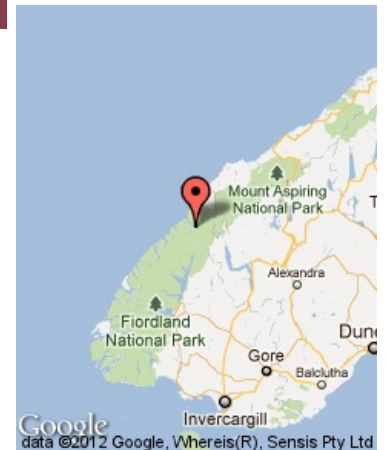


Kayaking & Hiking Milford Sound



Highlights

As far as Milford Sound trips go, this gives you a bit of everything. Spend two days kayaking, hiking and a boat trip on what some people have nicknamed the eighth wonder of the world. With accommodation to suit any budget, this one's a must on any traveller's itinerary.

Milford Sound is a massive fjord formed over millions of years of glacial activity. It is the biggest tourist attraction in New Zealand, attracting over half a million visitors each year. It was also granted the Traveller's Choice award for best travel destination in the world in 2008.

It is not difficult to see why it holds such great acclaim. Milford Sound is the most famous of all the fjords in the region, even though it is not the largest. This is owing to its unequalled beauty, the scale and majesty of which sets it aside from anywhere else on the planet. The mountains are huge and lush with vegetation, waterfalls cascade hundreds of metres down vertical cliff faces and the seas coursing through the valleys are as clear as anywhere else on Earth.

This is, in our opinion, one of the best Milford Sound trips out there. You are collected from Te Anau for a beautiful early morning scenic drive to Milford Sound. On arrival you are given all your equipment for the day and instruction for kayaking before taking to the water. Explore this dynamic land of glacial mountains, view classic Mitre Peak, spectacular waterfalls, and towering cliffs clothed in primeval rainforest. From your vantage point of the kayak, at sea level, sense the water more clearly and enjoy the landscape on its terms.

After exploring the fjord by kayak unwind surrounded by magnificent scenery at Milford Sound. The next day offers a leisurely start to the morning before you are collected for an extended nature of Milford Sound to the Tasman Sea, allowing you to see the fjord from a different perspective. After heading back to land you are transported to the famous Routeburn track for a walk to Key Summit. Ascending up through lush beech rainforest and into the alpine environment, at the top you will be rewarded with panoramic views of the surrounding Fiordland Mountains, alpine lakes and deep bush clad valleys.

Is it for me?

Aside from the moderate level of fitness required for the outdoor activities, this package is for everyone. There simply isn't a soul on the planet who wouldn't be inspired by the beauty which Milford Sound has to offer.

You can choose your level of accommodation, so you are catered for whether you want to stay in a luxury chalet or budget accommodation.

The only problem you may encounter is catching good weather – the fiordlands are incredibly wet and prone to storms all year round. Whatever the weather all you need is the right attitude to enjoy your day, and the ability to cast aside your usual interpretations of what is good and what is not. If you need some help with this then let our guide's enthusiasm show the way.

Accommodation

After a day of activity you'll be transferred to the Milford sound Lodge, your accommodation for the evening (and only one available at Milford Sound). Included in the rate is a dorm bed with shared bathroom, but depending on your budget and availability (this is a popular place), you can upgrade to a luxury chalet or twin or double room.

Prices from

169 GBP (2 days) per person

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Food is available for your evening meal at the local Milford Sound pub, at reasonable prices. Alternatively there are full cooking facilities available if you'd rather cook your own. Breakfast is included at the Lodge.

Itinerary

Day one - A guide will meet you at your accommodation in Te Anau at 6:30am with the aim of arriving at Milford Sound at approximately 8:30am. The majority of the journey will lead you through lush alpine roads and amazing scenery.

On arrival at the launch site you'll be issued with your waterproofs and kayaking gear before going through all the necessary safety talks. Following a brief paddling exercise the group will make its way by kayak from Deep Water Basin to the centre of Milford Sound, where you'll get to spend around four hours exploring the fjord. Your guide will take you to the best spots to view landmarks such as Bowen Falls, Mitre Peak and the highlights of the Pembroke Glacier Wilderness Zone.

Lunch will be enjoyed at a beach if weather permits before kayaking back to Deep Water Basin, after which you'll be transferred to your accommodation at the Milford Sound Lodge.

Day two - Pick up by coach at 10:15am at the Milford Sound lodge. The first order of the day is a nature cruise launched from the Milford wharf. This extended cruise lets you enjoy the sights and learn more about the region's exotic wildlife at a relaxed pace, travelling through the mountains and waterfalls of the fjord and out to the Tasman sea.

After the cruise, the group will be returned in the early afternoon to the mountain divide, where two options await you. For the active amongst you there is the Key Summit walk on the Routeburn Great Walk. This is an unguided hike with an ascent of around 400m (requiring some degree of fitness) through beech forest, and offers incomparable vantage points with which to view the breathtaking alpine scenery. Alternatively, a nature guide can escort you on a tour of the idyllic Hollyford Valley, a profoundly moving rainforest which hasn't changed in tens of thousands of years (this tour includes a visit to the Hollyford camp and museum.) Both options are well paced to give you the change to take in the surrounding beauty and get plenty of photos. The groups will then reunite from each respective walk

The group will reunite from each respective walk and break for tea in the forests before walking back to Te Anau town. The walk will be slow paced in order to give you the chance to take in the surrounding beauty and get plenty of photos.

Details

Getting there

Pick-up for the first day of the tour will be at 6:30am, so guests are advised to arrange accommodation for the preceding night in the pick-up town of Te Anau (roughly two hours' drive from Milford Sound.)

Price includes

Tour guides, kayaking equipment and clothing, quad share accommodation with shared bathroom facilities, breakfast, nature boat cruise, transport from Te Anau to pick up/ drop off points.

Not included are the following: lunch, evening meal and additional drinks and food at Milford Sound, entry to underwater observatory.

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed