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Welcome



Mackinnon Pass, Milford Track — John Strother

The rain has been falling since midnight. You know this not because you checked your watch, but because you can hear it — a steady, insistent percussion on the corrugated iron roof of Clinton Hut, the kind of rain that doesn't apologize for itself. By morning, the Fiordland wilderness has transformed overnight into something almost hallucinatory: every surface gleaming, every fern trembling with collected water, the Clinton River running fast and silver between banks of moss so intensely green they seem to generate their own light. You pull on your pack, step off the hut's wooden porch, and walk into it anyway. This, you will come to understand, is what Milford Track demands of you — not merely your feet, but your willingness to be *inside* the weather, not sheltering from it.

Average Monthly Rainfall — Milford Sound

Month	Avg. Monthly Rainfall (mm)	Avg. Rain Days per Month	Notes
Late October	480	18	Season opens; variable conditions
November	510	19	Snow possible on pass; waterfalls spectacular
December	520	19	Early summer; improving stability
January	490	18	Peak season; warmest month
February	460	17	Most settled month statistically
March	500	18	Excellent conditions; fewer crowds
April	530	19	Season closes end of month; cooler

The figures above are measured at Milford Sound; rainfall at altitude — particularly on and above Mackinnon Pass — is considerably higher. It is not unusual for the pass to receive 50–100 mm of rain in a single day while conditions in the valley remain merely overcast. The practical implication is that your gear must be waterproof regardless of what the valley-level forecast says when you set out each morning.

Day 4 — Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point (Milford Sound)

Stat	Detail
Distance	21.5km
Elevation Gain	0m
Elevation Loss	0m
Estimated Time	5–6 hours
Difficulty	Easy-Moderate

The final day of the Milford Track carries a particular emotional texture that few long-distance trails manage to replicate. After three days of deepening immersion — in forest, in altitude, in the physical language of a landscape that does not accommodate passivity — the walk from **Dumpling Hut to Sandfly Point** is largely flat, river-guided, and through forest of increasing wetness and botanical extravagance. At 21.5 kilometres it is the longest single day by distance, but the absence of significant elevation change means that legs which have descended MacKinnon Pass the day before can find a comfortable rhythm and hold it. This is a day for reflection, for noticing the details that urgency obscures, and for arriving — properly, slowly, with full attention — at one of the most dramatic coastal termini in the world.

The morning from Dumpling Hut follows the **Arthur River** downstream through valley floor terrain that is, in high rainfall periods, substantially modified by water. The river here is broad and powerful, fed by dozens of tributaries descending from the surrounding peaks, and its floodplain has the character of a landscape perpetually mid-negotiation between land and water. Side channels appear and vanish depending on recent rainfall. The track is maintained well above flood levels for most of its route, though sections near the river bank may be muddy or puddled after wet weather — a condition that, in Fiordland, requires no special meteorological event to bring about.

The forest through which Day 4 moves is the wettest on the track, and its botanical diversity reflects this generosity of moisture. **Rimu**, **kamahi**, and **Hall's totara** appear with increasing frequency as the track descends toward sea level, mixing with the silver beech in combinations that shift gradually from subalpine to coastal. The moss and lichen coverage reaches its maximum extravagance in these lower forests — trunks, branches, and fallen logs are so thoroughly draped in bryophytes of every shade of green that individual trees sometimes appear to be wearing living coats several centimetres thick. In morning mist, which is common along the Arthur valley regardless of overall weather conditions, this forest takes on a quality of unreality that experienced photographers often call the most difficult light of the entire walk: too beautiful, too diffuse, too persistently transient to pin down satisfactorily.

Approximately eight kilometres from Dumpling Hut, the track passes **Giant Gate Falls**, where the Arthur River concentrates through a narrow rock gate and drops in a single, forceful curtain to a pool below. A short viewing platform provides direct access to the falls' immediate vicinity, and the spray