**FACT FILE/ESCAPE ROUTES**

**Getting There**
Qantas and Air New Zealand fly to Christchurch from Australia with connections to Queenstown. Alternatively there is a once-weekly direct flight from Sydney to Queenstown.

**Eating**
Vegetarians are catered for on the trek with plentiful and tasty meals. There is fresh fruit provided at the lodges, herbal teas provided at rest points, and lunch is DIY, with a wide range of vegetarian sandwich fillings. Ultimate Hikes is happy to assist vegans who are encouraged to discuss with the organisers their preferences prior to the trip.

**Best Times**
The walking season runs from late October to late April. February usually has the most settled weather.

**Logistics**
The Milford Track is a 54-kilometre moderate walk with some alpine climbing and uneven terrain with changeable weather conditions. There is no pressure to walk with others or keep up with the fastest walkers, and there is always a guide at the rear of the party. The track surfaces vary from smooth well-formed paths to rough terrain broken by rocks and tree routes. The weather in this region can be unpredictable, and it is important to carry appropriate clothing. Walkers must also be able to carry a medium backpack - with a change of clothes, personal items and lunch.

**Ultimate Hikes**
Ultimate Hikes can be contacted on info@milfordtrack.co.nz or alternatively visit their website at www.ultimatehikes.co.nz Prices for all-inclusive, 4-night packages start from $1490 per person.

For independent walkers The New Zealand Department of Conservation controls the walk. More information can be found at www.doc.govt.nz

"The world belongs to the energetic." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

**SWITCHING FROM A REGULAR DIET TO VEGAN IS EASIER THAN EXPECTED**

Making the switch from a regular meat-and-dairy diet to a fully plant-based, vegan diet may be easier than it would seem, new research suggests. Among a group of overweight, postmenopausal women, most of those who followed a vegan diet said that they enjoyed the diet. Most also said that they were completely used to the vegan diet after 14 weeks and planned to continue it - for the most part at least - in the future.

Moreover, women eating only vegan foods lost an average of 13 pounds (5.9 kg) - more than the women who followed a standard low-fat diet. The author of the study, Dr Neal Barnard of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in Washington, DC, explained that, for many people, giving up meat and animal products entirely is easier than trying to limit them as part of standard low-fat fare. "It's a little bit like quitting smoking," he said. "If I said to you, 'have one-half of a cigarette a day,' it's easier to quit." Another incentive for people to follow the vegan diet is that it works, he said. Study after study has shown that vegan diets can lower cholesterol and lead to as many health benefits as medications, Barnard explained. "If you want people to stick with it, you have to give people a diet that gives them results," he said. Although it may seem daunting to give up all animal products, Barnard said that one easy way is to just try it for a few weeks and see how you feel. Before beginning, ask family and friends to join in, and make a list of the foods you plan to eat at each meal. After around three weeks of only vegan foods, he said, many people's tastes adapt, and they don't want to return to their old habits. "Once you make the change, you just wish you had done it earlier," he said.

To investigate how people would cope with a switch to an all-vegan diet, Barnard and his team asked half of 64 overweight women to try a low-fat form of the diet - one that excluded all animal products, nuts, avocados and other fatty fare - for 14 weeks. The rest of the women ate a standard low-fat diet that included animal products. There
Wildlife Protection Council Plea

The Australian Wildlife Protection Council has issued a plea to save and protect our remaining old growth forests and our unique native animals. We all know that native species live in the hollows of the big old trees, so each time we lose one of those ancient trees, a native animal loses its home. They cannot replant old growth forests – once they are gone they are gone forever.

Australia has the highest rate of extinction in the Western world and that continues on a grand scale as we clear the land for agriculture and destroy habitat. It is our shame and one that we must stop.

Stop using 1080 Poison to protect new seedlings planted by foresters after they have cut down the ancient trees to make way for new plantations for woodchips.

1080 POISON

The widespread use of 1080 poison to eradicate browsing animals is an indiscriminate killer of protected wildlife and bird species. Its use is of increasing concern to anyone who cares about the Earth and the debilitating effect on those species with whom we share this planet. There is no known antidote to this extremely toxic compound, which cannot be readily detected in trace amounts, and all it takes to maim or kill is a trace amount. Further, the active life of 1080 in clear, cool drinking water is about 9 to 12 months.

The side-effects of 1080 poisoning are mental disturbance, breathing difficulty, renal failure, seizures and fits, and ultimately a painful death. Not only are people at risk with traces of this deadly poison entering our food chain, but the danger exists that a whole city could be held to ransom by someone simply threatening to tip a container of 1080 into the reticulated water supply. Far deadlier than dieldrin, 1080 has been banned in most western countries. Although alternatives exist, government and forestry officials persist with poisoning waterways, food chains and animals. The 1080 does not break down readily as they claim.

Neither does it remain in the areas where it is laid. Animals poisoned by 1080 can take up to 5 days to die during which time they travel in their search for water. Birds of prey pick up 1080-poisoned carrion and, in turn, cause the 1080 to spread further.

You can help by sending a letter of protest to Tasmanian Premier, Paul Lennon, and to all who allow the use of 1080 poison.

"Sharing what you have is more important than what you have."

- Albert M. Wells, Jr.

Scientists have proved what dog owners have known for centuries – their pets really can understand almost everything they say.

Researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, have discovered a border collie with a vocabulary of 200 words and the ability to pick up the meaning of new words on first hearing.


...were no limits placed on calories or portion size, and people could eat allowed desserts as often as they liked. Vegan participants also took a supplement of vitamin B₁₂, which is naturally found in animal products. Participants attended weekly meetings about their diets, and received instructions, tips for eating at restaurants and recipe ideas. After 14 weeks, 93% of vegan eaters said that the diet was good, moderately good or extremely good, and 79% rated the diet as "acceptable". Almost 90% said that they planned to continue the diet after the experiment, the authors report.

In an interview, Barnard explained that giving up eggs and dairy adds extra health benefits because these foods contain high amounts of fat and cholesterol. He added that many vegan products at upscale health food stores are expensive, but people can make a hearty meal of potatoes, canned beans and vegetables for only "pennies".


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