



MILFORD QUEST

ITINERARY



Love hiking and love your creature comforts come night time? You've come to the right place.

On this 14-day Milford Hiking Adventure, you'll experience the very best of New Zealand's South Island, one trail at a time. Day hike on the Milford Track, the stunning Routeburn, and Kepler Tracks, easy task - especially when you add in an overnight cruise on Doubtful Sound and a cruise on Milford Sound.

You'll fall in love with Fiordland's diverse landscapes and learn about the fascinating culture, flora and fauna of the region with two knowledgeable local guides leading the way. We don't stop there, though. You'll also hike trails known only to the locals as you explore Mt Aspiring National Park, Franz Josef Glacier and Aoraki Mt Cook National Park.

Our Milford Quest is one of those experiences you'll be talking about for years to come.

LENGTH	14 days	
GRADE	C: no outdoor experience required just reasonable fitness and enthusiasm	
START	Christchurch, 10.30am at Merivale Manor (please confirm this with us), or Christchurch Airport (i-Site), 11.00am	
FINISH	Christchurch, 3.00pm (approx.)	
DEPARTURES	2024 - 2025 October 2024: 21 November 2024: 4, 18 December 2024: 2, 16, 30 January 2025: 13, 27 February 2025: 10, 24 March 2025: 10	2025 - 2026 October 2025: 21 November 2025: 3, 17 December 2025: 1, 15, 29 January 2026: 12, 26 February 2026: 9, 23 March 2026: 9
PRICE	2024 - 2025 : Adult NZ\$15,599.00* Single supplement NZ\$4,200.00*	2025 - 2026: Adult NZ\$16,399.00* Single supplement NZ\$4,200.00*
*Tour prices are dynamic and will be confirmed upon your booking request.		

"ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL"

An absolutely wonderful adventure and the people who made it exceptional where our two guides, Claire and Holly. Both were very organized, fun and professional!"

~Jeanne K. - British Columbia, Canada

"ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME!"

The guides can either make or break a trip, so I was thrilled to experience the best! I'm so impressed with their knowledge, fun spirit, culinary skills, and especially, their attention to details! I couldn't believe how they catered to each individual's needs or preferences! Of course, the scenery and hikes were amazing everywhere we explored! How can you go wrong with New Zealand landscape?! Top notch all the way!"

~ Kathy V. - California, United States

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARRIVE - CASTLE HILL

1km/30mins-1 hour hiking

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Saturday evening, arriving in Auckland early Monday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline – but you get it back on the way home! It's a short flight from Auckland to Christchurch in the South Island where we'll meet you. We'll then head west to Kura Tawhiti Conservation Area in the heart of the Southern Alps. We'll take a gentle one-hour walk among the imposing limestone tors of Castle Hill, which were once a meeting place for moa hunters of the Ngai Tahu tribe. The Dalai Lama visited this area and described it as a 'spiritual center of the universe'. This afternoon, we'll continue on to the West Coast and the seaside village of Punakaiki, where you'll have the rest of the afternoon to relax or walk along the beach. Depending on where you're coming from, you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal – for instance, it's a 12 to 13-hour direct overnight flight from Los Angeles to Auckland so you'll appreciate the gentle start to your New Zealand adventure. *Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki, Punakaiki. Includes lunch and dinner.*

DAY 2 RAINFOREST AND BEACH IN PUNAKAIKI

6km/2-3 hours hiking

We'll spend most of today hiking the Inland Pack Track through temperate rainforest and limestone canyons in the footsteps of the gold miners who established this trail over a century ago. We'll also follow the Truman Track to a rocky cove and check out the famous Pancake Rocks and blowholes – aptly named limestone formations that have been sculpted through relentless pounding by the Tasman Sea. The Punakaiki coastline is a magnet to marine wildlife, including little blue penguins and Hector's dolphin (the world's smallest) that can sometimes be seen close to shore. *Accommodation: Scenic Hotel Punakaiki, Punakaiki. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 3 HOKITIKA - FRANZ JOSEF

