

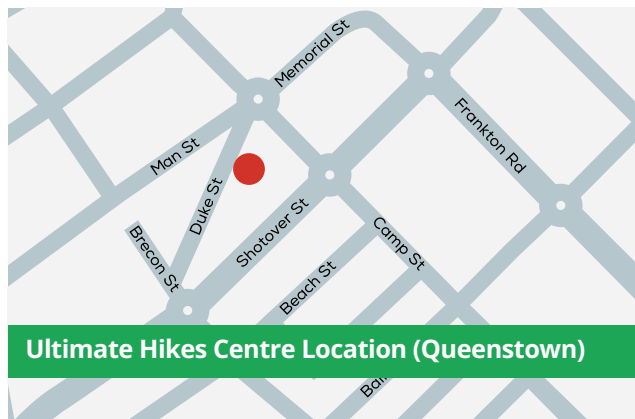
Milford Track

Pre Walk Information

Important Information

Pre-track briefing

Please check in at **2:45pm** on the day prior to your walk for a group pre-track briefing. The briefing is held at the Ultimate Hikes Centre, Ground Floor, The Station Building, Duke Street Entrance, Queenstown.



At the briefing, you will have the opportunity to confirm your dietary, and medical information and emergency contact details. You will be able to pick up any gear you need to borrow from us or purchase any last minute items from our shop. Our customer service staff will also give you an overview of what to expect while you are on track.

If you cannot make the pre-track briefing, please contact Reservations on +64 3 450 1940 or info@ultimatehikes.co.nz as soon as possible.

Check in time

Check in time on day of departure is 9.15am at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

There is no collection from accommodation. Please ensure you have breakfast before arrival as food and beverages are not to be consumed on the coach. Lunch will be provided in Te Anau on arrival – about **12.00pm**.

Te Anau departures are available. If you are starting in Te Anau please advise the Ultimate Hikes Centre to arrange your registration and receive a briefing. You will meet the group at **12.00pm** at The Ultimate Hikes Te Anau Desk in the Alpine Centre cafe cnr Sandy Brown Rd & Highway 94, Te Anau.

Return time

The coach returns to Queenstown on the final day at approximately **4.00pm**. You will be dropped off at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown. Arrival times may vary due to weather, road and traffic conditions. If you wish to be dropped off at Queenstown Airport, please notify the Ultimate Hikes Centre before departing from Queenstown.

Guides

Your guides provide a safe, efficient and friendly service on track and in the lodges. They will tell you about the flora, fauna and history of the region and provide assistance if needed. They are trained in first aid and are in constant radio contact with each other, the lodges and our Queenstown base.

Weather

We cannot stress enough how extreme and unpredictable the weather can be in this region. Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Parks experience some of the highest rainfall in New Zealand; snow, high winds and cold temperatures can occur at any time of the year. It is essential to be prepared for all weather conditions and to carry the clothing that we recommend. If you wish to check the weather forecast you can visit the [NZ met service](http://www.metservice.govt.nz) website, but please be aware that forecasts can change very quickly.



Equipment & what you will carry

You carry a pack each day containing your personal belongings, lunch and water. It is essential that you are prepared for all types of weather. See the equipment list included in this document and available on our website.

We can provide a backpack and raincoat at no cost and available to collect at the UHC (booking not required). Walking poles can be hired (\$25 a pair) or purchased.

Capacity

The maximum number of people per departure is 50. You are encouraged to walk at your own pace, unless your guides advise otherwise due to track conditions or weather.

Safety

Your safety is of paramount importance and our guides may have to adapt the day depending on fitness levels and weather or track conditions. Whilst they will make every effort to meet your needs, you must adhere to their professional decisions at all times.

Insurance

We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** you arrange to take out your own personal travel insurance to cover your walk and related costs in the event that you are not able to start your adventure.

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency on the track, a medical evacuation by air will be carried out by New Zealand emergency services, which might be at your own cost.

