



# Fiordland & Southland

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## Best Places to Eat

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- ➔ Miles Better Pies (p256)
- ➔ Yesteryears Museum Cafe (p266)
- ➔ The Batch (p269)
- ➔ South Sea Hotel (p281)

## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Milford Sound Lodge (p263)
- ➔ A boat on Doubtful Sound (p265)
- ➔ Victoria Railway Hotel (p269)
- ➔ Newhaven Holiday Park (p275)

## Why Go?

Welcome to scenery that travellers dream of and cameras fail to do justice.

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, just one of many trails that meander through densely forested, glacier-sculptured valleys confined by mighty mountain ranges. Fiordland is also home to Milford and Doubtful Sounds, where verdant cliffs soar almost vertically from deep, indigo waters. Both fiords are relatively easy to reach and explore by road, boat or kayak.

In Southland's east, a sharp turn off the beaten track leads through the peaceful Catlins, where waterfalls cascade through lush forest and diverse wildlife congregates around a rugged, beautiful coastline.

And then there's the end of the line – Stewart Island/Rakiura, an isolated isle home to friendly seafarers and a flock of beautiful rare birds including New Zealand's beloved icon, the kiwi.

## When to Go

- ➔ Visit from December to April for the best chance of settled weather amid Fiordland's notoriously fickle climate (although chances are, you'll still see rain!).
- ➔ Late October to late April is the Great Walks season for the Milford, Kepler, Routeburn and Rakiura Tracks, so you'll need to book in advance if you want to hike these popular tracks.
- ➔ Stewart Island/Rakiura's changeable weather can bring four seasons in one day, at any time of year, although the temperature is milder than you'd expect, with winter averaging around 10°C and summer 16.5°C.



## Fiordland & Southland Highlights

**1** Sea kayaking, dwarfed by the steep cliffs of **Milford Sound** (p262)

**2** Tramping through a World Heritage wilderness on the **Kepler** (p257), **Milford** (p258) or **Hollyford Tracks** (p260)

**3** Soaking up sunset and sunrise on a **Doubtful Sound overnight cruise** (p265)

**4** Discovering Southland's colourful history at Riverton's excellent **Te Hikoi museum** (p266)

**5** Savouring the solitude on the **Rakiura Track** (p279), NZ's southernmost Great Walk

**6** Immersing yourself in the bird-filled paradise on **Ulva Island** (p277)

**7** Exploring side roads, forest waterfalls and lonely southern beaches in the peaceful, windswept **Catlins** (p271)

**8** Spotting rare wildlife such as Hector's dolphins and yellow-eyed penguins at **Porpoise and Curio Bays** (p272)