4.2km/1-2 hours hiking

We'll travel down the coast to hike the Point Elizabeth track through native coastal forest and flax. The fibers of the flax plant are a traditional resource for Maori, used for weaving a variety of baskets, mats and clothing. Then it's on to Hokitika where we'll stretch our legs and check out local art galleries and pounamu-carving workshops (pounamu is Maori for jade). We'll continue south and stop off in Okarito, a little-known beach community on the coast, for a relaxing hike through lush coastal forest or along the black sand beach. We'll then carry on down the windswept coast to Franz Josef. Nestled in the rainforest-clad foothills of the Southern Alps, Franz Josef is the heart of New Zealand's glacier country. After dark, we can head out to look for the eerie lights of *Arachnocampa luminosa* – the native glowworm – and listen for some of New Zealand's nocturnal birdlife such as the distinctive hoot of the morepork owl. *Accommodation: Rainforest Retreat, Franz Josef. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 4 FRANZ JOSEF GLACIER

3.5km/1-2 hours hiking & 4.8km/2-3 hours hiking

With some 140 glaciers making their way down from the Southern Alps, this area is fittingly known as glacier country. Few sights equal the spectacle of this giant frozen river (Franz Josef Glacier) imperceptibly grinding its way down through the temperate rainforest to just 250 meters (820 feet) above sea level. We'll take a morning walk to the historic Tartare Tunnels, and then continue on to Franz Josef Glacier where we'll walk to an incredible view of the terminal face. From Franz Josef, we'll travel down the coast through lush rainforest and inland to Makarora, a small village bordering Mt Aspiring National Park, with incredible views of the snow-capped mountains.

Accommodation: Wonderland Lodge, Makarora. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DAY 5 ROCKY MOUNTAIN - ARRIVE QUEENSTOWN

7km/2-3 hours hiking

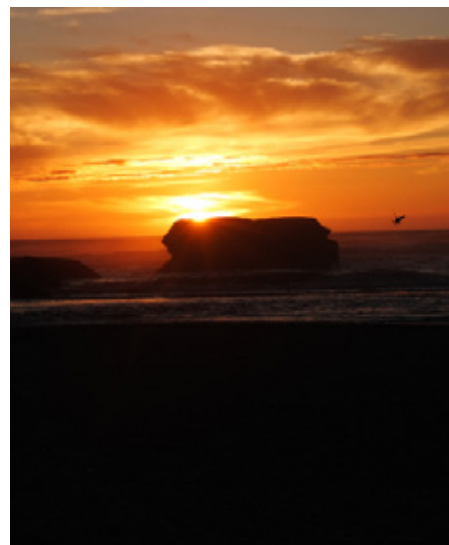
This morning we'll hike the Rocky Mountain track, a spectacular circuit through an area carved out by ice-age glaciers, with stands of native forest and shrub land. We'll enjoy lunch after our hike in Wanaka, then it's a short but dramatic drive over the Cardrona Saddle to Queenstown on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, our base for the next couple of nights. You'll have time to explore and plan your free day tomorrow before dinner. You'll sleep in this beautiful alpine town. *Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Queenstown. Includes breakfast and lunch.*

DAY 6 FREE DAY IN QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown is the adventure capital of New Zealand (if not the world!) and all the comforts of civilization are packed into this tiny resort town: restaurants galore, stylish lounge bars, day spas, and boutiques. You'll also find incredible optional activities here including horse trekking, fishing, winery tours, a historic steamship, bungee jumping, jet boating, and skydiving as well as some great hiking opportunities. Or you can just soak up the atmosphere at one of many local cafés. Your guides will happily share their favorite haunts and point you in the right direction for your free day today. This afternoon, there's a pre-departure briefing for the Milford Track Guided Walk if you've chosen that option. *Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Queenstown. No meals included.*

DAY 7 DOUBTFUL SOUND

Variety is the spice of life and that's exactly what this option is all about - hike three of New Zealand's Great Walks and take an overnight cruise, all in five days - it's unheard of! We kick things off with a relaxed breakfast, and a drive to the lakeside town of Manapouri, where our journey into Doubtful Sound begins. We'll board a boat for the cruise across Lake Manapouri, before a drive over Wilmot Pass to Deep Cove where we'll board the Fiordland Navigator for our overnight cruise. Doubtful Sound is a large and remote wilderness area, where you'll have the opportunity to take a kayak out on the water or hop aboard the tender craft for a guided exploration of the fiord, and in the right season, you may catch a glimpse of the rare Fiordland crested penguin. Tonight, you'll sleep in a quad share room aboard the Fiordland Navigator, though there is the option to upgrade to a private ensuite room, if you prefer. *Accommodation: Fiordland Navigator, Doubtful Sound. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

