Cruise Milford
Milford Sound NZ

Milford Sound Drive Guide

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DRIVE TIME RECOMMENDATION

TE ANAU – MILFORD – 2.5 hrs*
QUEENSTOWN – MILFORD – 5 hrs*

This does not include time for stops. Aim to arrive in Milford Sound 45 minutes before your cruise departure time to allow for Parking, walking to the Terminal and Check-in.

* times are approx

THE DRIVE TO MILFORD SOUND

Buckle up for one of the world's most jaw-dropping road trips – State Highway 94 into Fiordland National Park (aka Ata Whenua). Trust us, the drive to Piopiotahi (Milford Sound) is just as mesmerizing as the boat cruise itself. You'll be amazed over the wild landscapes, ancient rainforests, and views that make postcards jealous. Fiordland's UNESCO World Heritage status isn't just for show – this place is packed with glaciers, towering alpine ranges, and native wildlife just waiting for you to come and enjoy!
Check out our favourite must-see stops on the next page.



Want to sit back and take it all in? If you are not in the mood to drive you can join on one of our premium day tours from Queenstown or Te Anau – our small buses take no more than 16 Guests and local guides will show you all there is to see along the way.



DRIVE CONDITIONS

During Winter months (May-Oct) you may experience black ice or snow on the road. Road closures due to heightened avalanche danger at the Homer Tunnel are common in September and October. Our Team will provide you with all the information regarding possible road closures/ re-opening times closer to your travel date. Please drive safe, stay sharp and be ready for an adventure!

CHECK UP TO DATE ROAD STATUS AT
www.cruisemilfordnz.com/how-to-get-to-milford-sound/

WHERE YOU'D RATHER BE!

PHONE COVERAGE

Signal can be patchy on the drive into the National Park, with some areas completely off the grid. However, there are emergency phone services at Knobs Flat (card phone), Homer Tunnel (satellite phone), and the Milford Sound Visitor Terminal (card phone) in case you need them. You will be able to receive a phone signal near the main car park and the Milford Sound Visitor Terminal.

WHAT'S THE WEATHER LIKE?

Fiordland's million-dollar question: How much rain do we get? Well, being a temperate rainforest, we see a fair bit – around 6.5 to 7 meters a year, and some years even hit 9 meters! But don't worry, it's not raining every day. When it does rain, though, it definitely makes a statement! Our top tip? Pack for anything and everything, because in Fiordland, you never know what the weather's up to!



WHAT'S IN MILFORD SOUND

Milford Sound is a small town with a close-knit community, mainly made up of the friendly faces onboard the boat and behind the check-in counters – that's about it!
Make sure you fill up your tank before leaving Te Anau, the only FUEL available in Milford Sound is pricey, a bit unreliable, and only accepts certain credit cards with PINs.

FOOD – you can purchase snacks and drinks at the Café at the Discover Milford Sound Center near the paid car park. It's a good idea to bring your own snacks and drinks along for the cruise as the cafe can get pretty busy.
Milford also has a small airport, a handful of scenic walks, staff accommodations, and Deep Water Basin where the fishing boats operate out of.

MILFORD SOUND PARKING INFORMATION:
https://milfordsoundtourism.nz/parking

main image - William Patino Photography

O'REGAN STUDIO
oreganstudio.nz

MILFORD SOUND DRIVE GUIDE



1 TE ANAU DOWNS 30KM

Marking the entrance to Fiordland National Park, the Te Anau Downs offer spectacular views across the lake to the Murchison Mountains. In 1888, Scottish explorer Quintin Mackinnon established the first overland route to Milford Sound, now the famous Milford Track, this sheltered harbor is the starting point for trampers.

2 EGLINTON VALLEY 53KM

Not only is the Eglinton Valley an impressive scenic stop, but it's also a hot spot for conservation. This lowland area has an extensive array of New Zealand Beech (Tawhai). Thanks to extensive pest control, you can also find many endangered species here, including mohua, bats, kākā, and kākāriki.

