

Milford Track

Pre Walk Information Booklet

Prior to arrival

Thank you for booking a guided walk with Ultimate Hikes.

Insurance

We **STRONGLY RECOMMEND** you arrange to take out your own personal travel insurance to cover your walk and related costs if you are not able to start or complete 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.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our walkers and team is at the forefront of our operation. Ultimate Hikes has long been a voluntary member of active adventure programmes and we regularly seek out audits to review our health and safety practices.

Our guides are trained in first aid and go through an extensive pre-season training programme in mountain safety. You are required to adhere to any instructions they give you at all times.

Guides and lodge staff are in constant touch with each other, the lodges and the Queenstown base by radio.

For the safety and consideration of others, walkers must sign a waiver to confirm they are not ill or been in contact with someone who is, within 48 hours of departing and should consult a staff member if they feel unwell on track.

Each person is responsible for their physical capability to complete the walk and should actively commit to fitness training prior to departure.

Each person is responsible for bringing and wearing appropriate clothing while walking. Please see the section below on equipment you must bring and the checklist.

Please read all the information in this booklet carefully.

The Milford Track traverses mountainous and remote terrain and preparation is key to your safety and enjoyment.

If you are the main contact for a group or family, you are responsible for ensuring every person on your booking has read and understood the information below.

Adventure activity

Before starting a hike with Ultimate Hikes, you should be aware that hiking on New Zealand's Great Walks and tracks involves risks that include natural hazards such as flood, rockfall, landslip, earthquake and avalanche. Unpredictable weather including high winds, snow and heavy rain can occur at any time. The tracks are uneven, rocky and steep in places. Ultimate Hikes takes every reasonable precaution to eliminate or minimise the risks you could be exposed to, but natural hazards can be unpredictable and should they occur, they could result in injury and even death.

You are required to adhere to any instructions given to you at all times. Failure to comply with any instruction could result in you being unable to continue and/or being removed from the activity. You are also responsible for all children in your care doing the same.

[You can read our risk management strategy here](#)

Fitness requirements

To enjoy your walk you must be able to carry a medium sized backpack (weighing 5-7kgs) for 6 to 9 hours over 10-21 km of mountain track each day.

The track surface varies from rough terrain broken up by large rocks and tree roots to well-formed paths. Training on uneven ground with poles is strongly recommended along with core strength exercise to support balance on rough terrain. We recommend you wear hiking boots, which provide firm ankle support.

If you are not a regular walker, you should begin walking regularly at least 6-8 weeks before your departure carrying a pack and including hills and/or staircases. You should also be prepared to walk in windy and rainy weather. Walking through surface and even running water is probable in heavy rain.

To maximise your enjoyment we encourage you to set your own pace while walking the track, there is no need to keep up with the fastest walkers. There is always a guide at the back of the group.

[Click here for more information](#)

Cancellation policy

All cancellations must be made in writing and sent to info@ultimatehikes.co.nz or Ultimate Hikes Reservations, PO Box 259 Queenstown NZ, 9348.

Cancellation fees for all Multi Day Walks are charged on the following basis per person:

Outside 90 days from date of walk departure:
NZ\$100 per person

Between 89-60 days from date of walk departure:
NZ\$200 per person

Between 59-31 days from date of walk departure:
50% of full fare

Within 30 days of date of walk departure:
100% of full fare

The date and customer name, for which the walk has been booked, once confirmed by the Operator providing the services and activities described, is non-transferable.

[See Terms and Conditions for more information](#)

Our cancellation policy applies to all walkers and is non-negotiable.

Excess luggage

We recommend you leave any excess luggage at your pre and post accommodation.

We can store excess luggage at our centre in Queenstown for an additional fee. There is no need to book this – just bring it with you on the day of your departure.

Luggage storage is not available for Te Anau departures. For further information, please contact our Reservations team prior to your arrival.

Vehicle parking

Check with the accommodation you have booked if you can leave it there otherwise there are some options in Queenstown and Te Anau.

[Click here for more information](#)

Solo travellers

Walking is a great opportunity to meet like-minded individuals from around the world. Please note however that we cannot always guarantee same sex shared rooms.

Equipment & what you will carry

You will carry your own pack from lodge to lodge. We do not transport packs.

