

Day 11 – Sightseeing in Auckland, NZ [Tuesday 01-Feb-2011]

We woke up very early local time. I chatted with Erik back at RIT for a while. It seems like things are moving along nicely. Weather is supposed to be nice today. We headed out and started looking for a place to have breakfast. Lilli had read about a place called Kokako.



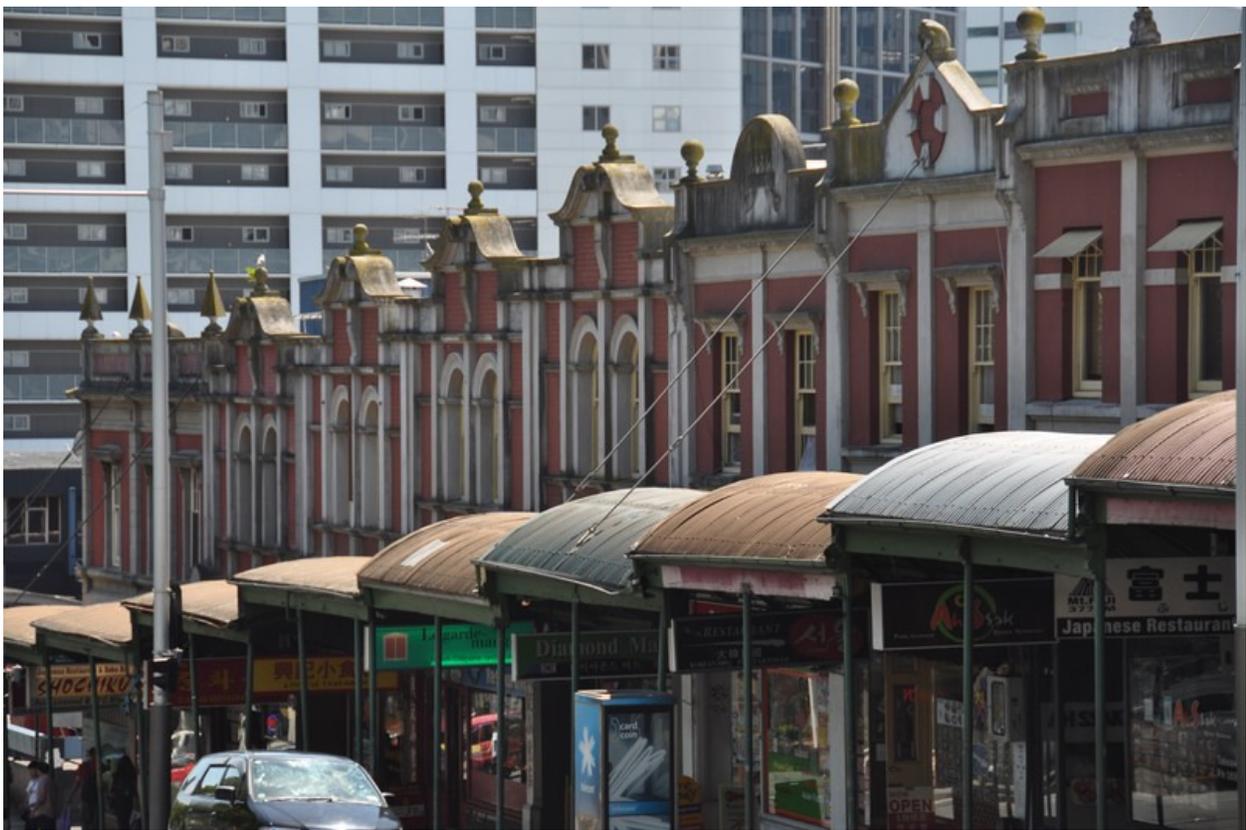
Café au lait with a heated muffin (and obligatory butter stick) at Kokako in Auckland



Auckland is quite tropical, with palm trees and all



The style of buildings on Purnelle street.



Old and New along Queen St. Auckland has hills like a micro San Francisco.



Along Queen St in Auckland, as we approach the financial district.



Two very expensive beers and a “flowerpot” with Belgian Fries (with mayo) at Occidental



Reflections of buildings in windows of another building along Queen St in Auckland

You definitely get the sense that this is the financial district of town. The buildings are tall and new. We can only imagine that the NZ economy, if measured by these buildings, is doing quite well.



Another interesting building texture along Queen St in Auckland



Major barnacles on the pier by Devonport, where our catamaran ferry docked



Hiking down Victoria Mountain in Devonport. Auckland can be seen with the tower ahead.



Coasting back to the ferry terminal in downtown Auckland, NZ

It was then time to pick up the car. First I scouted out some parking on the street where we live, since I wanted it to be really easy to drive on the left side of the road in rush hour, while I was tired. We then walked down to car rental place and prepared our paperwork. We added Lilli to the contract as well, at no additional charge. After I got the keys to the car, we both hopped into the car. Lilli was on the left side of me. That was odd since I had the steering wheel. I discovered that the turn signal was on the opposite side only after wiping the windshield with what was supposed to be a turn signal. I parked the car outside where we stay and paid \$5 NZD for the night.

As soon as the car was parked we headed down the grocery store to buy some supplies. It was a fairly large store with some 12-15 cash registers. They were well stocked. But it was very expensive compared to home. And, get this, in the land of Kiwi the US imported Kiwis were cheaper than the local ones. We got some apples. The US Gala apples were the least expensive ones. And local wines were high, too. I looked at Coke, even though I was not planning to buy any: \$18.50 USD for a case of 24 cans. Hello! After I was disenfranchised about prices I started thinking that perhaps we need to live on P&J, US Kiwi fruits and water for the rest of the visit to NZ. But I may need to re-think that 😊

When we returned back to the apartment with the groceries I was so totally pooped that I had to sit down in the couch. I pulled my sandals and my socks off and, for about one hour, all I could do was to browse the news with one finger on the laptop. Although I had hoped that a ½ glass of New Zealand wine would rejuvenate me, I could not even finish it. So there went the plans to go out for dinner. Lilli went out to a Chinese place to get some takeout. Although I did not have any appetite, I decided to at least try to eat a little bit. What a fire-ball! That food was very hot. I felt my energy coming back to a level just above passing out. I was now able to use a few more fingers on the keyboard.

What an incredible day we had today! The weather, which started out crappy, turned into a complete winner. We had blue skies and mid 70s.