

FIORDLAND & RAKIURA

Mavora Lakes
Luxmore Hut
Shallow Lake



Green Lake
Blue Cliffs Beach



Key Summit
Marian Cascade & Lake Marian
Hidden Falls
Gertrude Saddle
The Chasm & Bowen Falls



Ackers Point
Maori Beach
Ulva Island
Rakiura Circuit

Mavora Lakes

High country lakes

Beech forest & bush birds

Wide tussock valleys.

Good camping, snow in winter

3-4 hours circuit

Bush track and road

8 kilometres circuit

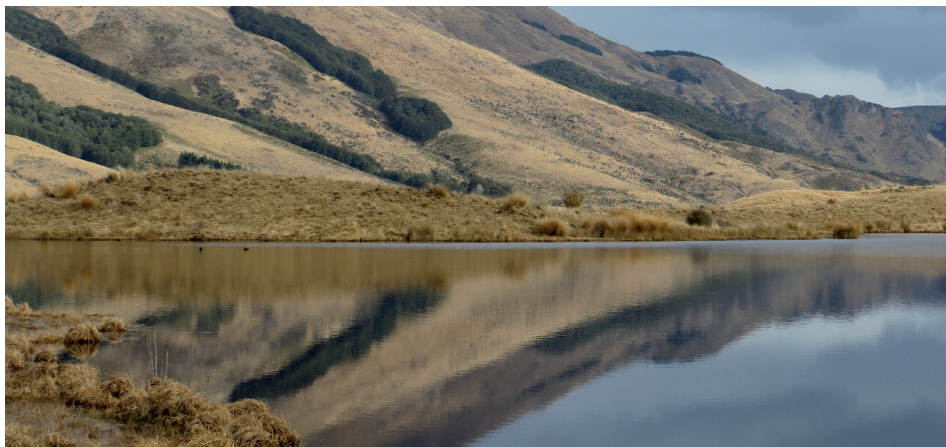
From Highway 94 follow the unsealed road for 40 km to the South Mavora Lake. Picnic areas, toilets and barbecue sites at both the South and North Mavora lakes.

Mavora Lakes is the sort of place Kiwi families go to, and the campsite is popular in high summer. But for 11 months of the year the Mararoa Valley is quiet and forgotten, and in midwinter the beech trees around the lakes are beautiful under layers of deepening frost.

The best and gentlest walk is around South Mavora Lake. Cross the long swing-bridge at the foot of the South Mavora Lake and wander in the lakeside beech forest. Healthy variety of bush birds, including the rifleman, parakeet, yellow-breasted tomtit and the ever-inquisitive robin. Common throughout the beech forest is the mistletoe, and the flower is a brilliant red before Christmas.

The track crosses an open area of tussock then heads back into the forest and around to a deep green pool in the river outlet from the North Mavora. Here, another swingbridge takes you back to the road, which you can follow back to your car.





Campsite: DOC, open grass and beech forest beside North Mavora Lake

Luxmore Hut

Big climb to a big hut

Tussock downlands and lake views

Lakeside beech forest

7-8 hours return

Well graded bush track

18 kilometre return

From Te Anau take the Manapouri Road for 5 km, turning off to the signposted Control Gates.

This track is a garden path, climbing from the glistening Lake Te Anau to the undulating tussock hills around Luxmore Hut. Despite the 1000-metre climb, and the altitude (1200 metres above sea level), the quality of the track enables many people to visit this alpine region in a day return. The views of the lake and the remote Murchison Mountains are certainly worth the effort.

Note: you can get water taxis and pick-ups from Te Anau to Brod Bay, saving an hours walk each way.

Cross the Control Gates and follow the gentle lakeside track as it wanders through tall red beech forest. Occasional footbridges as you pass the Dock Bay picnic and camping area and go on to Brod Bay beach and shelter. This is a sparkling little bay, spoilt by the hungry sandflies.