Clothing requirements:

For your safety and comfort while hiking, you must wear fabrics that are warm and quick drying such as merino wool, polypropylene, thermal, micro fleece and polar fleece. **Cotton, silk and denim is not recommended for physical activity as when it gets wet, the fabric retains the moisture next to your skin which will make you cold and expose you to the risk of hypothermia.**

Please follow our recommended [equipment list](#) to ensure you are prepared for the unpredictable environment we hike in. A checklist is included in this booklet

Pack & pack liner

You can supply your own or we can provide a 40L backpack for you. This can be collected at the pre-track briefing or from the Ultimate Hikes Centre. A photo of the pack can be viewed on this link [What to Bring](#). A pack liner can be collected at the briefing.

The pack is likely to weigh between 5-7 kg (10-14lbs) full, if you follow our recommended [equipment list](#).

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 bring it with you on the day of your departure.

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

Lodges and accommodation

The maximum number of people per departure is 50.

Power

Power in the lodges is driven by generators. They are turned on in the morning (timings depend on lodges) and all are turned off at 10pm. There is no power from 10pm until the morning. Nightlights operate on small batteries charged during the day.

Electrical devices can be charged in NZ power sockets while the generators are running.

There is no internet access in the lodges or along the track.

CPAP machines: We are able to supply 600W power points to two private rooms for a CPAP Machine at each of our lodges to run machines through the night. You must have booked a private room and contact us in advance of your arrival to be allocated the room – they are subject to availability. There is no power source for CPAP machines in multishare rooms.

Clothes washing/drying: All lodges have facilities for washing clothes by hand, soap and drying rooms.

Bathrooms/toilets: All bathrooms have flush toilets and hot showers, with soap, shampoo, conditioner, towels and hairdryers provided.

Please flush only toilet paper in the flush toilets – any other products will block and/or contaminate the natural breakdown system in the septic tanks. Covered rubbish bins are provided in all bathrooms for any other products including and specifically for sanitary product and wipes. All other rubbish should be disposed of in bins provided.

Shared rooms: 4-6 people share bunk rooms with separate shared bathroom facilities. A sleep sheet is provided and must be used. Duvets, pillows and blankets are also provided.

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

Lounge and dining

Smoking and vaping is strictly prohibited in all Lodges and Ultimate Hikes facilities. Please ask at lodges where the designated smoking area is.

Meals provided

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 options are included in all our menus.

We will notify where no dairy or gluten is added.

If you have specific food allergies or dietary requirements, please contact us to discuss them. We will endeavour to cater for general requirements but we are unable to cater for strict diet plans or specific food requests due to the extremely isolated and challenging environment we operate in.

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

An explanation of meals and timings is provided in the itinerary section.

FOR YOUR SAFETY and comfort while hiking, you must wear fabrics that are warm and quick drying such as merino wool, polypropylene, thermal, micro fleece and polar fleece.

Cotton, silk and denim is not recommended for physical activity as when it gets wet, the fabric retains the moisture next to your skin which will make you cold and expose you to the risk of hypothermia.

Equipment checklist

Required to walk

Walking boots or sturdy hiking shoes

Base layer - wool, polypropylene, or thermal (top and bottom)

Fleece or merino wool jacket.
An ideal outer layer in cold weather

Waterproof raincoat
we can provide, see below.

Long-sleeved wool, polypropylene, or thermal top

T-shirt. wool, polypropylene, or thermal. **Avoid cotton**

Sunhat (with peak or brim) and wool/fleece hat

Warm gloves - wool, polypropylene,

Shorts/walking trousers
(not jeans or lycra/cotton leggings)

Three pairs of hiking socks - merino wool or thermal

Sunscreen, insect repellent

Water bottle or bladder (1 litre capacity)

Optional but recommended

Walking poles – highly recommended
(you can rent a pair from the UHC)

Waterproof over trousers

Gaiters

Swimwear & lightweight towel

Spare laces. Just in case

Sealable plastic bags

Reusable lunchbox – we can supply but more environmentally friendly.

Essential equipment you need to bring on your multiday guided walk.

In the lodge

Shirt or long sleeved top

Sweater/jersey

Lightweight trousers

Lightweight shoes – with a hard sole.

