Getting there on time

The drive to Milford Sound is one of the most scenic drives in the world. Everywhere you look you'll see breathtaking beauty and stunning vistas. We firmly believe that the drive to Milford Sound is just as important as the Sound itself. Take plenty of extra time to explore this unique area. This drive guide will give you estimated driving times, couple of handy tips for comfort on the road and your own personal tour guide for the day. On the other side of this guide you will find our personal favourites for stops along the way to Milford Sound. If you discover something amazing that’s not on this list but you think we should share with other guests please email us at info@cruisemilfordnz.com.

Fuel
Make sure you have a full tank of fuel before leaving Te Anau as there are no fuel stations until Milford Sound. You can get petrol only at Gunn’s Camp in the Hollyford Valley, which is a detour from Milford Road. Otherwise you can get petrol and diesel in Milford Sound, although the service is limited to certain credit cards with pin number access only.

Phone Coverage
There is no cell phone coverage after leaving Te Anau. Telephone services are available at Knobs Flat (card phone), Homer Tunnel (satellite phone – emergency use only) and the Milford Sound Visitor terminal (card phone).

Chains
Over the winter months you might be required by law to carry snow chains in your vehicle. FOR UP TO DATE ROAD INFORMATION go to www.cruisemilfordnz.com/info

Te Anau
Te Anau is considered to be the walking capital of the world. We also consider it to be the gateway to the Fiordland National Park. This very scenic town with a population of 2000 lies nestled on the edge of Lake Te Anau, the South Island’s biggest lake with the deepest point recorded at 417 metres.

Te Anau offers a wide range of activities and attractions for tourists such as hunting, fishing, hiking and of course sightseeing. It is the perfect place to experience true New Zealand hospitality and connect with nature.

For any advice on what to do and where to stay in Te Anau give us a ring on 0800 MILFORD (645367).

Fuel
Make sure you have a full tank of fuel before leaving Te Anau as there are no fuel stations until Milford Sound. You can get petrol only at Gunn’s Camp in the Hollyford Valley, which is a detour from Milford Road. Otherwise you can get petrol and diesel in Milford Sound, although the service is limited to certain credit cards with pin number access only.

Phone Coverage
There is no cell phone coverage after leaving Te Anau. Telephone services are available at Knobs Flat (card phone), Homer Tunnel (satellite phone – emergency use only) and the Milford Sound Visitor terminal (card phone).

Chains
Over the winter months you might be required by law to carry snow chains in your vehicle. FOR UP TO DATE ROAD INFORMATION go to www.cruisemilfordnz.com/info

Te Anau
Te Anau is considered to be the walking capital of the world. We also consider it to be the gateway to the Fiordland National Park. This very scenic town with a population of 2000 lies nestled on the edge of Lake Te Anau, the South Island’s biggest lake with the deepest point recorded at 417 metres.

Te Anau offers a wide range of activities and attractions for tourists such as hunting, fishing, hiking and of course sightseeing. It is the perfect place to experience true New Zealand hospitality and connect with nature.

For any advice on what to do and where to stay in Te Anau give us a ring on 0800 MILFORD (645367).
3. Knobs Flat 63KM
Knobs Flat was named for the kames and hummocks which have been left by retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age. It’s also a great convenience stop as you will find toilet facilities, a phone and campsites.

4. Lake Gunn 78KM
In the 1970’s an Otago University student named several features near Lake Gunn after J.R.R. Tolkien’s The Lord of the Rings, but the names were later rejected by authorities for being “unimaginative”. Ironically Sir Peter Jackson chose this area to represent the Misty Mountains in the movie The Fellowship of the Ring. At the head of the Lake you’ll find a gravel road that takes you down to the beach. This is a great spot for a picnic, a bit of swimming or stone skipping.

5. Lake Fergus 80KM
On a calm morning you’ll get endless reflections of the mountains surrounding this Lake.

6. The Divide 84KM
This is the start/finish of the lowest east to west pass in the Southern Alps and famous walking tracks like the Routeburn, Greenstone and Caples Track. If you have time, a walk up to the Key Summit is worthwhile for the spectacular views of the Eglington, Hollyford and Greenstone Valleys. The Key Summit viewpoint is 918m above sea level and will take you approx. 3hrs return. (You should now have used approximately half of your allocated time to get from Te Anau to Milford Sound.)

7. Hollyford Valley Lookout 88KM
This Lookout provides an excellent view over the Hollyford Valley and the Darren Mountains. CAUTION: be careful with traffic pulling in and out of the lookout. For safety reasons we recommend you do this stop on your way out of Milford Sound.

8. Lower Hollyford Road 89KM
The Lower Hollyford Road is a 22km no exit gravel road that will bring you into the heart of the Hollyford Valley. 1km down the Road you will find the Lake Marian track. It is a 1Dmim walk to the Marian Waterfalls and a 3 hour return journey to Lake Marian.

9. Gunn’s Camp & Museum 95KM
At the end of the Lower Hollyford Road you will find Gunn’s Camp. This has been described as “The home of legends, tall stories and laughter.” This unique and quirky place is well worth the drive. You can spend hours exploring the camp & museum and finding out how tourism flourished in this remote area. Overnight stays at the old original huts are available for a small cost. For more information and bookings email gunnscamp@ruralzone.net. If you keep following the road to the end you will find a little track that will bring you to the 275m high Humboldt Falls.

10. Monkey Creek 96KM
Rumoured to be named after William H. Homer’s most loyal companion, his dog “Monkey”. From here you’ll get breathtaking views over the Upper Hollyford Valley. William H. Homer discovered the Homer Saddle in 1889 and suggested the nearby road tunnel believing it to be a worthwhile project because of the route’s potential tourism value. Little did he know that almost 60 years after his death the Homer Tunnel project was completed and how right he was about the huge impact it had on tourism in this area.

11. Homer Tunnel 102KM
At 945m (East Portal end) this is the highest point on the Milford Road. The Homer Tunnel is an amazing achievement of the early pioneers. With less than perfect conditions men and their families lived up here in camps all year round. Work on the tunnel started in 1935 and it was finally opened to the public in 1954. The story of the men working on this tunnel is nothing short of spectacular but too long to print here. We encourage you to ask our skipper or crew in Milford for more information. Before continuing through the tunnel it’s worth stopping at the parking bays outside the tunnel. You are more than likely to see our cheeky mountain parrots, the Kea’s, hanging around this area causing mischief. As beautiful as the Kea’s are, be mindful of your possessions. The parrot’s love sparkling car keys and don’t mind leaving you stranded in the middle of nowhere. Please DO NOT feed the Kea’s.

12. The Chasm 110KM
Another MUST DO! This is a 25min loop track. You will see the 22m deep ravine where the Cleddau River has cut through the rock, carving fascinating formations in this landscape.

13. Mt Tutuko 112KM
Directly in front of you, you’ll see Mt Tutuko, with 2723m the highest peak in the Fiordland National Park.

14. Cruise Milford Visitor Center 122KM
You can park your vehicle free of charge in the signposted car park. From there it’s an easy 5min scenic walk to the Visitor Terminal via the raised walkway. Check in at the Cruise Milford Counter (second on the left as you enter) and let us show you our Milford Sound.

Now sit back relax and enjoy your cruise…. 

Cruise Milford
Milford Sound NZ
www.cruisemilfordnz.com