3 MIRROR LAKES 59KM

This 5-minute boardwalk is best in the early morning before the breeze kicks in. It provides picture-perfect reflections of the Earl Mountains.

4 KNOBS FLAT 63KM

Named for the kames and hummocks that have been left behind by retreating glaciers at the end of the last ice age. It is also where you will find the Eglinton Valley Camp, a great convenience stop with Campsites, Information and the last flushing toilets before Milford Sound.

5 LAKE GUNN 78KM

Cascade Creek and Lake Gunn offer a campsite, a short 1.4km nature walk through ancient Beech Forrest as well as the perfect spot for a picnic or a refreshing dip in the lake.

6 THE DIVIDE 84KM

Named as you pass over the great alpine fault, from here all the rivers run west. A car park with shelters and long drops provides the start/end to the famous Routeburn Track. The much shorter Key Summit hike starts from here as well, rewarding you with 360° views of the Hollyford Valley. The Key Summit viewpoint is 918m above sea level (hike approx. 3hr return).

7 HOLLYFORD VALLEY LOOKOUT 88KM

This lookout provides panoramic views down the Hollyford Valley, the Darren and Humboldt Mountains run North towards the Tasman Sea.

8 HOLLYFORD ROAD/LAKE MARIAN 89KM

The lower Hollyford is a 22km, no exit, gravel road that ends right in the heart of the Hollyford Valley. 1km in, you will find the trailhead to Lake Marian, a beautiful alpine lake situated in a hanging valley. It is a 10-minute walk to the Marian Waterfalls and a 3-hour return journey to Lake Marian.



9 FALLS CREEK 91KM

Particularly impressive on a wet day, 15m Christie Falls, also known as Falls Creek, is well worth a quick snap. Find a car park on the side of the road closest to the river. Please do not stop on the one-way bridge for photos.

10 MONKEY CREEK 93KM

Named after William Henry Homer's Dog, Monkey, this is the perfect spot to take in the upper Hollyford valley. Look up on the northern side of the road to see the near vertical wall of Mt Christina, towering high in the Darran Mountains at 2474m.
The Darran Mountain range has some of Fiordland's highest peaks and biggest glaciers. Ice would have filled these valleys as early as 10,000 years ago. Tall granite cliffs provide a climbing mecca for mountaineers from all over the world.

11 GERTRUDE SADDLE 97KM

A 4-6hr return hike for the more experienced trampers, this 7km climb to Gertrude Saddle gains nearly 700m in elevation. On a clear day, you are greeted with views out beyond the Fiord to the West Coast.

Make sure to check the Department of Conservation website beforehand for extra information, wet weather, snow or ice create treacherous conditions all year.

12 HOMER TUNNEL 100KM

At 945m (East portal end) this is the highest point on the Milford Road. The tunnel is an impressive feat of early engineering. With less-than-perfect conditions, workers and their families lived up here in camps all year round. The Homer Saddle, first discovered and named by William H. Homer, was the old mailman's route. Pre-tunnel, post was carried up onto the saddle before being lowered down into the Cleddau basin on the other side.

13 THE CHASM 110KM

(20 min return) Dramatic views of a series of powerful waterfalls. The sheer velocity of water gives an appreciation of how much rainfall the Milford Sound area receives per annum.

14 MT TŪTOKO 112KM

Named after a Maori Chief, Mt Tūtoko is Fiordland's Highest peak. Standing tall at 2,723m it's an impressive sight before arriving in Milford Sound.
The Tūtoko Suspension Bridge was built in 1940 to cross the Tūtoko River to complete the road into Milford Sound.

15 MILFORD SOUND 120KM

You've made it. The walk from the paid car park to the Milford Sound Visitor Terminal takes approx. 10min. Our counter is the second one on the left as you enter the terminal building. We can't wait to welcome you on-board.

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