off-track navigation is not recommended for novice walkers in New Zealand. 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 level. If you get into trouble don't make a bad situation worse. Think **STAR** – Stop / Think / Assess / React.
- 5. Take sufficient supplies.** With NZ's changeable conditions many hikers are frequently caught out by isolated local conditions. Carry – and expect to use – rain jackets all year round. Take an extra day's supply of food and an emergency shelter. Don't rely on cellphone signal alone for communication. Food and drinks are not available to purchase at Great Walks huts or campsites. Plan to be self-sufficient.

## Milford Track safety

The information in this brochure relates to the Milford Track in the Great Walks season (24 October 2017 to 30 April 2018).

- 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.
- 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.
- Go to [greatwalks.co.nz/milford](http://greatwalks.co.nz/milford) 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a comprehensive gear list.

Remember – 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 is very cold and wet, with ice, snow and short daylight hours. Avalanche-prone bridges across some major watercourses are removed. DOC does not manage hazards such as flooding or avalanches. Walking the Milford Track at this time should **only** be attempted by people who are very experienced in the New Zealand backcountry and have navigation, river crossing and alpine skills. Alpine-specific trip planning is critical for you and your group safety. The consequences are severe if not correctly managed.

In addition, **facilities are greatly reduced** – including no gas for cooking, a limited water supply, and no rangers or emergency radio facilities. For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at [greatwalks.co.nz/milford](http://greatwalks.co.nz/milford).