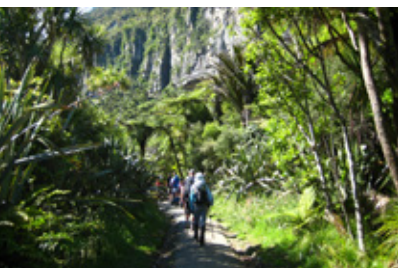




DAY 8 CRUISE IN DOUBTFUL SOUND AND HIKE KEPLER TRACK

9.5km/2-3 hours hiking

You'll wake in the middle of Doubtful Sound and after breakfast we'll retrace our journey back to Manapouri. From there we'll tick off a section of the Kepler Track. Interestingly, the Kepler Track differs from the Routeburn and Milford Tracks in that it didn't actually evolve from a necessary Maori greenstone trail, but was custom-built for hiking. The section we'll hike today passes over the control gates at the outlet of Lake Te Anau and meanders through ancient beech and podocarp forest. *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel and Villas, Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 9 CRUISE MILFORD SOUND, HIKE MILFORD TRACK

10km/3-4 hours hiking

It's worth getting up early to take a photo of Mitre Peak, quite possibly the most photographed mountain in New Zealand, but your challenge is to find a unique angle! After breakfast, we'll take a short boat ride across Milford Sound to hike from Sandfly Point to the Giant Gates waterfall, a spectacular section of the famed Milford Track. The forest here is lush and rich with mosses and ferns as we follow the Arthur River past Lake Ada. By hiking from the Milford Sound trailhead, we'll enjoy the track to ourselves, which is a luxury others seldom get. Once we return to the Milford wharf, we'll board a boat for a two-hour nature cruise to the head of this spectacular fiord. We'll then leave Milford Sound behind to hike some lesser-known tracks in eastern Fiordland before returning to Te Anau. *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel and Villas, Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 10 TAKAHE BIRD PARK AND HIKE ROUTEBURN TRACK

3.4km/3-4 hours hiking

This morning we'll drive to the Divide, where we'll hike part of the Routeburn Track, the third of the Great Walks you'll experience. We hike through beech forest, subalpine shrub land and picturesque alpine tarns, before reaching Key Summit. Here you'll be standing at the head of three different valleys (the Hollyford, Eglinton and Greenstone), with stunning views over the Great Divide, which separates west and east flowing rivers. Afterwards we'll head back to Te Anau and head for the Department of Conservation birdlife park. The centre takes care of injured or aging birds which would struggle to survive in the wild - it's a great opportunity to see some of our rarest birds up close, so don't forget your camera! *Accommodation: Distinction Hotel and Villas, Te Anau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*



DAY 11 GONDOLA RIDE AND HIKE BEN LOMOND

8km/4-5 hours or 13km/6-7 hours

Today we'll drive back along the shores of Lake Wakatipu to Queenstown, and take a ride on the gondola to the top of a tree-covered rocky crag, known as Bob's Peak, to start our alpine hike. We pass through open alpine tussockland to the Ben Lomond saddle and will be rewarded with panoramic views of Queenstown and Lake Wakatipu, surrounded by the often snow-covered Southern Alps. For those keen to press on to the top, Ben Lomond's summit reveals views of Mt. Earnslaw and Mt. Aspiring, two of New Zealand's highest peaks, and even a glimpse of Aoraki/Mt. Cook on a clear day. Tonight you'll dine out in

Queenstown at one of the many excellent restaurants.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Express and Suites, Queenstown. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

DAY 12 SAM SUMMERS TRACK- VISIT LOCAL WINERY

7.4km/3-4 hours hiking

After breakfast, we head out around Lake Wakatipu to the Mt. Crichton Scenic Reserve, where we'll hike the Sam Summers Track. This area was mined for gold until the 1930s and there are still many relics to be seen along the way. After hiking, we'll continue on to a local

winery. This region's dry and sunny climate is ideal for grape growing and is becoming well known for producing world-class pinot noir and other quality wines. We'll enjoy a glass or two and then head to Lake Ohau Lodge. Here we're staying beside a beautiful alpine lake, with stunning views stretching across to Aoraki/Mt. Cook and the Southern Alps - an ideal spot to soak in the hot tub! *Accommodation: Lake Ohau Lodge, Lake Ohau. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 13 AORAKI/MT COOK NATIONAL PARK

