

**NEW ZEALAND
PHOTO JOURNAL #5
HIKING ROTORUA LAKES**

Adventures by Scott David Plumlee

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NORTH ISLAND ZEALAND

NEW



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- Previous Route
- Current Path
- Cities

Auckland

Hot Water Beach

Karangahake Gorge

Hobbiton

Rotorua

Taupo

Gisborne

Previously on NZ Photo Journal:

After sailing from Auckland to the Coromandel Peninsula and cycling down into the famous Karangahake Gorge, I visited the amazing Hobbiton Shire. Today, I am continuing south towards the volcanically active Rotorua region where there are hot springs and geysers. I have read about some amazing hiking trails in the area that follow the shoreline of the neighboring lakes and I'm excited to take a break from the bike for a few days of hiking. Wow, so much to see - let's go!

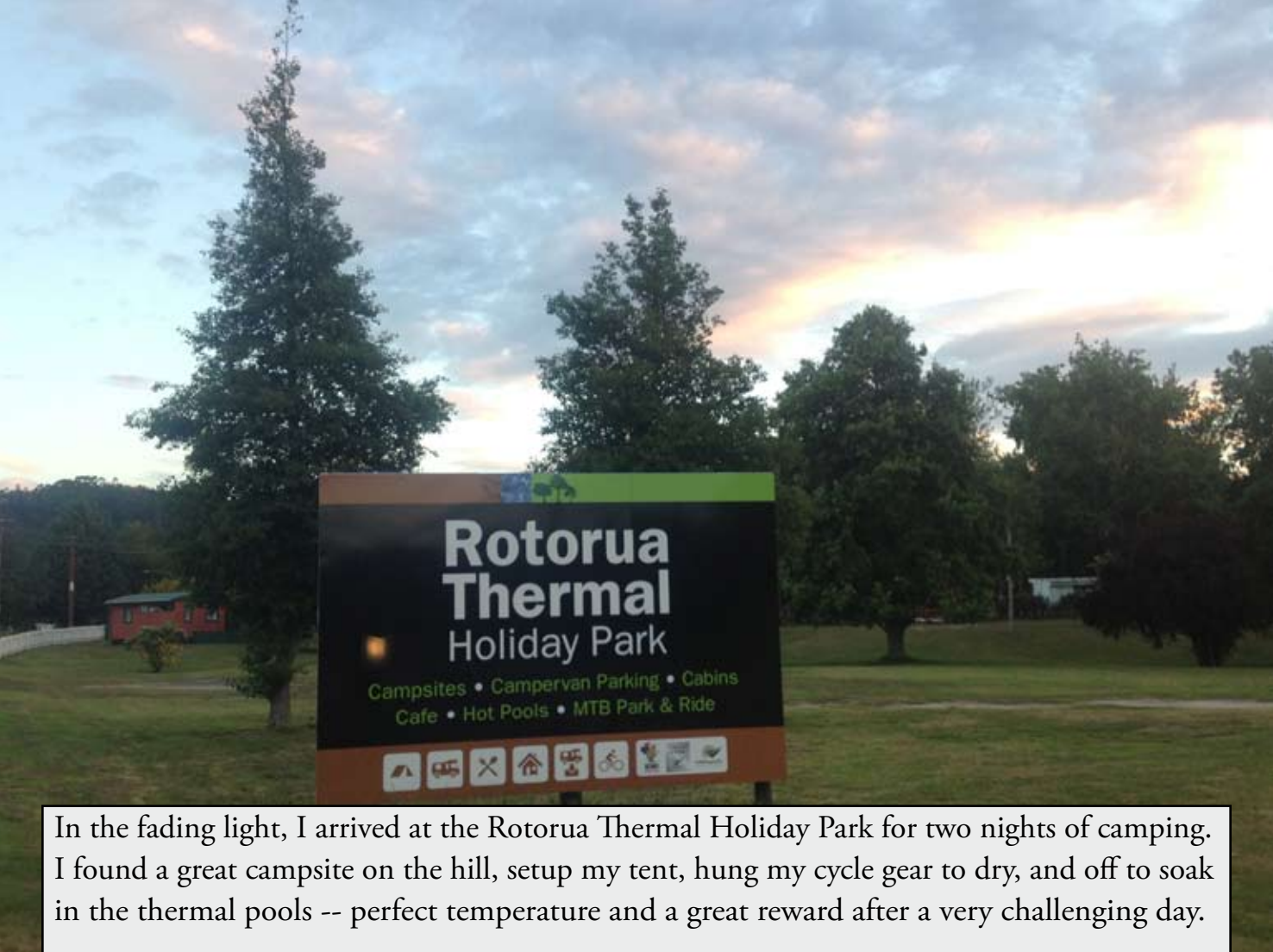




Back in the saddle and pedaling down the left side of the road -- heading south to Rotorua.

Blue skies, brutal UV light, and serious heat coming off the blacktop. I stopped for water and a Snickers along the way and I met a Canadian girl who liked my jokes. I cycled onward over many rolling hills and faced a huge climb where I had to push my bike for half an hour. After taking a break in the shade, I was looking for my sunglasses and I realized they were on my face -- that's how bright it is here in New Zealand. No complaints though, I broke my current cycling distance record today.





In the fading light, I arrived at the Rotorua Thermal Holiday Park for two nights of camping. I found a great campsite on the hill, setup my tent, hung my cycle gear to dry, and off to soak in the thermal pools -- perfect temperature and a great reward after a very challenging day.



I rode into town and found a Saturday Farmer's Market where I got a loaf of homemade bread, and then bought a used paperback book: *The Smoke Jumper* by Nicholas Evans.



I walked around the city park for awhile gawking at the thermal pools of bubbling mud until the sky started to turn dark gray and rumble, so I went down to the iSite center to get information about the lakes hike, got a map, and found out I didn't need a permit to hike.



It never rained, so I went down to the waterfront and walked along Sulphur Bay coastline to see more bubbling-mud thermal activity, but the smell of sulphur was a bit nauseating.



I went to the Pac-n-Sav grocery store for pasta, sauce, tuna, and nuts for the hiking trip. Back at camp, I soaked in the thermal pools where I took this picture of the orange clouds.



December 15th: Up at 7am, coffee-n-protein, organized food for the four day hike, packed my camp gear, did a yoga session, and cycled 16km out of Rotorua towards Lake Okareka.



I arrived at picturesque Lake Okareka at 2pm. I really wanted to go swimming to cool off, but it was getting too late in the afternoon so I reluctantly pedaled onward to the trailhead.

I cycled 15km in the hot blazing sun and then pushed my bike up a steep gravel road for the last kilometer to the trailhead. I repacked my camping gear from bike panniers into backpack and hid my bike with extra gear in the forest. Thoroughly exhausted, I set out hiking the trail at 4pm. With five hours of light remaining, I should have enough time to hike around Lake Okataina for camping tonight at Kaiwaka Bay.





Thank you for joining me on this 15-page free preview to visit Rotorua, to continue the adventure with me to Tarawera Waterfalls, purchase the full 50-page eBook at Amazon.com.

Won't you join me for my next adventure to cycle past the Rere Waterfalls to coastal Gisborne?

The author, Scott David Plumlee, seen with a monkey on his head below, is an avid world traveler, photographer, and writer. He has traveled to over 40 countries, taken millions of photos, and is always willing to share his jokes, stories, and philosophies. Plumlee is also the author of the five book Chain and Bead Jewelry series, and currently loving life in Asheville.

Discover more adventures at:

www.davidchain.com/travels.htm

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