Now the climbing starts, in gentle, lazy zigzags up the thick-forested hillsides. Not many views, but about two-thirds of the way up you reach a limestone bluff, with some fossils in the rock.

It is a wonderful moment when you burst out onto the rolling downlands, and the slopes are gentle as the track follows boardwalks and turns another kilometre to





the palatial Luxmore Hut. With 60 bunks it is rather a wart on the landscape, but there are fine views from the verandah. A good place for lunch before the long lollipop downhill.



Shallow Bay

Beech forest and idyllic lake

Sphagnum moss swamps

Cosy hut

Good walk for families

3-4 hours return

Gravel path

8 kilometres return

On the road between Te Anau and Manapouri townships drive about 12 km south of Te Anau to the Rainbow Reach carpark and footbridge. This is also one end of the Kepler Track.

Manapouri with its inlets, scattered bush islands and rain-filled mists, has a degree of enchantment about it. This track wanders past kettle lakes and moss swamps, through some beautiful red beech forest to a lakeside hut.

From Rainbow Reach carpark the track (which is the main Kepler Track) crosses the swing-bridge and follows the Waiau River around Balloon Loop, a side channel of the Waiau.

The track crosses the Forest Burn and climbs slightly to an attractive sphagnum moss swamp and lake, which is a piece of dragonfly heaven. The lake is called a 'kettle lake', and was formed when a large block of ice from a glacier was isolated and trapped on the glacial moraine.

After the moss swamp the track reaches a signposted junction, and the Shallow Bay track drops down to the lake-side and follows along the gravel beach to the battered and well used six bunk hut. The rippling vistas across the lake soothe the senses.

Cafe: Sandfly, in Te Anau





Key Summit

Views over three valleys

Wetland mosses and tarns

Fiordland mountain panorama

Beech forest and waterfalls

3-4 hours return

Graded gravel track

5 kilometres return

From Te Anau drive 55 km on Highway 94 to the start of the Routeburn Track at the Divide Saddle. Shelter, toilets and carpark.

A dainty sprinkling of tarns on this alpine wetland, which overlooks three great valleys — the Hollyford, the Greenstone and the Eglinton. Maori came here on war parties and carrying greenstone, early settlers were looking for cattle country, and goldminers were looking for gold. Now it's walkers and tourists who make the trek up to Key Summit, and admire the rugged panorama.

From The Divide carpark the well-graded track (which is also the start of the Routeburn Track) climbs up through silver beech forest with several streams to cross, bubbling over pretty waterfalls. An hour of gradual climb to the turn-off to Key Summit itself, a crossroads on a busy summer's day, with walkers and trampers stopping for a breather and a gossip.

From the junction the track climbs up through open slopes of flax and tussocks and there is an easy circuit, with plastic information sheets that you can pick up then deposit on the way down.



The main track reaches a boardwalk around a beautiful tarn with bog cushions, mosses, and the alpine sundew. A plane table helps you identify a panorama of mountain scenery that is breathtaking.



Campsite: several DOC campsites up the Milford Highway

Marian Cascade & Lake Marian

Dashing cascade and waterfalls

Profuse moss and lichens

Forest up to an alpine lake

Fiordland cirque

3-4 hours return (Lake Marian)

Boardwalks then steep bush track

6 kilometres return

From Highway 94 to Milford Sound, turn off 4 km down the Hollyford Road.

The cascades are a nosiy, bubbling, frenzied collision of waters, quite in contrast to Lake Marian. This an alpine lake lies in a deep trench, hemmed in by granite walls, and not much other sound to diminish the serious silence.

From the carpark, cross the swing bridge over the Hollyford River and follow the well-gravelled track as it wanders through rainforest where the moss literally drips from the trees. After 15 minutes the track hops up on cantilevered boardwalks and verandahs bolted into the rock face, and overlooks the mossy boulders choking Marian Creek, with the water seething underneath. A fine and popular lookout.

It is much less popular to carry on to Lake Marian, and the track gets rougher as it climbs away from the creek. It crosses fern gullies, where there may be a bit of scrambling, and climbs almost 400 metres from the Hollyford road to the lake outlet.