Fitness requirements

To enjoy your experience, you should be comfortable carrying a backpack (5-7kg/10-14lbs) for 5-9 hours, walking up to 21km (13.5 miles) of sometimes uneven track each day.

Each walker will have a different experience/expectation depending upon previous experience and fitness level.

A reasonable level of fitness is required and if you are not a regular walker, you should start walking daily **in all weather conditions** and include hill-climbing, at least 6-8 weeks prior to departure. You should gradually increase the distance that you walk, carrying a backpack and wearing the boots you will be hiking in. We encourage you to walk at your own pace, it is not a race and we want you to enjoy it. There is always a guide at the rear of the group. See our [fitness page](#) for more information.

Meals included

Day 1: **Lunch, dinner**

Day 2-4: **Breakfast, lunch, dinner**

Day 5: **Breakfast, lunch**

Breakfast:

Selection of cereals, toast, fruit, cooked options, juice, hot drinks.

Lunch:

Selection of breads, sandwich fillings, salad, fruit, snacks.

Dinner:

Varies between lodges: starter, main course (choice of 3 options), dessert.

Vegetarian and gluten free options are available. If you have any particular dietary requirements or intolerance, please advise and we will do our best to accommodate you, bearing in mind the isolated environment.

A selection of New Zealand wine, beer and soft drinks are available for purchase at the lodges.



Lodges & accommodation

All beds have pillows, duvets and blankets. There is generated electricity in the lodges until 10pm. Electrical devices can be charged until then. There is no internet access in the lodges.

Due to the generator times, CPAP machines are not able to be used in shared rooms and must be pre-booked in private rooms by contacting our reservations team directly.

All lodges have facilities for washing clothes by hand, soap and drying rooms. There are small drying rooms for boots.

All bathrooms have flush toilets, and hot showers, with soap, shampoo, conditioner and towels provided. Hair dryers are available at each lodge.

Shared rooms: 4-6 people share bunk rooms with separate shared bathroom facilities. A sleep sheet must be used and is provided at each lodge.

Private rooms have a queen bed or two king single beds and ensuite bathroom. All linen is provided.

Track conditions

The track surface varies from smooth, well formed paths to rough terrain broken by rocks and tree roots. It can be challenging in places. There are steep rocky uphill and downhill sections and you may have to cross streams and wade in deep water after heavy rain.

We recommend that you wear hiking boots which provide firm ankle support. Taking two walking poles is also recommended and are available for hire or purchase at the Ultimate Hikes Centre. Visit our [website](#) for more information.

Extra luggage

A small duffel bag (you may bring one or we can provide one) of clothing/personal belongings for use at Mitre Peak Lodge (Milford Sound) on the final night can be sent by road from Queenstown to await your arrival.

Please note that because of weight restrictions on our coaches, excess luggage and suitcases cannot be transported.

Luggage storage

We recommend for our guests to leave any excess luggage at their pre and post accommodation.

We are able to store excess luggage while you are on track, at an additional fee. This can be arranged at the Ultimate Hikes centre on arrival to Queenstown and prior to your briefing. Luggage storage is not available for Te Anau departures and drop offs.

For further information, please contact our Reservations team prior to your arrival or the Ultimate Hikes Centre team at your pre-track briefing.

Transfer option – helicopter

You will have an opportunity to book a scenic transfer by helicopter with an alpine landing from Milford Sound back to Queenstown at an additional cost. The flight is weather dependent and subject to numbers. Your guides will ask you to confirm this transfer at Quinton Lodge and you will be asked to pay at Mitre Peak Lodge in Milford Sound once the flight has been confirmed. This is a fantastic experience and an opportunity to see the spectacular region from a different perspective.

Flight time for the transfer is approximately 45 minutes and leaves Milford Sound following the cruise on the morning of departure. Arrival time in Queenstown is generally by 12.30pm.

Itinerary

Pre-track briefing

(Day prior to departure)

Please check in at the Ultimate Hikes Centre, Ground Floor, The Station Building at **2:45pm** on the day prior to your departure to complete registration and attend a pre-track briefing where we will give you an outline of what to expect on your walk.

