



# Fiordland & Southland

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## Best Outdoors

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Misty Mountain Eco-Retreat (p617)
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## Why Go?

Welcome to scenery that travellers dream of and cameras fail to capture.

To the west is Fiordland National Park, with jagged misty peaks, glistening lakes and a remote and pristine stillness. Enter this beautiful isolation via the world-famous Milford Track, one of the various trails that meander through dense forest and past spectacular mountains and glacier-sculpted canyons. Fiordland is also home to Milford and Doubtful Sounds, with verdant cliffs soaring almost vertically from deep, indigo waters. Both fiords are relatively easy to access by road, boat or kayak.

In Southland's east, a sharp left turn off the beaten track, the peaceful Catlins showcase bird-rich native forests and rugged, windswept coasts. Abundant southern Pacific waters host penguins, seals, sea lions, dolphins and the occasional whale.

Keep heading south for the rugged isolation of Stewart Island, and the opportunity to spy New Zealand's beloved kiwi in the wild.

## When to Go

Visit from February to March for the best opportunity of settled weather amid Fiordland's notoriously fickle climate. Linger until May for the opportunity to sample local beers and NZ's favourite bivalve and at the annual Bluff Oyster and Food Festival. The Milford, Kepler and Routeburn Tracks are three of NZ's iconic tramping routes, and classified as Great Walks by NZ's Department of Conservation. During the Great Walks season from late October to late April you'll need to book your time exploring these three popular tracks in advance.



## Fiordland & Southland Highlights

- 1** Sea kayaking, dwarfed by the steep cliffs of **Milford Sound** (p615)
- 2** Exploring side roads, forest waterfalls and lonely southern beaches in the peaceful, windswept **Catlins** (p625)
- 3** Walking through forest and mountains on the **Milford and Hollyford Tracks** (p613)
- 4** Overnighting on the vast, remote **Doubtful Sound** (p618)
- 5** Sharing a beach with dolphins, whales, sea lions and penguins at **Porpoise Bay** (p627) in the Catlins
- 6** Diverting from **Te Anau-Milford Hwy** (p612) to explore forest walks and still mountain lakes
- 7** Saying g'day to the tuatara, New Zealand's living dinosaurs, at Invercargill's **Southland Museum & Art Gallery** (p621)
- 8** Chancing on a snuffling, shuffling band of kiwi on a twilight kiwi-spotting expedition on **Stewart Island** (p630)