There is a sheltered grass clearing on top of the rock-fall that shuts the lake in, and a short track down to the lakeside itself.

After heavy rainfall you cannot get near the fore-shore, but usually the lake level is low enough to walk around. Rocks provide a back-rest for lunch, and you are almost above sandfly level. It is like another world.





Hidden Falls

Dense rainforest along riverside

31 metre waterfall

Historic pack track

Lunch hut

4-5 hours return

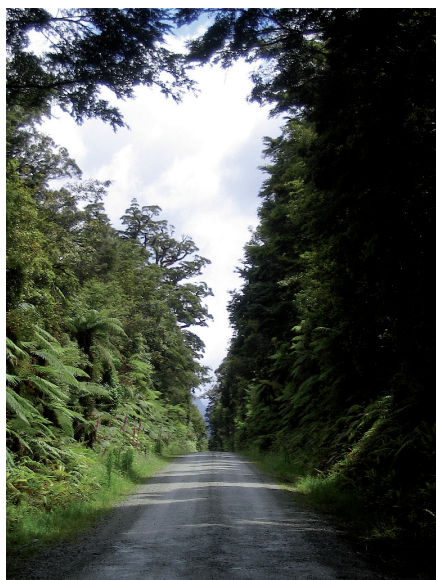
Graded bush track

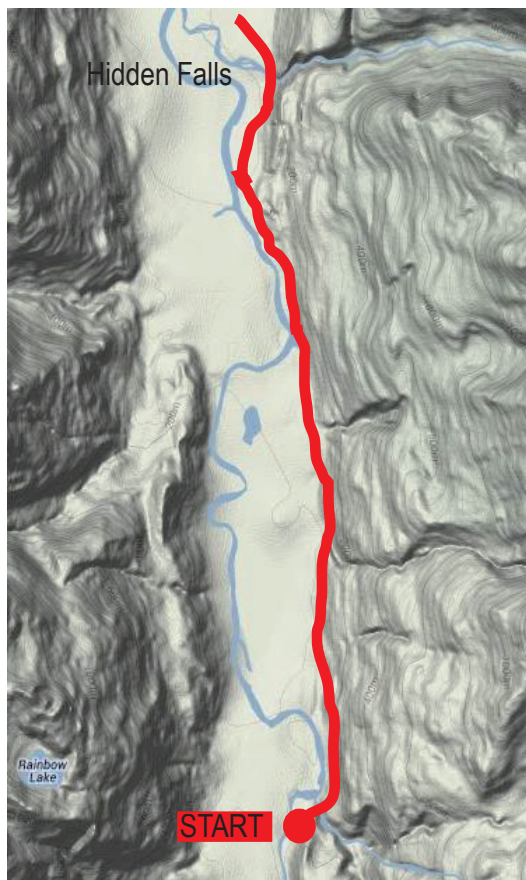
16 kilometre return

From Highway 94, 90km from Te Anau, turn down Hollyford Road 15 km to the carpark. Shop, museum, campground and cabins at the Hollyford Motor Camp.

The beauty of this walk is its easy grade. Meander along an historic pack and cattle track through dense rainforest whilst admiring the jostling mass of punga and shrubs as they fight for a place in the sun. There are muted tree-absorbed sounds of bush birds such as wood pigeons, bellbirds and fantails, and the urban world seems a long way away.

From the carpark the track plunges immediately into tall podocarp rainforest and leaves the Hollyford River as it cuts inland past a verandah bolted into the rock that overlooks a quiet backwater. Swingbridges over Eel Creek and Swamp Creek, then meets the river again with a second gantry overhanging the slick dark waters of the river.





Five minutes further on there is the first decent break in the bush canopy, with excellent views up to the splintered peaks of the Darran Mountains. The track sidles along the riverside for another hour to Hidden Falls swingbridge and a glorious view of the thundering 31 metre falls.