Nightwear

Personal toiletries
(soap, shampoo and conditioner are provided)

Change of underwear

Extras/useful items

Credit/debit card *(for purchases in Te Anau and to settle bar bills at the end of your walk).*

Foot fleece/second skin

Strapping tape

Lip balm

You can collect from us

Backpack & Liner
(weighs approx 2kg empty)

PVC Waterproof raincoat with hood
(weighs approx 500gms)

Sleep sheets are provided at the lodges.
(for shared rooms only)

Jersey cotton sleeping bag shape.
You may prefer to bring your own.

Many items can be purchased at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

On track

Your guides will accompany you every day and will provide current weather and track conditions. There is always a guide at the back of the group, near the front, and in the middle of the group. They will show you interesting aspects of the track, provide general knowledge and are trained in weather and safety protocols. You must adhere to any requests or instructions made by the guides.

You are encouraged to walk at your own pace in your own time (unless advised otherwise). Parts of the track can be uneven, wet or rocky – take your time.

Please keep all rubbish with you and dispose of it in the lodges.

Sandflies are common along the track. We recommend you wear insect repellent each day.

All of our lodges have flush toilets. There are flush toilets at the Department of Conservation huts. Toilets along the track and at all our lunch shelters and huts are kiwi long drops. Toilet paper is provided. If you need a toilet stop between these dedicated spaces please leave your pack on the track. Make sure you are 50 metres from any water sources and bury your waste.

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

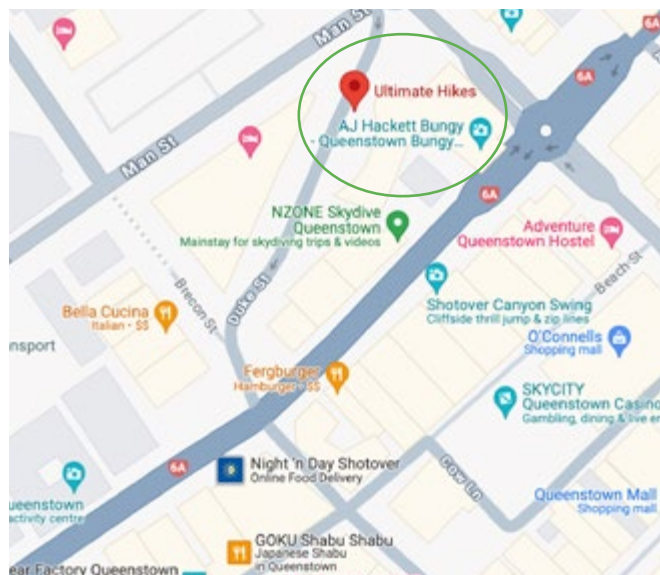
Pre-track briefing

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.

If you are unable to make it to the pre track briefing please advise our reservations team closer to the time of your departure, to ensure you have all the up to date information required for your walk.

At check in you will complete your registration form 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 items you may need from our shop. Our customer service staff



Ultimate Hikes Centre Location (Queenstown)

will also give you an overview of what to expect while you are on track.

Day of departure

Please check in at the Ultimate Hikes Centre at **9.15am** on the day of departure.

There is no collection from accommodation or the airport. We can collect you from the Frankton bus shelter on request.

Please ensure you have breakfast before arrival as food and beverages cannot be consumed on the coach. Lunch will be provided in Te Anau on arrival – at about **12.00pm**.

