The ferry ride to the North Island was uneventful; the seas were a little rough, but not enough to get us sick. Just yesterday we met some Germans who said that on their crossing the seas were so rough that a semi tipped and was leaning against its neighbor.

I write about a week into our time on the North Island, and so far things have been uneventful, at least compared to our South Island camping adventure, where we didn’t stay in the same place during any two consecutive nights. The kids have enjoyed holing up with TV in our condo in Turangi, on the mighty Lake Taupo, which sits in the crater of a massive volcano. Turangi is a very quiet town on the banks of the Tongariro River, which is famous for trout fishing.

We’ve had only two day-long excursions while we’ve been here. The first was to Rotorua, where we let the kids drain our bank account doing extreme activities: a wind tunnel, and the Zorb. They had a grand time doing these activities, and on the way to and from Rotorua, we hit some nice natural (and free) hot springs, making for a great day.

Our second major outing was a trip to Tongariro National Park, where we did a couple of day hikes around Whakapapa (pronounced Fakapapa – my new favorite word). Tongariro is a beautiful and pristine national park; it was the world’s fourth. Our hikes took us to a couple of gorgeous waterfalls.

What we’ve really wanted to do in Tongariro, however, is the Tongariro Crossing, which is a 19.5 km trek up and over the saddle between two of the three big volcanoes in Tongariro National Park. It is billed as New Zealand’s best one day hike. The track has been closed, as the winds have been high all week, but it looks like there’s a weather window on Friday. If it holds, we’ll give it a shot.