



Fiordland & Southland

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Why Go?

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

To the west is Fiordland National Park, with jagged misty peaks, glistening lakes and fiords, and a remarkable surfeit of 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.

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 and 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 routes.
- ➔ 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 Milford Sound** (p259)
Being overwhelmed by your first glimpse of the sheer majesty of Mitre Peak rising from the inky waters of the fiord.
- 2 Milford Track** (p256)
Tramping through a World Heritage wilderness.
- 3 Doubtful Sound** (p261)
Soaking up sunset and sunrise in glorious surrounds on an overnight cruise.
- 4 Te Waewae Bay** (p263)
Marvelling at the wild power of nature on this surf-battered stretch of coast.
- 5 Rakiura Track** (p276)
Savouring the solitude on NZ's southernmost Great Walk.
- 6 Ulva Island** (p275)
Immersing yourself in a bird-filled paradise.
- 7 The Catlins** (p269)
Exploring side roads, forest waterfalls and lonely southern beaches in this peaceful, windswept corner of the country.
- 8 Curio Bay** (p269)
Spotting rare wildlife such as Hector's dolphins and yellow-eyed penguins.