There is a large hut a short distance away on the other side of the creek, and big grassy flats afford some previously well-screened views.

Mounts Madeleine and Tutoko loom large over the valley and it is surprising to realise that you are barely 100m above sea level.

Campsite: Hollyford Motor Camp has cabins and tent sites on the Hollyford Road

Gertrude Saddle

Alpine tramp

Pristine valley and flowers

Granite walls and remote lake

Steep climb, wires two sections

6-7 hours return

Worn tussock trail and rock scramble

6 kilometre return

From Highway 94, turn off down the short gravel road to Homer Hut.

In Fiordland the valleys are so deeply incised the Maori called it 'the tattooed land'. In Gertrude Valley the glaciers carve painfully deep, with severe granite on every side, except for the goat path that climbs up to the saddle. You need calm, clear weather to get to Gertrude Saddle itself, suited to experienced trampers.

From the Homer Hut carpark, take the signposted trail as it winds through boulders and crosses the (usually) dry stream bed once, then trots along the west bank. You can move quickly through the beech forest and into open tussock with large boulders that sometimes attract rock wrens.

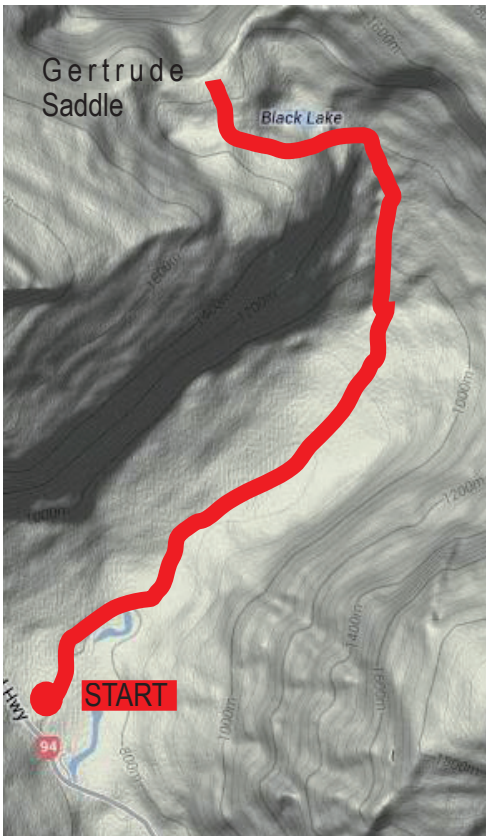
The sheer walls of the Gertrude Valley are awesome as the well-defined trail reaches the top forks. The trail still sticks to the west bank, and climbs vigorously and crosses the Gertrude stream before sidling around towards the head of the valley.





Just before Black Lake there is a short, steep section on rock and wire, (sounds worse than it is). The cable is well-secured by DoC. The lake has a magical mirror effect on a good day.

Another thick cable has been bolted up the smooth rock slabs above Black Lake, but on a dry day the steep rock gives a good grip. At the top of the cable, sidle across easier slabs, then scramble up through the cairned rock piles onto the low point that is Gertrude Saddle. Stupendous views. A remarkable place.



