

On the Milford Track



ON THE MILFORD TRACK

WALKING NEW ZEALAND'S WORLD FAMOUS TRAIL

Almis Simankevicius

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GOOD WALKING
BOOKS

On the Milford Track

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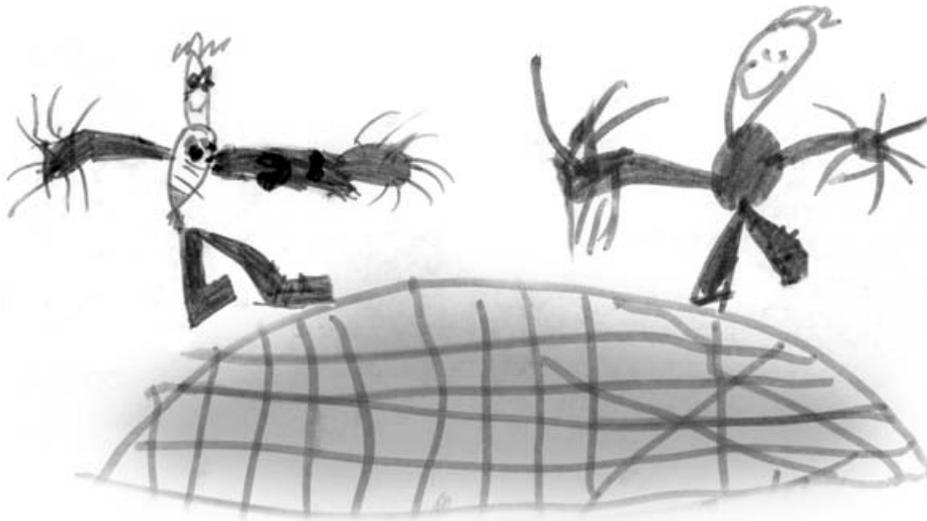


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Scrambling across the slippery rock face, Mitchell lost his footing and started to slide down the steep slope.

“I’m falling! Hold the rope!” he yelled. Mackinnon heard the cry and braced himself for the inevitable pull on the rope.

Unghh! Mackinnon was able to hold the weight and stopped Mitchell’s fall. On the far end of the rope, Mitchell swung hard against the rock face, managing to grab hold of a rock ledge. As Mitchell clung precariously to the ledge, Mackinnon secured his own end of the rope to a tree trunk and began the slow process of hauling his partner back to safety.



Once out of danger, the two explorers and their dog rested till the unsettling effects of the potentially fatal slip had passed. They continued their ascent hindered by heavy rain, eventually emerging near the top of the forested bluff where they trudged out onto an open alpine terrain and stopped - two drenched men and an equally wet dog. Confusing mists swirled around.

They had reached what appeared to be a saddle between the surrounding mountains. If this was the pass they were seeking, celebrations were due. If not, then they would have to continue their search for the elusive overland route to Milford Sound.

As they stood there, the cloud cover moved aside and the mist retreated, leaving them to marvel at the panorama unfolding before them. Both men shaded their eyes as the full brilliance of the sun swept away all doubt. They gazed out over a landscape bound by snow-capped mountains while the dog barked with joy.

Although their supplies had run out and they had had little respite from heavy rains, the explorers felt a sense of exhilaration from knowing that they had found the pass and silently thanked their Creator for having got them here.

Fiordland

South Island, New Zealand

The South Island of New Zealand is one of nature's marvels. Its mountains run north and south for hundreds of miles presenting a mighty barrier to the moisture laden winds that sweep off the Tasman Sea.

The South Island contains a marvellous wilderness region known as Fiordland; an ancient topography of lakes, glacial valleys and snow capped mountains. Even the producers of the new film "Lord of the Rings", recognised the area's suitability for Tolkein's mythical landscape and shot much of the film's footage amongst the folds of this wondrously varied land.



Milford Sound

New Zealand, the country that produced possibly the first man to climb Mt. Everest, has set aside one third of its land area as parks and wilderness areas. These places are criss-crossed by thousands of kilometers of walking tracks, and at intervals along these tracks are huts where a walker can spend a safe sheltered night and cook dinner on a gas stove, meet other walkers and sleep on a mattress. The huts are built in places where there are no roads, vehicles or electricity. A walker can travel without a tent, stove or mattress, and as a result can enjoy the exciting mountains and lakes without carrying a heavy load. These facilities have made New Zealand a popular destination for walkers from around the world and help to make tourism the largest export industry in the country.

David Trinder, Sydney Bushwalker, Australia

Numerous glowing accounts of the wonderful southern wilderness had finally convinced Carol and myself to undertake one of the numerous adventure walks in Fiordland, and like so many other people around the world, we decided on the Milford Track, often called “the finest walk in the world.”

We filled our backpacks with the necessary walkers’ items (see appendix) and caught a flight to Christchurch, a large city situated on the eastern coast of New Zealand’s South Island. From there we rented a car and explored Arthur’s Pass and the West Coast before arriving at Te Anau, the town from which our adventure would start.