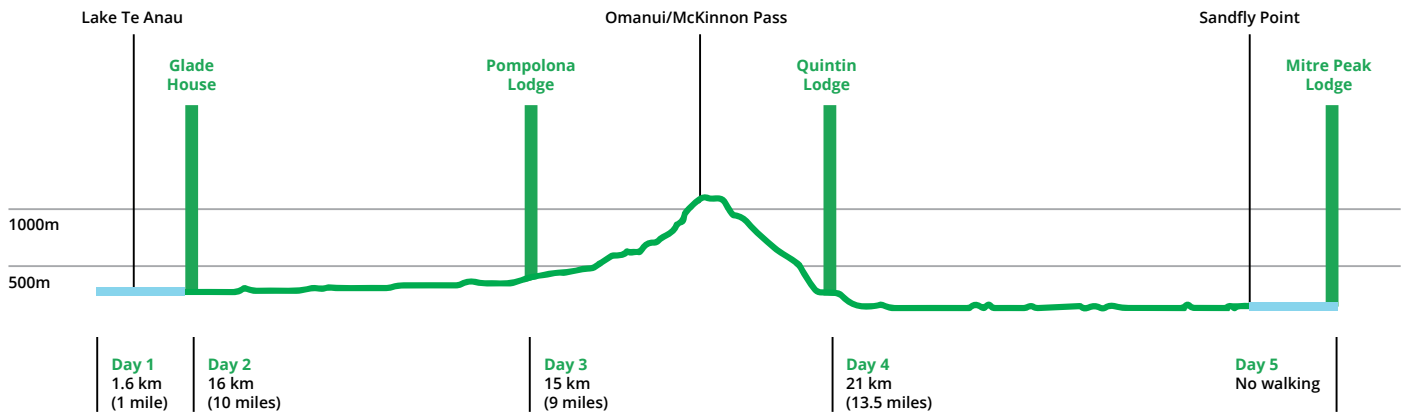
Te Anau departures. If you are starting the walk in Te Anau please contact Reservations to arrange your registration and receive a briefing. You will meet the group at **12.00pm** at The Ultimate Hikes Te Anau Desk in the Alpine Centre cafe cnr Sandy Brown Rd & Highway 94, Te Anau.

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.

PLEASE NOTE: It is not possible to be dropped off at the Airport. If you wish to be dropped off at the Frankton bus shelter (15 mins walk to the airport), please advise guides prior to departure so your belongings can be packed in the coach accordingly.

Itinerary



Day 1 | Nature walk Queenstown to Glade House

1.6km/1 mile walking from wharf to lodge on flat track

2km/1.2miles (over about 1.5 hours) nature walk with some steep and uneven terrain, including tree roots

TRACK TERRAIN: Some rocky sections and uneven ground on the nature walk.

The group meets at the Ultimate Hikes Centre in Queenstown ready for departure. Your pack will be put under the bus and not available until you reach the boat, so it's a good idea to keep your water bottle, a warm layer, your phone/camera, and some money with you to take on the bus.

The bus will travel to Te Anau where you will have lunch before travelling on to Te Anau Downs to meet the boat to take you to the start of the Track and the first lodge.

The drive is approximately three hours with the stop in Te Anau of about an hour. At the Te Anau Downs carpark you will be asked to carry a pack to the boat to be stored for the one hour ride to Glade Wharf. The boat is a catamaran with outdoor and indoor seating – depending on the weather you will get views across Lake Te Anau and your skipper will point out sites of interest along the way. This is where your warm layer may come in handy.

Glade Wharf marks the start of the Milford Track and once on shore, you will collect your pack and make your way up the 1.6km/1 mile flat track to Glade House. On arrival, you will be checked in and shown to your room. After a brief refresh and some afternoon tea, the guides will take you

on a nature walk up the Glade Burn. The walk will introduce you to some of the trickier terrain of the track and some of the natural habitat you will see over the coming days.

Following the nature walk, the bar will be open and you can enjoy a pre-dinner drink and snacks, before sitting down to dinner in the dining room. The menu is set and you will have been asked for your choice of main course.

After dinner, the guides will initiate an introduction to the group and provide a briefing on the day to follow.

The group is then free to enjoy the lounge facility or return to their rooms for the evening. The generator will turn off at 10.00pm – there will be nightlights in the rooms and corridors. There will be no hot water until about 15 minutes after the generators are turned on in the morning.



Itinerary

Day 2 | 16km (10 miles)

Glade House to Pompolona Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: This section is a mostly flat graded track with some uneven and rocky sections and an incline to Pompolona Lodge. The track closely follows the Clinton River and some sections are prone to flooding in heavy rain. Just before Pompolona lodge there is a dry river bed to cross that has large boulders.

Your first day on track sets the schedule for the next three days. Please check the timing in each lodge as it can differ slightly.

Once the generators have turned on, lunch making preparations are set up in the lounge. Each person can choose from a variety of fillings to make sandwiches, wraps or salads.

