

# Milford Track Itinerary



5 Days  
4 Nights



54 km  
33.5 miles



Difficulty  
Intermediate

## Our walks include

- ✓ Transport to and from the Track, including boat across Lake Te Anau to the track.
- ✓ Accommodation on track for three nights and one night at Milford Sound in private rooms for two people with ensuite bathroom or multishare room sleeping 4-6 people with shared bathroom facilities.
- ✓ All food while on track and at Milford Sound
- ✓ Fully catered and staffed private lodges, with bars to purchase wine, beer and softdrinks.
- ✓ The company and safety of our experienced and well trained guides
- ✓ Full support of Queenstown based operations team with expert knowledge in safety to provide a fully immersive hiking experience.

## You will bring

- ✓ Appropriate clothing and personal items.
- ✓ A reasonable level of fitness and strength
- ✓ A love of nature and a sense of adventure.

The Milford Track is a fully immersive guided walk from Lake Te Anau to Milford Sound. Your adventure starts in Queenstown, travelling by bus to Te Anau and enjoying a cruise across Lake Te Anau to the start of the track and your first night's accommodation at Glade House.

The Track traverses dense rainforest, crosses crystal clear rivers and winds up and over alpine terrain before descending steeply to the Arthur Valley and out to Milford Sound. The walk is three full days hiking, staying in private, purpose built accommodation along the track.

Your final night is at famous Milford Sound in our private lodge with views of Mitre Peak rising out of the water. On your last morning you will take a scenic cruise on Milford Sound before travelling back to Queenstown through the picturesque Milford Road.

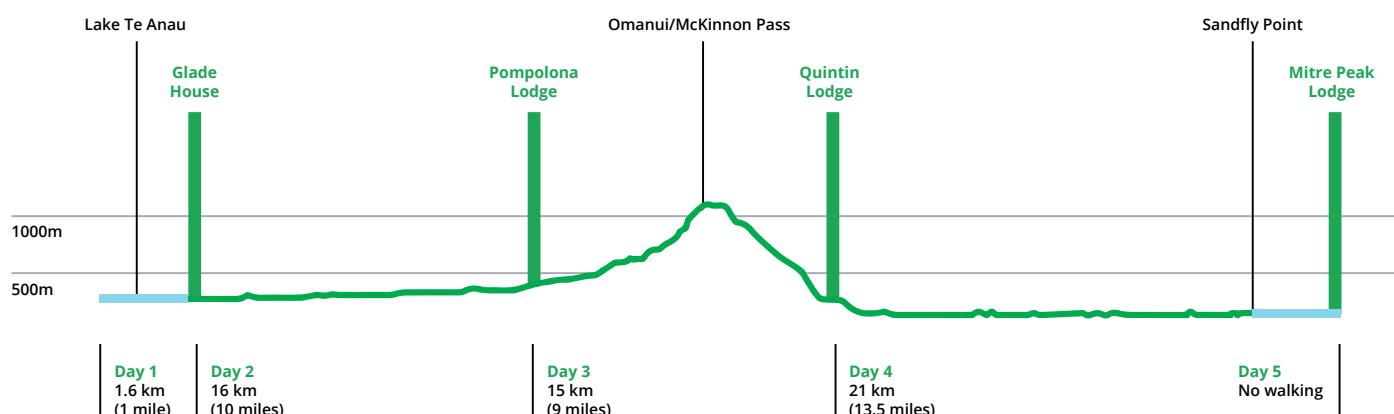
The walk requires good physical fitness and the capability to hike for up to 21km carrying around 7kgs, across uneven and often steep track.

The following pages cover the daily itinerary of the guided walk starting on the day of departure. The walk departs from our Queenstown base and returns at about 4pm on the final day. Departures and drops offs are available from Te Anau.

For booking and preparation information please visit our website.

[www.ultimatehikes.co.nz](http://www.ultimatehikes.co.nz)

# Itinerary



## Day 1 | Nature walk

### Queenstown to Glade House

**1.6km/1 mile walking from wharf to lodge on flat track**

**2km/1.2miles (over about 1.5 hours) nature walk with some steep and uneven terrain, including tree roots**

**TRACK TERRAIN:** Some rocky sections and uneven ground on the nature walk.

The group meets at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown ready for departure. Your pack will be put under the bus and not available until you reach the boat, so it's a good idea to keep your water bottle, a warm layer, your phone/camera, and some money with you to take on the bus.

The bus will travel to Te Anau where you will have lunch before travelling on to Te Anau Downs to meet the boat to take you to the start of the Track and the first lodge.

The drive is approximately three hours with the stop in Te Anau of about an hour. At the Te Anau Downs carpark you will be asked to carry a pack to the boat to be stored for the one hour ride to Glade Wharf. The boat is a catamaran with outdoor and indoor seating – depending on the weather you will get views across Lake Te Anau and your skipper will point out sites of interest along the way. This is where your warm layer may come in handy.