7.2km/6-7 hours hiking (Mueller Ridge) OR 9km/3-4 hours (Hooker Valley)

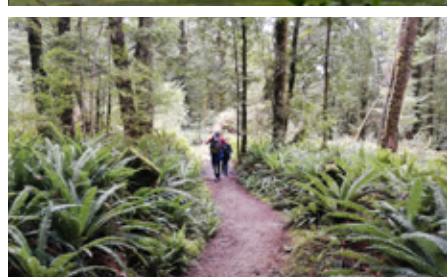
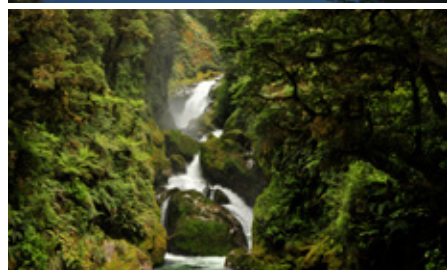
A short distance away is Mt. Cook, named Aoraki or 'cloud piercer' by South Island Maori, the highest mountain in New Zealand. Directly opposite Aoraki/Mt. Cook, we have a stunning day hike to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier. This area has a unique alpine environment and includes endemic flora such as the Mt. Cook lily (*Ranunculus lyallii*), the world's largest buttercup. Many of our clients have said this is the best hike they've ever done and it's a fine way to finish off a great trip. It's a bit of a hike, but you'll remember the view of the glacier and the surrounding peaks forever! The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it's a true alpine climate notorious for sudden weather shifts. If we aren't able to do the Mueller Glacier hike, or you'd like to take it a little easier, there's an impressive hike up to a glacial lake (complete with icebergs!) at the base of the Hooker Glacier. After hiking, we'll relax at our lodge nestled right in the heart of Aoraki Mt. Cook National Park. *Accommodation: Mt Cook Alpine Lodge, Aoraki Mt Cook Village. Includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.*

DAY 14 DEPART FOR HOME

This is the last day of your Milford Quest trip and you'll leave refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had in New Zealand! For a great way to see the North Island too, where you'll experience Maori culture, and volcanic and geothermal areas, you can combine this trip with the 5-day North Island Adventure (11-day options available; please contact us for information). If you are flying out on the last day of the trip, we recommend departing from Christchurch after 4pm on Sunday.

If you're considering alternative flight times, please check with us.

Includes breakfast and lunch.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

GRADE C

- Up to 6 hrs of physical activity per day.
- At times carrying a backpack of 5-6kgs.
- Tracks generally in good condition. Altitude gains of up to 600m on harder days.
- No hiking experience necessary but a reasonable standard of fitness required.

You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on this trip. You don't have to be young and extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of doing at least some exercise. Age and experience are not important, but this trip is not a passive scenic tour of New Zealand. For example, a person in their 50s who hikes every couple of weeks will be happier than a 22-year-old couch potato. If you're concerned about your fitness level, please contact us for more information. The focus is on getting you out of the vehicle, out of stress-mode and into the scenery.



GUIDES AND SAFETY

Experienced Kiwi guides are used who are well-versed in the local culture, flora and fauna, and history. They are trained in Outdoor First Aid. You will have two guides on this trip to take good care of you - a Lead Guide who is in charge of your trip and does the driving and a Second Guide to assist the Lead Guide and make sure you're well fed.

FOOD

Almost all meals are included on the Milford Quest. A wide variety of cuisine is used - sometimes you will dine out, and sometimes dine in. Breakfasts when there is an early start will generally consist of cereal, yoghurt, fruit, toast, coffee and juice. When there is more time, your guide will make pancakes and full cooked breakfasts. Lunches are usually picnic style - sandwiches, salad and fruit, or maybe a barbecue - in some beautiful spot. Vegetarians and people with particular dietary needs or preferences are easily catered for.

You will enjoy the skills of your second guides, whose primary responsibility when they are not guiding is cooking up great meals. Their cooking skills will astound you, as you enjoy a traditional kiwi roast dinner at the shearer's quarters, or french toast and sugared bananas at Punakaiki, or one of a score of awesome meals on the road! When the group eats out, there is no budget or restrictions on what to order. You may find the meals are a real highlight of your trip!