You will receive an information guide to carry with you, and you can pick up a backpack, pack liner and rain jacket. There is no need to book these items prior to the briefing.

You can purchase last minute items you may require at the Ultimate Hikes Centre and we can answer any further questions you may have.

If you are unable to attend this briefing please let us know.

Day 1

Queenstown to Glade House

The coach departs from the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown. Please arrive by **9.15am** to meet your guides and board the coach for the two hour drive to Te Anau. We will have lunch in Te Anau before travelling on to Te Anau Downs, where a boat will take you up to the start of the track at the northern end of Lake Te Anau. It's a short walk to the historic Glade House, where you will be greeted with afternoon tea and shown to your room.

Your guides will take you on a nature walk in the afternoon to give you an idea of the terrain and the environment you will be walking. In the evening, you'll have time to get to know your group over dinner.



1.6 km (1 mile)



20 Mins



Lunch, Dinner

Day 2

Glade House to Pompolona Lodge

Your first full day of walking begins by crossing the Clinton River bridge. The smooth track follows the river up the valley to the Hirere Falls lunch shelter. Take a side walk to the wetlands, a complex eco-system unique to this section of track. After lunch look out for your first glimpse of Omanui/McKinnon Pass in the distance. You'll stay in the beech forest, until you come out onto the Prairie - detour down to soak your feet in Prairie Lake. From this meadow you can capture the true nature of the ice-carved Clinton Canyon. From here, it's a short climb to Pompolona Lodge.



16 km (10 miles)



5-7 hrs



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Pompolona Lodge to Quintin Lodge

From Pompolona Lodge the track leads up to Lake Mintaro at the head of the Clinton Valley, before climbing the Omanui/McKinnon Pass in a series of zig-zags. Take your time and enjoy the views. At the top you can rest at McKinnon memorial before passing the highest point and stopping for lunch in Pass Hut overlooking the Clinton Valley.

The descent into the Arthur Valley is steep and uneven so take care and use poles. Viewing platforms give you a great view of the Cascades waterfalls. Quintin Lodge is a welcome sight at the bottom of the Pass. Take a short break to revive with a drink and a snack then we highly recommend doing the optional 90-minute round trip to Sutherland Falls, at 580m/1904ft it is one of the highest in the world and well worth seeing.



15 km (9 miles)



6-9 hrs



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 4

Quintin Lodge to Milford Sound

Your final day on the track is the longest section at 21km. You'll walk down the Arthur Valley to the historic Boatshed. After a short break and a hot drink, the track continues on past MacKay Falls through lush beech forest to the lunch spot at Giants Gate waterfall. The final stretch of the track follows tranquil Lake Ada to Sandfly Point.

From Sandfly Point it is a short boat trip across the renowned Milford Sound; the fjord often referred to as the eighth wonder of the world. Mitre Peak, the famously photographed pinnacle rises almost sheer from the Sound to a height of 1692m (5551ft). At Mitre Peak Lodge, relax in the bar enjoying the view, before sitting down to a celebratory dinner.



21 km (13 miles)



6-8 hrs



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Milford Sound to Queenstown

This morning after breakfast we'll take you on a cruise on Milford Sound. Watch for dolphins and fur seals and, if the waterfalls are in full flow, you'll have seen Fiordland at its very best!