Glade Wharf marks the start of the Milford Track and once on shore, you will collect your pack and make your way up the 1.6km/1 mile flat track to Glade House. On arrival, you will be checked in and shown to your room. After a brief refresh and some afternoon tea, the guides will take you

on a nature walk up the Glade Burn. The walk will introduce you to some of the trickier terrain of the track and some of the natural habitat you will see over the coming days.

Following the nature walk, the bar will be open and you can enjoy a pre-dinner drink and snacks, before sitting down to dinner in the dining room. The menu is set and you will have been asked for your choice of main course.

After dinner, the guides will initiate an introduction to the group and provide a briefing on the day to follow.

The group is then free to enjoy the lounge facility or return to their rooms for the evening. The generator will turn off at 10.00pm – there will be nightlights in the rooms and corridors. There will be no hot water until about 15 minutes after the generators are turned on in the morning.





# Itinerary

## Day 2 | 16km (10 miles)

### Glade House to Poppelona Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** This section is a mostly flat graded track with some uneven and rocky sections and an incline to Poppelona Lodge. The track closely follows the Clinton River and some sections are prone to flooding in heavy rain. Just before Poppelona lodge there is a dry river bed to cross that has large boulders.

Your first day on track sets the schedule for the next three days. Please check the timing in each lodge as it can differ slightly.

Once the generators have turned on, lunch making preparations are set up in the lounge. Each person can choose from a variety of fillings to make sandwiches, wraps or salads.

There is also a selection of snacks, home baking and fruit to choose from. You have 16km of walking so please ensure you pack enough food to sustain you through the day.

A continental breakfast, tea and coffee will also be available in the dining room and a cooked breakfast will follow. Once you have completed lunch making and breakfast, and re-packed your pack, your guides will be waiting for you outside the main entrance to the lodge.

The first guide will lead the group along the front of the Glade and onto the swing bridge, to cross the Clinton River. You will be following the river throughout the day, but do linger and look back at the view of Glade House – a lodge has been on this site since 1895. As the group leaves, the other guides will join them and one guide will always be at the rear of the group. If you have any questions or concerns please ask the nearest guide or stop to wait for the guide behind you.

The track in this section is well graded through Beech Forest. Look out for the mile markers – these are in miles as it was the original measurement of the track (kms are on the other side). You will pass by 33 of them. A side walk past the two mile marker leads to a wetlands walk – leave your pack at the turnoff and head up to the boardwalk to view the wetland and read the information panels.

Continue along the track for about half a mile – Clinton Hut is the DOC hut and has flush toilets – the last until you reach the lodge (there are two

long drops along the track). After Clinton Hut it is about 8.8km/5.5 miles until you reach Hirere Hut where you will stop for lunch. The guides will have a hot drink available and you are welcome to relax here and eat your lunch – you may see a cheeky Weka looking for scraps – please don't feed them!

Soon after Hirere Hut, the track opens up, leaving the Beech Forest and becoming tall grass and manuka bush. Along here a side track will take you down to Prairie Lake where the brave among you can swim in glacier cold water.

The track then leads back into the beech forest to Poppelona lodge. The track winds uphill before reaching Marlene's Creek, a wide usually dry river bed with very large boulders. A guide will be stationed here to show you the way and the orange markers will also indicate the best way to navigate through. On the other side it's a short walk to Poppelona Lodge.

The lodge host will welcome you at the entrance with a cold drink and snack and will show you to your room and point out the lodge facilities. Once you have had a shower, rinsed your hiking clothes, and have them drying in the drying rooms, the lounge will provide welcome comfort with afternoon tea. The bar will open late afternoon followed by dinner and a briefing.



# Itinerary

## Day 3 | 15km (9 miles)

### Pompolona Lodge to Quintin Lodge

**TRACK TERRAIN:** Steep uphill following zig zags to Pass Hut on rocky uneven track. Steep downhill (including steps) to Quintin lodge. This is a very challenging day and can be made more so by the weather. Please listen carefully to the guides briefing and ensure you have dressed appropriately and are prepared for the conditions. Take your time and walk at your own pace.

Leaving Pompolona Lodge the track leads behind the lodge and crosses another river bed before winding back into Beech Forest. The first stop is Mintaro Hut. Refill your water bottle and use the toilets.

The zig zags of Omanui/McKinnon Pass start shortly after leaving the hut. At the 15 mile marker you will be half way up the zig zags to the memorial. This is the steepest section of the uphill – the track is very rocky with some big step ups. Shortly after the 15 mile marker the track comes out of the beech forest and becomes more exposed. The zig zags lengthen out and you traverse up the side of the pass before coming across to the McKinnon Memorial. Much of the uphill for the day is done. Rest here and have a snack. Your guides will provide a warm drink and you can have a wander to see the incredible views from the saddle.

