

Te Anau – Milford Highway

a journey into the heart of Fiordland National Park



FREE
virtual tour guide

TE ANAU – MILFORD HIGHWAY

GET THE STORY

The journey starts in Te Anau and ends in the world famous fiord of Milford Sound/Piopiotahi, a memorable 120 km journey into the heart of Fiordland National Park and Te Wāhipounamu – South-West New Zealand World Heritage Area.

- Te Anau**, start your journey here!

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre
Get up-to-date information about the exciting journey you are about to take into New Zealand's largest national park. That way you won't miss the best bits!
- Henry Creek** (23 km from Te Anau)
- Lake Mistletoe** (45 min return)
Suitable for all ages, this track leads you through forest to peaceful Lake Mistletoe, a perfect spot for a family picnic.
- Te Anau Downs** (28 km from Te Anau)

Departure point for the Milford Track and a great spot for viewing the Murchison Mountains, home of the takahē. Accommodation is available.
- Te Anau Downs Historic Site**















A historically significant site with information panels telling the history of pioneer farmers in Fiordland.
- Walker Creek** (47 km from Te Anau)
- Totara** (50 km from Te Anau)
- Mackay Creek** (51 km from Te Anau)
- Eglinton valley** (52 km from Te Anau)
- Mirror lakes** (56 km from Te Anau) (10 min)
Small tarns (mountain lakes) on the roadside provide outstanding reflective views of the Earl Mountains – a good place to stretch your legs.
- Deer Flat** (59 km from Te Anau)

Somewhere between here and Knobs Flat you will cross latitude 45° South.
- Knobs Flat** (62 km from Te Anau)

Display panels show the effect of avalanches on the Milford Road and provide information on the wildlife of the Eglinton valley. The last flush toilets before Milford Sound. Accommodation is available.
- Kiosk Creek** (63 km from Te Anau)
- Smithy Creek** (65 km from Te Anau)
- Upper Eglinton** (68 km from Te Anau)



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

- 16. Cascade Creek**    (45 min return)
From here you can access the Lake Gunn Nature Walk, an easy loop walk that provides an introduction to tall red beech/tawhairaunui forest and birdlife of the Eglinton valley. Side trips can be made to lake beaches and sheltered fishing spots.
- 17. Lake Gunn** (79 km from Te Anau) 
- 18. The Divide** (83 km from Te Anau)  
This is the lowest east-west pass in the Southern Alps/Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana (531 m) and it marks the start of the Routeburn, Caples and Greenstone Tracks. From here the road becomes windy and narrow in places; extra care should be taken.
- 19. Key Summit – Routeburn Track**   (3 hr return)
The track starts at The Divide car park and follows the Routeburn Track for about an hour. It then branches off on a 20 min climb to Key Summit for spectacular views of Fiordland National Park. If the weather is fine, this track is well worth the effort!
- 20. Lake Howden – Routeburn Track**    (3 hr return)
From The Divide car park follow the Routeburn Track to the Key Summit turn off (see above). From here it is a short descent to a DOC hut at Lake Howden. Spend the night here (hut bookings required) or return the same way. Add another hour if combining with the Key Summit walk.
- 21. Pops View** (85 km from Te Anau)  
Stop here on your return trip for stunning views of the Hollyford valley.
- 22. Marian Corner** (87 km from Te Anau) 
Avalanche gates at Marian Corner are closed whenever there is avalanche danger to motorists.
- 23. Lake Marian**   (3 hr return)
The car park is 1 km down the unsealed Hollyford Road. Cross the swing bridge and continue for 10 min to the spectacular series of waterfalls. From here it is a 1 hr ascent to this beautiful alpine lake situated in a hanging valley.
- 24. Gunns Camp**
Take a right turn down the unsealed Hollyford Road. Gunns Camp is a quirky collection of buildings that began life in 1938 as a Public Works Department camp. A visit to the museum and shop is a must. Accommodation available.



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Historic White Mile Posts are a feature of the early days of the Milford Road construction.

94 TIPS FOR TRAVELLERS

Plan your trip

- The journey from Te Anau to Milford Sound takes a minimum of 2 hr 30 min driving, without allowing for stops.
- Allow for possible delays at the Homer Tunnel and other areas along the highway.
- There are no fuel stops or stations between Te Anau and Milford (240 km return) – fill up before you go!
- You may want to pack insect repellent – there are a few hungry sandflies in Milford Sound/Piopiotahi.
- Leave the pets at home – remember you are entering a national park.
- Bring warm and waterproof layers of clothes so you can best enjoy your walks and boat cruise.
- If you are lucky enough to see kea please don't feed them.
- There is no cellphone coverage along the Milford Road.

- 25. Humboldt Falls**  (30 min return)
A well-graded track takes you on a short climb through rainforest to the lookout of these impressive falls.
- 26. Monkey Creek** (93 km from Te Anau) 
A pull-over area with a good chance of spotting whio/blue duck.
- 27. Gertrude Saddle**  (4–6 hr return)
Breathtaking views will reward your efforts, but high-level tramping skills and experience, navigation skills and a head for heights are essential. Subject to avalanche risk.
- 28. Homer Tunnel** (99 km from Te Anau) 
The Homer Tunnel, at an altitude of 945 m above sea level, pierces the sheer rock to allow road access to Milford Sound. The completion of the tunnel in 1953, (1.2 km) was an extraordinary achievement. Traffic lights over peak periods in summer months control traffic flows through the tunnel and can create delays of up to 20 min.
- 29. The Chasm** (110 km from Te Anau)    (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.
- 30. Tutoko Suspension Bridge** (116 km from Te Anau) 
Built in 1940 to cross the Tutoko River, this suspension bridge completed the road into Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Information panels here describe its colourful history.
- 31. Milford Sound/Piopiotahi** (120 km from Te Anau) 
Milford Sound Visitor Terminal    The departure point for all cruises is a 10-min walk from the car park, via a covered walkway.
Piopiotahi Milford Foreshore Walk    (30 min)
At the entrance to the main visitor car park at Milford Sound you will find the start of this walk, an easy stroll along the shoreline.
Piopiotahi Milford Lookout Walk  (10 min)
Access to this track is from the car park area at the rear of the cafe. There are a number of steps up to the lookout, which gives impressive views of spectacular Milford Sound/Piopiotahi. Return the same way.
- 32. Piopiotahi (Milford Sound) Marine Reserve**
One of the most popular places in Fiordland to dive and see the black corals for which the fiords are famous.

- For the latest road condition information visit www.milfordroad.co.nz or 0800 4 HIGHWAYS (0800 444 449).

Safety

- If you are holding up other travellers be courteous, pull over at a safe site and allow following traffic to pass.
- Park considerately and always be aware of pedestrians.
- Taking a coach tour can relieve the stress of driving an unfamiliar road, and get you to your boat cruise connection on time.

In the winter

- Obey the 'Avalanche Area No Stopping' signs.
- Between May and November, when required (as indicated by signs), all vehicles on the Milford Road must carry or fit snow chains.
- Chains can be hired in Te Anau at any of the local service (petrol) stations.