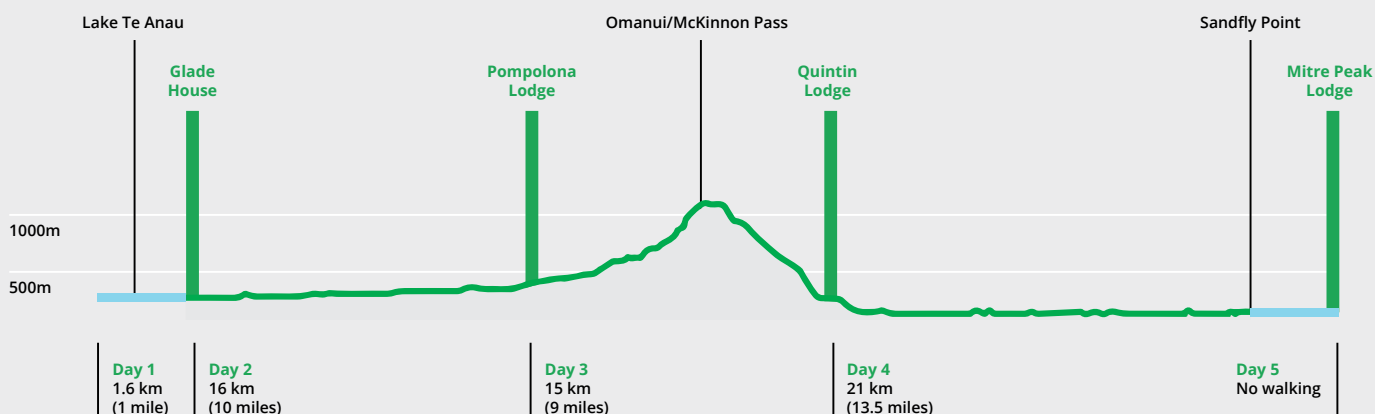
Following the cruise it's time to head back to Queenstown. The coach trip follows the scenic Milford Road through Homer Tunnel and on to Te Anau, where there will be a short break before the last leg of the journey to Queenstown. Lunch will be eaten along the way.



No Walking



Breakfast, Lunch



Advised equipment list

What to bring

The following is a list of essential equipment that we recommend you bring on your multiday guided walk. Many items can be purchased at reasonable prices from the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown.

To walk

We suggest taking one set of clothing to walk in. All of our lodges have facilities for washing clothes by hand, soap and drying rooms.

Fabrics

We suggest you wear fabrics that are lightweight but warm and quick drying such as merino wool, polypropylene, thermal, micro fleece and polar fleece. Most items on the recommended clothing list are available to purchase at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

Cotton, denim or silk is not recommended for physical activity as when its wet, these fabrics retain the moisture next to your skin and can make you feel cold.

On Track

- Walking boots or sturdy shoes.** Broken in, preferably with ankle support. Please check your boot condition prior to coming to the pre-track briefing. Look especially at how well your sole is attached to the boot, to see that the glue is not perished. Please also ensure that they are clean if you are coming through customs and adhere to all biosecurity notices at the airport. We do not sell or hire walking boots/shoes in our retail outlet
- Thermal base layer (top and bottom)**
Fundamental clothing that can be worn either as a base layer or as a single layer
- Fleece or merino wool jacket.** An ideal outer layer in cold weather
- Quality and durable waterproof raincoat**
- Long-sleeved top.** Lightweight, warm and quick-drying, this layer can be worn on top of thermal base layer
- T-shirt.** Ideal for fine weather. Avoid cotton
- Sunhat & warm hat.** Be prepared for sun and cold
- Warm gloves**
- Shorts/walking trousers.** Fast drying shorts, trousers or zip-off trousers (NOT JEANS)
- Three pairs of merino wool or thermal socks**
Main consideration is warmth and comfort
- Sunscreen, insect repellent
- Water bottle or bladder (1 litre capacity)
- Credit card or some cash (we stop in Te Anau)
- Reusable lunchbox

In the lodge

A change of clothes is recommended for the lodges and for sleeping in. Remember the more that is taken, the heavier the pack is to carry. The nights may be cold so a warm change of clothing is recommended.