The Chasm & Bowen Falls

Deep slot gorge

Dramatic waterfalls

Homer Tunnel and granite walls

Milford Sound

Chasm 20 minutes return, Bowen
Falls 20 minutes return

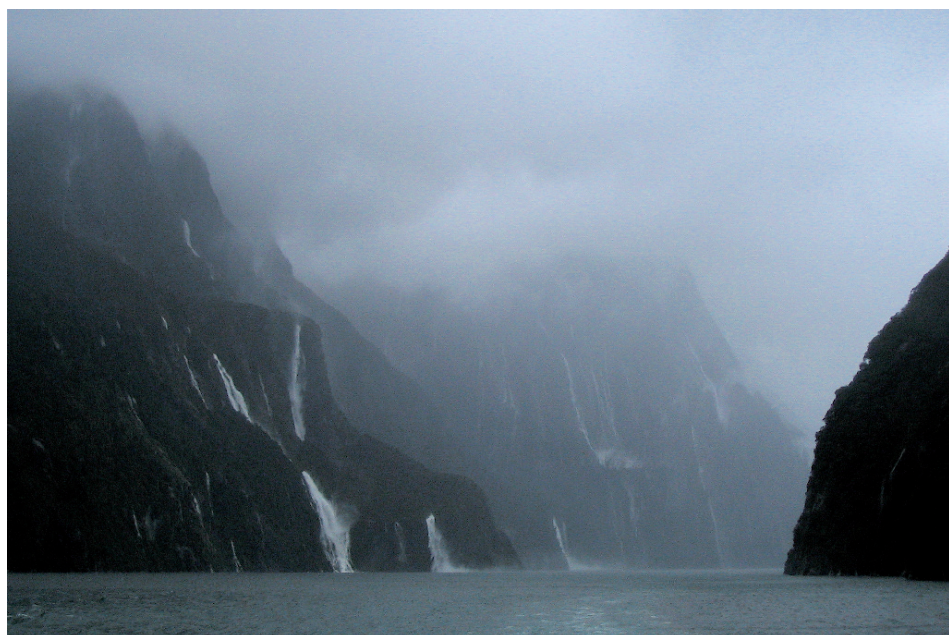
Gravel tracks

1 kilometre return

From Te Anau drive 110km to the
signposted Chasm Walk, then
10km to Milford Sound to carpark
and walk to the visitor centre and
start of the Bowen Falls Track.

These two short walks illustrate the power of Fiordland. The road is almost a wilderness experience in itself, with towering slabs of black mountains, heavy rainforest and the dark, difficult hole of the Homer Tunnel. On both walks you can expect to see buses lined up in ranks at the Chasm and by the Milford Visitor Centre.

Most of the buses are on a tight schedule, so day-trippers normally 'do' the Chasm in the morning, drive to Milford Sound, go on a boat trip, and then possibly make a quick trip to Bowen Falls in the afternoon. Milford can be strangely deserted by 5 pm. If you head to Milford Sound in the afternoon you will certainly encounter buses going the opposite way in the close confines of the Homer Tunnel.



The Chasm

A short circuit track around a deep defile where the Cleddau River has ransacked its way through the diorite and in the process created some fantastic and improbable shapes in this most unyielding of rocks. The boardwalk crosses a natural bridge of boulders at one point, and many of the rocks are potholed (moulines) by the relentless pressure of water churning pebbles like small grindstones. After a downpour (not uncommon in these parts) the chasm is like an excited and roaring beast.

Bowen Falls

Bowen Falls is spectacular and the walk is signposted by the visitor centre and follows a boardwalk to the bouldery bank of the 160m falls. It's worth scrambling downriver to the seashore at low tide (note the small cemetery) to get good views up and down Milford Sound.



Green Lake

Peaceful lakes

Tussock clearings and wetlands

Dense beech forest

Off the beaten track

4-5 hours return

Bush tracks

11 kilometres return

Off the Blackmount Road (between Manapouri and Tuatapere) turn down the Borland Road 11 km to Borland Lodge, then 20 km over saddle to Borland Biv carpark

Remote, serene lake with a hut beside it. Beech forest dripping with shaggy lichens and open tussock flats that get swampy after rain. A quiet location, well away from it all. The Borland access road is not for the faint hearted and is often closed with a locked gate at Borland Lodge. Check with DOC Fiordland NP for opening and closing times first.

At the carpark and little biv plunge into the beech forest and the track quickly reaches a large tussock pasture. Wetland plants and paradise ducks. Follow the orange poles back into the bush over a low saddle, then down to the second tussock clearing. n easy stroll through more forest to a junction, and its about ten minutes side-trip to look at Island Lake.

Otherwise, 200 metres of climbing over a bush spur and down to tranquil Green Lake. The large comfortable hut is on the far side, and has a great view from the verandah.