TRANSPORT

This trip focuses on spending as little time as possible sitting in vehicles so that you can spend your time on outdoors-oriented adventure. The average driving time over the period of this trip is just over two hours a day, and as much time as possible is spent in the outdoors. Modern, comfortable minibuses are used. Vehicles are fitted with good stereo systems, and you will hear plenty of New Zealand music.



ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation is interesting and comfortable. Some places are quite civilised, but many of the other locations you visit are off-the-beaten-track - and don't have many accommodation options - but they are really, really spectacular.

We think you'll love the places you stay in! The preference is to stay in comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments.

Rooming is based on twin-share, although single room upgrades are available on request. As there's such a variety of accommodation on this trip, some places will have ensuite bathrooms and some will have shared bathrooms.



LIFE ON THE TRAIL

ADDITIONAL COSTS

- Activities in Queenstown
- Meals in Queenstown

Maximum 14 participants.

BOOKING CONDITIONS

Payment

You can pay in NZ dollars by credit card, or by direct transfer into our NZ dollar account.

Pay in full - non-refundable rates (10%)

You may choose to pay your full tour price at the time of booking. Non-refundable rate discounts require full payment at the time of booking, and your booking is non-refundable. This discount only applies to bookings that are scheduled to depart no later than 180 days from the date of payment and the 'cancellation and Refund (By You) and Change of Trip or Departure' terms and conditions do not apply. If you change or cancel your trip, no refunds will apply. This discount cannot be combined with any other offers. We highly recommend that you purchase Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) insurance.

Deposits

For bookings, 4 or more months in advance of the departure a 25% deposit can be paid with the remainder due 130 days

prior to your trip. For bookings within 4 months of the departure, full payment is required. This deposit is non-transferable and non-refundable. However, provided you cancel your booking 121 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date, your deposit (less any applicable cancellation fee) will be held as a credit for you for up to 24 months.

Cancellations

121 days or more: 100% of payments already made by you, less your deposit will be refunded. A cancellation fee of 10% of the full booking value will be deducted from your deposit and the balance of your deposit will be held as a credit for you.

120-91 days: 50% of tour price forfeited.

90-0 days: 100% of tour price forfeited.

On booking request, you will be sent the full terms and conditions which you must review and acknowledge that you have reviewed the booking conditions associated with this and understand and accept this agreement.

Travel Insurance

It is suggested that clients take out comprehensive travel insurance.

This trip is run in conjunction with another operator.

PACKING LIST

ESSENTIAL ITEMS

- ☐ Main piece of luggage: a sports bag with wheels, a suitcase, a backpack or similar
- ☐ Daypack: used for day trips and on the bus
- ☐ Hiking boots: required for most days of the trip. Sturdy boots with good ankle support and solid tread are required.
- ☐ Trail runners/running shoes
- ☐ Sandals/flip-flops
- ☐ Waterproof rain jacket/shell
- ☐ Waterproof rain pants
- ☐ Fleece/down jacket/wool sweater: 1-2 something nice and warm for those cold days/nights
- ☐ Shirts/T-shirts: 2-3, some cotton, some quick-dry
- ☐ Long-sleeve shirts: 1-2, some cotton, some quick-dry, some insect protection
- ☐ Lightweight trousers: 1-2 pairs
- ☐ Shorts: 1-2 pairs, some cotton, some quick-dry
- ☐ Underwear: a weeks worth
- ☐ Thermal underwear: 2 top and bottom sets of thermal/polypropylene underwear
- ☐ Pajamas/nightwear

- ☐ Socks: 3-4 pairs. Some good quality hiking socks, some warm, some casual
- ☐ Swim suit/shorts
- ☐ Travel towel for swimming
- ☐ Warm hat: wool/fleece ski hat
- ☐ Sun hat & Sunglasses
- ☐ Warm gloves
- ☐ Water bottle/bladder
- ☐ Torch/flashlight/headlamp
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Toiletries
- ☐ Sun-block
- ☐ Personal First Aid Kit including blister kit
- ☐ Insect Repellent

This clothing will keep you warm and comfortable during outdoor activities - cotton clothing is not suitable. You will also need other clothing and shoes for between activities, i.e. evenings, travel.

Recommended items

Travel towel, Personal First Aid Kit, Hiking Poles, Hiking Gaiters, Ear Plugs, Alarm clock, Casual Clothes, Binoculars, Reading materials, iPod/mp3 player.