- Shirt or long sleeved top
- Sweater/jersey
- Lightweight trousers
- Lightweight shoes with a sole
- Nightwear
- Personal toiletries (soap, shampoo and conditioner are provided)
Change of underwear

Optional

- Walking poles.** We strongly advise all walkers to use two walking poles, especially if you have difficulty walking up or down gradients. Leki poles are available for hire (\$25 a pair) or purchase from the Ultimate Hikes Centre. There is no need to pre-book these
- Waterproof over trousers.** We strongly advise walkers to carry lightweight over trousers for rain and wind protection
- Gaiters.** For extra protection in wet weather
- Swimwear & lightweight towel
- Spare laces

Extras/useful items

- Foot fleece/second skin
- Strapping tape
- Lip balm
- Ear plugs
- Small torch
- Sealable plastic bags

We can supply free of charge though you may prefer to bring your own. Items can be collected at the pre-briefing, no need to pre-book:

- 40L Back pack & Liner (weighs approx 2kg)
- PVC Waterproof raincoat with hood (weighs approx 1KG)



Caring for the environment

Ultimate Hikes is dedicated to reducing our carbon footprint and operating in a sustainable and responsible way to protect the natural environment we operate in and contribute to the wider goal of managing climate change in our region of the world.

The locations we operate in provide unique challenges to protect our environment and we focus on two key areas:

- 1. How do we create efficiencies and energy savers in our remote lodges whilst maintaining a level of service to our walkers that meet or exceed expectations?**
- 2. How do we reduce and offset carbon emissions created mainly through fuel usage and other aspects associated with the distance between our lodges and our base in Queenstown.**

What we can do

Our primary focus is to reduce our carbon footprint. We are measuring our CO2 emissions – primarily through fuel use. We will use the data gathered in previous seasons and over this coming season to develop a carbon neutral system, based on those emissions.

To further understand our usage and reduce it, we are taking preventative measures such as

- upgrading fuel lines and storage units.
- Reducing generator power use/times
- Systemic replacement of aging equipment with more efficient alternatives.
- Choosing local/NZ made products where possible.

We use a helicopter, trucks and a barge to supply the lodges and remove waste from the National Park.

Some of the ways we can reduce the number of trips we make are to:

- Reduce bulk and individual packaging on products – bringing in bulk items reduces the quantity of packaging to be removed
- Use packaging that can be crushed and broken down to take up less space to remove and deliver to recycling receptacles in Queenstown.
- Where possible bringing in food items pre-prepared to reduce organic waste on track.
- Collect organic waste to remove from lodges and deliver to a local composting business in Queenstown
- To reduce waste going to landfill we aim to eliminate single use plastics, reduce glad wrap and use containers with lids for fridge storage.
- Encourage use of lunchbox or reusable containers for packed lunches.

Our lodges are on septic tanks that need to be emptied periodically. There are ways to reduce the amount of waste in the tanks by using natural methods to breakdown matter, thereby reducing the number of times waste has to be flown out during the season. It is important therefore that only organic matter and toilet paper is released into the septic tanks.

What you can do

You can help us to reduce our carbon emissions and better protect the environment by:

- Bringing a reusable lunch box to pack your lunch or use one of ours
- Respect the septic tank system and don't flush anything other than toilet paper. Bins are provided for all other paper and hygiene products.
- Use specific bins provided to recycle rubbish
- Empty lunch boxes and separate food waste into compost bins provided.
- Keep all rubbish with you and dispose of it appropriately in the lodges.
- Look out for litter on the tracks and pick it up.



FAQs

Will I be fit enough?

To enjoy your experience, you should be comfortable carrying a backpack (5-7kg/10-14lbs) for 5-9 hours, walking up to 21km (13.5 miles) of sometimes uneven track each day.

Each walker will have a different experience/expectation depending upon previous experience and fitness level.

A reasonable level of fitness is required and if you are not a regular walker, you should start walking daily **in all weather conditions** and include hill-climbing, at least 6-8 weeks prior to departure. You should gradually increase the distance that you walk, carrying a backpack and wearing the boots you will be hiking in.

We encourage you to walk at your own pace, it is not a race and we want you to enjoy it. There is always a guide at the rear of the group. See our [fitness page](#) for more information.

Do I have to carry my pack or do you transport it?

You carry your own pack from lodge to lodge. We do not offer a service for transporting your luggage.

How heavy will my pack be?

It's likely to be approximately 5-7 kg (10-14lbs) if you follow our equipment list & guidelines.