Blue Cliffs Beach

Remote Fiordland coast

Old-time baches

Driftwood covered shore

Mean sandflies

3-4 hours return (to Track Burn hut)

Bush track then beach

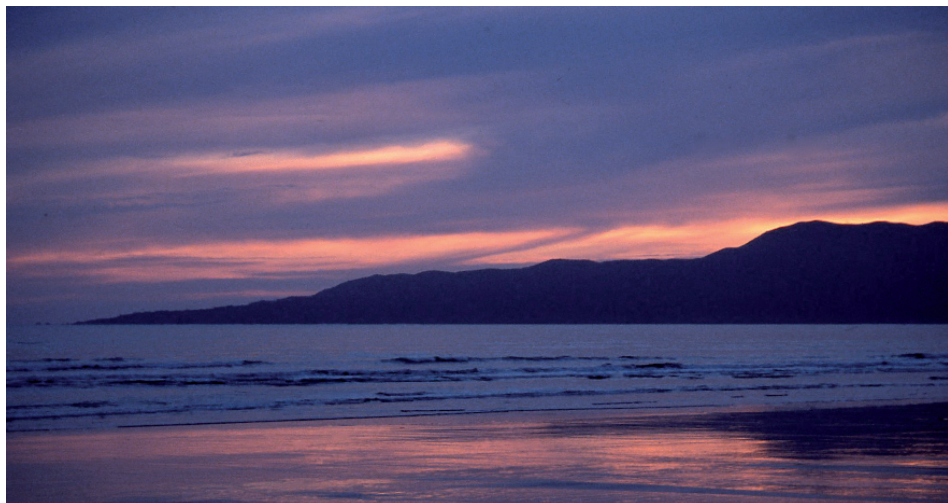
12 kilometres return

From Tuatapere township turn onto the Papatotara Coast Road, and drive 14 km to the Rowallan Burn to reach Blue Cliffs Beach Road. Drive 4 km up onto the terrace to the large carpark and signboards.

It feels a bit like the end of the world on the Blue Cliffs beach, and it practically is. There is only Rakiura Island between you and Antarctica. The sea has been gnawing away at the beach for a long time, and quite successfully, for parts of the old road have been swallowed up, leaving the shore even more wild and remote. A low tide is much better for walking.

Initially the well constructed track stays on the high terrace, before dropping down to a long footbridge over the Waikoau River. There are several old fisherman cribs on this small spit, and some of them look as if they had been washed up by the tide itself.





At low tide it's much more enjoyable on the beach. Driftwood has been twisted into sculptures, and the golden sands have dark channels where the occasional side-creek runs down through the coastal forest.

After an hour you reach the Hump Burn, and cross via another footbridge, and by following the road briefly for ten minutes you reach a private bach, with an outside verandah. You'd stop and linger, if it wasn't for the murderous sandflies.



Ackers Point

Lighthouse peninsula

Sooty shearwater colony

Historic stone cottage

Coves and views

1-2 hours return

Sealed road and bush track

6 kilometres return

Ferry from Bluff, or plane from Invercargill airport gets you to Rakiura and Halfmoon Bay, the only township on the island. All services including groceries, cafes and DOC visitor centre.

Halfmoon Bay is a beautiful languid settlement, softly tucked into the bush hill-sides. Most of New Zealand's best bush birds are perched about the houses as if they own the place, which is probably half-right. Not too many cars, with only 25 km of roads, and electricity has quietened the generators.

From the settlement foreshore, follow the coastal road around the south edge of Halfmoon Bay as it wanders in and out of small bays. In one eucalyptus grove there is a loud colony of kaka, and it is quite likely you will see individual birds up close as they tear at the tree bark for grubs. Tui and kereru (wood pigeons) are equally abundant.