There is also a selection of snacks, home baking and fruit to choose from. You have 16km of walking so please ensure you pack enough food to sustain you through the day.

A continental breakfast, tea and coffee will also be available in the dining room and a cooked breakfast will follow. Once you have completed lunch making and breakfast, and re-packed your pack, your guides will be waiting for you outside the main entrance to the lodge.

The first guide will lead the group along the front of the Glade and onto the swing bridge, to cross the Clinton River. You will be following the river throughout the day, but do linger and look back at the view of Glade House – a lodge has been on this site since 1895. As the group leaves, the other guides will join them and one guide will always be at the rear of the group. If you have any questions or concerns please ask the nearest guide or stop to wait for the guide behind you.

The track in this section is well graded through Beech Forest. Look out for the mile markers – these are in miles as it was the original measurement of the track (kms are on the other side). You will pass by 33 of them. A side walk past the two mile marker leads to a wetlands walk – leave your pack at the turnoff and head up to the boardwalk to view the wetland and read the information panels.

Continue along the track for about half a mile – Clinton Hut is the DOC hut and has flush toilets – the last until you reach the lodge (there are two

long drops along the track). After Clinton Hut it is about 8.8km/5.5 miles until you reach Hirere Hut where you will stop for lunch. The guides will have a hot drink available and you are welcome to relax here and eat your lunch – you may see a cheeky Weka looking for scraps – please don't feed them!

Soon after Hirere Hut, the track opens up, leaving the Beech Forest and becoming tall grass and manuka bush. Along here a side track will take you down to Prairie Lake where the brave among you can swim in glacier cold water.

The track then leads back into the beech forest to Pompolona lodge. The track winds uphill before reaching Marlene's Creek, a wide usually dry river bed with very large boulders. A guide will be stationed here to show you the way and the orange markers will also indicate the best way to navigate through. On the other side it's a short walk to Pompolona Lodge.

The lodge host will welcome you at the entrance with a cold drink and snack and will show you to your room and point out the lodge facilities. Once you have had a shower, rinsed your hiking clothes, and have them drying in the drying rooms, the lounge will provide welcome comfort with afternoon tea. The bar will open late afternoon followed by dinner and a briefing.



Itinerary

Day 3 | 15km (9 miles)

Pompolona Lodge to Quintin Lodge

TRACK TERRAIN: Steep uphill following zig zags to Pass Hut on rocky uneven track. Steep downhill (including steps) to Quintin lodge. This is a very challenging day and can be made more so by the weather. Please listen carefully to the guides briefing and ensure you have dressed appropriately and are prepared for the conditions. Take your time and walk at your own pace.

Leaving Pompolona Lodge the track leads behind the lodge and crosses another river bed before winding back into Beech Forest. The first stop is Mintaro Hut. Refill your water bottle and use the toilets.

The zig zags of Omanui/McKinnon Pass start shortly after leaving the hut. At the 15 mile marker you will be half way up the zig zags to the memorial. This is the steepest section of the uphill – the track is very rocky with some big step ups. Shortly after the 15 mile marker the track comes out of the beech forest and becomes more exposed. The zig zags lengthen out and you traverse up the side of the pass before coming across to the McKinnon Memorial. Much of the uphill for the day is done. Rest here and have a snack. Your guides will provide a warm drink and you can have a wander to see the incredible views from the saddle.

It can get very windy and cold at the Memorial in any weather as it is very exposed to the elements with no shelter. Listen to the advice of your guides who will point out the last section of track to Pass Hut where you will stop for lunch. The track leads over the last bit of steep terrain to the highest point (and most exposed) before dropping down to the shelter of Pass Hut. Rest here, have your lunch, change your clothing if necessary, and fill up your water bottle.

The descent from Pass Hut is the steepest, rockiest terrain on the track and is often regarded as the most challenging part. Leaving the hut you will start a sharp descent down to the Arthur Valley. The track becomes narrow in places and traverses the side of the mountain – it is exposed and you may cross running water. There are two tracks down depending on the time of the season – there is some avalanche risk in this section of track so the alternative track may be used. Both tracks require concentration and should be taken slowly. There

are very rocky sections and poles are strongly advised to assist balance.