What weather should I expect in the month that I am walking?

The unpredictable nature of the weather in this region means that snow, high winds, rain and flooding can occur at any time of the year. It is therefore very important to be prepared for the worst weather conditions and carry the recommended clothing at all times.

Generally in December, January and February are warmer but not necessarily drier. March and April usually have fresh mornings, sunny days and cooler nights with shorter days.

How remote are the tracks?

The tracks are not accessible by road except at the start and at the end. Any requirement to remove people off the track or over closed sections will be done by helicopter. In the event of an accident or emergency, a medical evacuation by air will be carried out by New Zealand emergency services.

Is there internet/Wifi access on the tracks?

No. There is no walker access to the internet on the track or in the lodges. Guides and Lodge staff are in constant communication by radio to Queenstown base.

What are the toilet facilities on the tracks?

All our lodges have flush toilets. There are toilets (some flush, some Kiwi long drop style) at all our lunch shelters and at various intervals along the track.

What time do I arrive back in Queenstown?

All multiday walks arrive back at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown at approximately 4.00pm. However, we cannot guarantee arrival time, which may vary due to road and weather conditions. Milford Track walkers can be dropped off at Queenstown Airport if required.

How bad are the sandflies?

They are prevalent, especially on the Milford Track, and at Sandfly Point! We recommend wearing insect repellent each day. This can be purchased from our shop, but most insect repellents should offer protection.

Where can I park my vehicle?

We do not have car park facilities in Queenstown or Te Anau. You can park your car in the Man Street Carpark in Queenstown for a set fee. The carpark is not able to take campervans.

See the Ultimate Hikes Centre team at the briefing for tickets. Alternatively, the hotels/motels where you are staying may allow you to park your vehicle whilst you are on the track.



Is there alcohol on the track?

Beer, New Zealand wine and soft drinks are available for purchase at the lodges. These are paid for at the final lodge on your walk.

Can I wash my clothes?

All lodges have facilities for washing clothes by hand, soap and drying rooms. Being able to wash and dry clothing helps keep the pack weight down.

Do I have to bring all my hiking clothes with me?

Yes you do. We can lend you a raincoat. Our centre has a retail shop in Queenstown if you would like advice on what to bring or have forgotten any items, prior to your departure.

Where can I leave excess luggage while I am walking?

We are able to store excess luggage while you are on track, at an additional fee. This can be arranged at the Ultimate Hikes centre on arrival to Queenstown and prior to your briefing. Luggage storage is not available for Te Anau departures and drop offs.

NB on the Milford Track / Classic: a small bag can be borrowed to send extra clothing or personal items to Mitre Peak Lodge and will be sent by road from Queenstown to await your arrival.

What about special dietary requirements?

Vegetarian and gluten free meals can be provided on all tracks. We will endeavour to cater for other dietary requirements within reason, however please remember we operate in an extremely isolated and challenging environment.

Please ensure you provide us with your dietary requirements at time of booking.

How many people sleep in the shared rooms?

Shared rooms can sleep up to four or six people on the Milford Track, and up to four on the Routeburn Track and Lake McKellar Lodge on the Greenstone Track. Steele Creek Lodge on the Greenstone Track (Grand Traverse) has large dormitory rooms. All shared rooms also share bathroom facilities.

Room allocation depends on the make up of the group and the track accommodation.

I will be travelling by myself, is that a problem?

No problem. It is a great opportunity to walk with like-minded individuals.

What clothing do I need to bring?

Please refer to equipment list.

Insurance

We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** you arrange to take out your own personal travel insurance to cover your walk and related costs in the event that you are not able to start your adventure.

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency on the track, a medical evacuation by air will be carried out by New Zealand emergency services, which might be at your own cost.

Gratuities

We often get enquiries about leaving a gratuity for staff. If you would like to leave one, you are welcome to do so when you settle your account at the last lodge or at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown. Doing this ensures all the staff who have been part of your walk will benefit equally from your generosity.