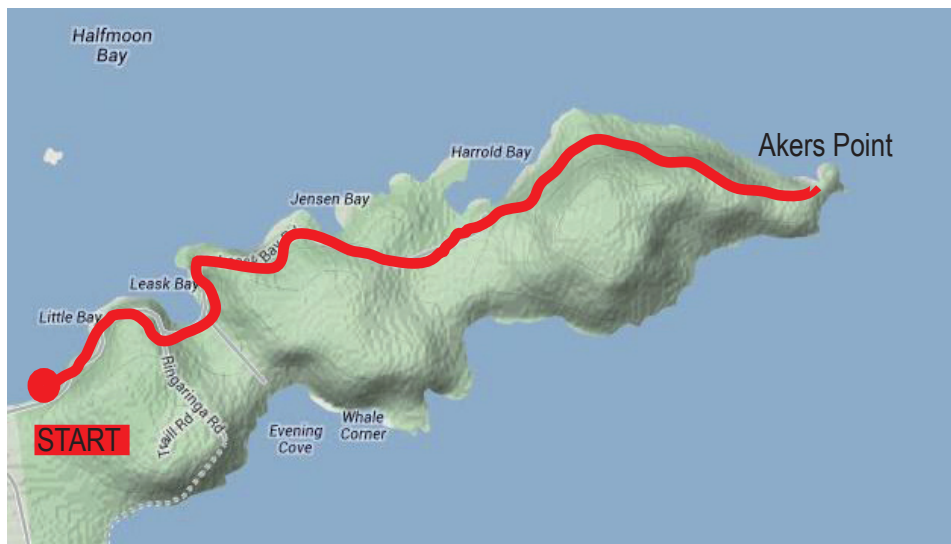
The coastal road climbs up and ends at a stile and signpost, after which an excellent gravel track continues, sidling past William Ackers stone cottage. The cottage, built in 1834, is worth the short detour.

The main track cuts around Fishermans Point (good seat here) then out to the lighthouse at Ackers Point, where there are information boards about the little blue penguins and sooty shearwaters, which return to their burrows here at dusk. The views towards Bluff are sometimes sharp, sometimes hazy.





Cafe: Kiwi French, in Half Moon Bay



Maori Beach

Coastal bridle path to a bonny bay

Coves and inlets

Good family area

Historic sawmill site

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks and beaches

6 kilometres return

From Halfmoon Bay walk or taxi to Horseshoe Bay and Lee Bay car-park, 5 km.

Rakiura or 'land of the glowing skies' is the poetic Maori description for this wilderness island. The skies have a soft, elusive light, constantly changing as rain squalls drift across the low, thickly forested island. This walk along an old bridle path takes you out of the settlement of Halfmoon Bay into a wilderness of beaches and light.

The track to Maori Beach starts through the Anchor sculpture and is well graded, though occasionally muddy, as it was once the main land route to the sawmill settlement at Maori Beach. Birdlife is usually vocal, with bellbirds, wood pigeons, chattering parakeets and kaka.

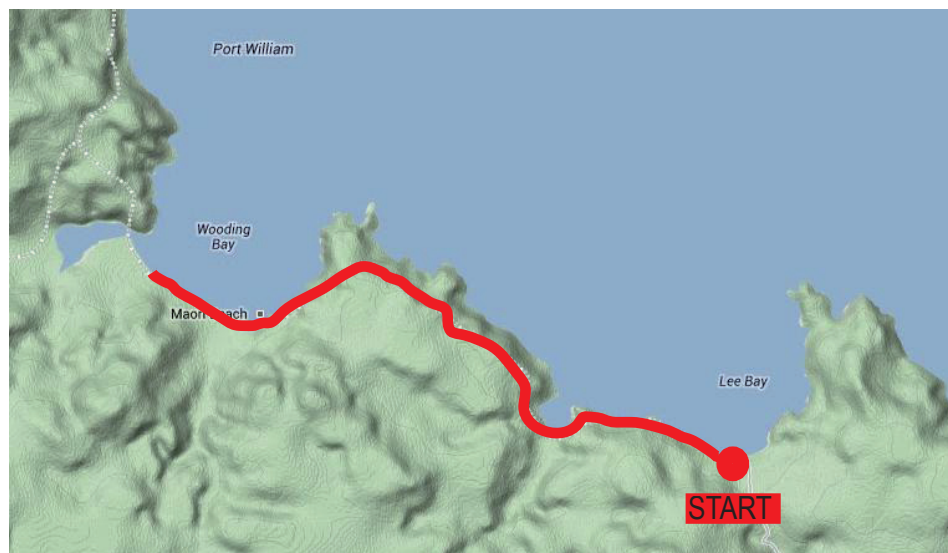
After a kilometre southern rata is particularly evident around the pretty Little River