Both tracks reach the Anderson Cascades which is an amazing waterfall with a series of steep steps alongside. They can be slippery so hold on to the railings on your way down. At the Anderson Shelter take a break before the track continues down in a zig zag pattern. The duration of the downhill is longer than you expect, as you descend further than you climbed in the morning. You will pass the 20 mile marker and it is another three quarters of a mile to the turn off to Quintin Lodge.

Turn left at the bottom of the track, and cross the swing bridge over the Roaring Burn River and Quintin lodge is in the clearing ahead of you.

Meet your lodge host, have a cold drink and drop your pack in your room. If you have arrived at the lodge with enough time, head out to the right of the lodge entrance to Sutherland Falls. There is a cut off time to walk to the Falls so please check with a guide or lodge member before setting off.

Sutherland Falls - This side walk from Quintin Lodge is an hour and a half return trip. It has two suspension bridges and some steep steps to navigate. From the second bridge you will see the Falls in the distance and this may be enough – but another 15 minutes and you'll reach the base – you'll hear it, and probably feel the spray before you see the thundering water up close. Sutherland Falls is the fifth highest waterfall in the world and well worth the trip!

Quintin Lodge is well appointed and you'll enjoy its warmth and comfort after a very full day of hiking.



Itinerary

Day 4 | 21km (13.5 miles)

Quintin Lodge to Mitre Peak Lodge (Milford Sound)

TRACK TERRAIN: A downhill section from Quintin lodge, then the track follows the Arthur river and alongside lake Ada to the end of the track where the water meets Milford Sound. The track is in a Beech Forest and while it is flat, the ground is uneven with rocks and tree roots. Some sections of the track are prone to flooding in heavy rain.

This is a long day and it's easy to miss a step so keep an eye on the track ahead of you. But stop to enjoy the views - especially the waterfalls, even if it's not raining! You will be walking under the canopy of the beech forest. It appears denser than the Clinton valley side with lush foliage due to higher rainfall on this side of the Pass.

Soon after leaving the lodge, look out for a sight of Sutherland Falls in the distance. About an hour along the track you'll reach Dumpling hut where you can use the toilet. Your morning tea stop is at The Boatshed next to the Arthur River, so called because boats were used to cross the river. Have a hot drink and a snack.

Leaving Boatshed you'll cross the bridge over the river and will shortly reach Mackay Falls and Bell Rock - you get a great view of the waterfall from the platform then duck into the entrance of the

rock with a torch to see the inside of the rock - it is hollowed out so you are able to stand up in there.

Continue along the track for another 6.4km/4 miles or so and you'll reach Giants Gate. You can stop here for lunch in the shelter or on the stones by the waterfall.

Soon after leaving Giants Gate you'll walk through an area that was severely affected by the floods in 2020. You will see where a massive slip came through the track and on a rainy day admire the temporary waterfalls. Further on the track follows the water and along a wide flat section of the track until the sight of Sandfly Point signals the end of the Milford Track.

Head into the room on your right, away from the sandflies. Your guides will have a hot drink for you while you wait for the boat to take you to Milford Sound wharf. A member of the Ultimate Hikes team will meet you and take you to Mitre Peak Lodge.

The lodge is on permanent power and each room has an ensuite and a bath. Join your group in the lounge with spectacular views of Mitre Peak from the picture window. Enjoy your final dinner with your group.



Itinerary

Day 5 | No walking

Milford Sound to Queenstown

This morning after breakfast, the guides will ensure your belongings are labelled to go in the coach. Please advise guides if you wish to leave the coach in Te Anau or at the Frankton Bus Shelter in Queenstown. We are not able to drop off at the Airport.

The bus will take you to the wharf to board the Cruise on the famous Milford Sound.

Enjoy waterfalls and wildlife and glimpse the Tasman Sea before returning to dry land and

hopping back on the bus for the ride back to Queenstown, stopping briefly at Te Anau and enjoying your packed lunch along the way. The bus arrives back in Queenstown about 4pm at the Ultimate Hikes Centre.

There is an option to return to Queenstown by helicopter. This is a separate cost. It is dependent on weather conditions and has a minimum number of 4 people. The guides will ask for interest at Quintin Lodge.



Track Map