It can get very windy and cold at the Memorial in any weather as it is very exposed to the elements with no shelter. Listen to the advice of your guides who will point out the last section of track to Pass Hut where you will stop for lunch. The track leads over the last bit of steep terrain to the highest point (and most exposed) before dropping down to the shelter of Pass Hut. Rest here, have your lunch, change your clothing if necessary, and fill up your water bottle.

The descent from Pass Hut is the steepest, rockiest terrain on the track and is often regarded as the most challenging part. Leaving the hut you will start a sharp descent down to the Arthur Valley. The track becomes narrow in places and traverses the side of the mountain – it is exposed and you may cross running water. There are two tracks down depending on the time of the season – there is some avalanche risk in this section of track so the alternative track may be used. Both tracks require concentration and should be taken slowly. There

are very rocky sections and poles are strongly advised to assist balance.

Both tracks reach the Anderson Cascades which is an amazing waterfall with a series of steep steps alongside. They can be slippery so hold on to the railings on your way down. At the Anderson Shelter take a break before the track continues down in a zig zag pattern. The duration of the downhill is longer than you expect, as you descend further than you climbed in the morning. You will pass the 20 mile marker and it is another three quarters of a mile to the turn off to Quintin Lodge.

Turn left at the bottom of the track, and cross the swing bridge over the Roaring Burn River and Quintin lodge is in the clearing ahead of you.

Meet your lodge host, have a cold drink and drop your pack in your room. If you have arrived at the lodge with enough time, head out to the right of the lodge entrance to Sutherland Falls. There is a cut off time to walk to the Falls so please check with a guide or lodge member before setting off.

**Sutherland Falls** - This side walk from Quintin Lodge is an hour and a half return trip. It has two suspension bridges and some steep steps to navigate. From the second bridge you will see the Falls in the distance and this may be enough – but another 15 minutes and you'll reach the base – you'll hear it, and probably feel the spray before you see the thundering water up close. Sutherland Falls is the fifth highest waterfall in the world and well worth the trip!

Quintin Lodge is well appointed and you'll enjoy its warmth and comfort after a very full day of hiking.



# Itinerary

## Day 4 | 21km (13.5 miles)

### Quintin Lodge to Mitre Peak Lodge (Milford Sound)

**TRACK TERRAIN:** A downhill section from Quintin lodge, then the track follows the Arthur river and alongside lake Ada to the end of the track where the water meets Milford Sound. The track is in a Beech Forest and while it is flat, the ground is uneven with rocks and tree roots. Some sections of the track are prone to flooding in heavy rain.

This is a long day and it's easy to miss a step so keep an eye on the track ahead of you. But stop to enjoy the views - especially the waterfalls, even if it's not raining! You will be walking under the canopy of the beech forest. It appears denser than the Clinton valley side with lush foliage due to higher rainfall on this side of the Pass.

Soon after leaving the lodge, look out for a sight of Sutherland Falls in the distance. About an hour along the track you'll reach Dumpling hut where you can use the toilet. Your morning tea stop is at The Boatshed next to the Arthur River, so called because boats were used to cross the river. Have a hot drink and a snack.

Leaving Boatshed you'll cross the bridge over the river and will shortly reach Mackay Falls and Bell Rock - you get a great view of the waterfall from the platform then duck into the entrance of the

rock with a torch to see the inside of the rock - it is hollowed out so you are able to stand up in there.

Continue along the track for another 6.4km/4 miles or so and you'll reach Giants Gate. You can stop here for lunch in the shelter or on the stones by the waterfall.

Soon after leaving Giants Gate you'll walk through an area that was severely affected by the floods in 2020. You will see where a massive slip came through the track and on a rainy day admire the temporary waterfalls. Further on the track follows the water and along a wide flat section of the track until the sight of Sandfly Point signals the end of the Milford Track.

Head into the room on your right, away from the sandflies. Your guides will have a hot drink for you while you wait for the boat to take you to Milford Sound wharf. A member of the Ultimate Hikes team will meet you and take you to Mitre Peak Lodge.

The lodge is on permanent power and each room has an ensuite and a bath. Join your group in the lounge with spectacular views of Mitre Peak from the picture window. Enjoy your final dinner with your group.





## Itinerary

### Day 5 | No walking

#### Milford Sound to Queenstown

This morning after breakfast, the guides will ensure your belongings are labelled to go in the coach. Please advise guides if you wish to leave the coach in Te Anau or at the Frankton Bus Shelter in Queenstown. We are not able to drop off at the Airport.

The bus will take you to the wharf to board the Cruise on the famous Milford Sound.

Enjoy waterfalls and wildlife and glimpse the Tasman Sea before returning to dry land and

hopping back on the bus for the ride back to Queenstown, stopping briefly at Te Anau and enjoying your packed lunch along the way. The bus arrives back in Queenstown about 4pm at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

There is an option to return to Queenstown by helicopter. This is a separate cost. It is dependent on weather conditions and has a minimum number of 4 people. The guides will ask for interest at Quintin Lodge.