estuary. There is a footbridge, but at low tide the track skirts the sand. Upstream from the bridge there is a pleasant picnic area and a toilet.

Now the track climbs steeply, and there are glimpses of the bouldery coastline as it wanders across the headland at Peters Point and drops abruptly to Maori Beach. At a lower tide you can cross directly to the beach, but there is a muddy high tide alternative track. Maori Beach is golden and elegant between its bushy headlands. Behind the beach a massive boiler remains from the days of the saw-mill.



Ulva Island

Water taxi to forested island

Abundant and rare birds

Beaches coastal view

Pattersons Inlet

2-3 hours return

Bush tracks

3 kilometre circuit

Check at the DOC information office for water taxi times and prices. Information panels, toilets and shelter on the island.

In the middle of the moody, atmospheric, inland sea of Paterson Inlet, Ulva Island has been turned into a sanctuary for birds and plants. Predators like rats and stoats have been eliminated from the island, and when the sudden Stewart Island squalls break and illuminate the forest in gold, you feel that this is a suitable place for a refuge.

The water taxi drops you at the wharf, and past the information signs you can wander at will on the tracks. Dense podocarps go down to the water's edge and mingle with bright strips of sand. The birds flourish and sing at this lonely outpost, as they might have sung thousands of years before and the birds take absolutely no notice of you.

Baby bellbirds chase their mum for food, brown creepers doing exactly what their name suggests, kaka hacking away at the old tree bark. Tui, parakeets, fantails, all are here, sometimes even a kakapo, so for those few people who make this long journey down to the near conclusion of New Zealand, the rewards are immense.





Rakiura Circuit

Big day and great circuit

Coastal and beach views

Podocarp bush and inlets

Several historic sites

8-10 hours circuit

Bush tracks and boardwalk

25 kilometres circuit

Ferry from Bluff, or plane from Invercargill airport gets you to Rakiura and Halfmoon Bay, the only township on the island. All services including groceries, cafes and DOC visitor centre.

The Rakiura Track is advertised as a relaxed three day walk, but can be hiked in a day for fit trampers. Start early and you'll enjoy rainforest, bird life, tranquil backwaters, coastal views and lovely beaches.

Walk or take a taxi to Lee Bay, 5 km from Halfmoon Bay. Impressive chain sculpture and the track to Maori Beach is well-graded as it was once the main land route to the sawmill settlement. At low tide you can cross directly to the beach, which is a curve of golden sand. An old boiler broods in the bush.

The track from Maori Beach does a 150 metres climb to the North Arm junction. The section of track up to the 300 m bush saddle to North Arm has been heavily boardwalked. A lookout on the saddle gives great views of Paterson Inlet.

More boardwalks on the short descent to North Arm hut. The main track continues over several headlands before dropping down to Sawdust Bay, the site of a sawmill 1914-1918. A sheltered campsite here, with toilet and small shelter. At low tide you can walk out a long way into the bay.





The track dips over a bush saddle and skirts Prices Inlet with occasional coastal views, until it drops down into the head of Kaipipi Bay and crosses the inlet over an elegant boardwalk. A small side-track goes down to a tiny peninsula in the bay which is a great lunch spot.

From hereon you are following an old road constructed to give access to the Kaipipi Bay sawmills, which employed over 100 people in the 1860's. Its quick travel and soon reaches the road-end, and an easy stroll back to Halfmoon Bay.

