

We have been dreaming of a white Christmas since we started planning this trip. Today there was plenty of the white stuff, although none falling from the sky. It was another perfect bluebird day in Colorado.

Matt was awake at 6:30am as per usual. He is one predictable morning kid. Anna was up about an hour later, which is considerably earlier than usual for her. The kids were delighted to see that their stockings were full and there were a few other parcels beside the fireplace as well. We gave each other a hug and a snowmobile trip - nice and easy!



We headed off mid morning for our crazy Christmas adventure. We were booked in for the midday snowmobile tour, but it was close to an hour drive up into the mountains. We are not getting sick of Highway 550, it is just so spectacular. Driving along surrounded by snow and listening to Christmas music was a great way to spend Christmas morning.

The snowmobile tour started near the Molas Pass that we visited on the way to Silverton on Tuesday. There were 20 people on our tour, all riding double sleds. Last time we snowmobiled was in Utah 17 years ago and Andy did virtually all the driving. So it was a new experience for me to be in charge of such a powerful machine. Matt was keen to ride with Andy for maximum speed, so Anna was stuck with the rookie. After a lesson on the basics (stop, go, how not to tip/crash.....) we were off into the snowy wonderland.

The first hour was spent zooming along endless snowy trails, sometimes in trees, but more often out in the open. It took a while to get used to riding, especially the instability as you hit many bumps and soft snow. The bumps were great fun, although it was twice as bumpy on the back for the kids. They had their own hand holds though and loved every minute of it.







Uh Oh...I think we've broken it!

After a break to stretch our legs and enjoy the views, the boys' snowmobile refused to start. The guides tried their hardest to coax it back to life, but in the end the verdict was a cooked engine. Both the guides were on single sleds, and they tried to fit the boys onto one of their singles. It didn't look very comfortable for either Andy or Matt, so I took the single sled. It wasn't too bad for two smallish people, but no handle holds for the passenger on the back. Matt had to hang on to me for dear life, especially going up hills as the sled had no back support. It was very weird going up steep hills - it felt like I had someone hanging off my waist like a sloth.

It took a while to get used to riding with someone holding on and the terrain got more challenging as we climbed up towards Molas Peak. The people in front of us rolled their sled on a steep uphill corner and it took four of us to get the machine upright again. They were unhurt but pretty shaken and suffering from the altitude, so they decided to stay there. The rest of us carried on to the peak. There were a few nerve-wracking moments, but we arrived

safely and were rewarded with the most incredible views. At over 12,000 feet, we were as high as Mount Cook.





The descent back down had a few tense moments as well (for me anyway, and Anna who was having a turn to be my passenger), but once we were off the main peak it was easy riding back to base camp with lots of speed, lots of bumps and lots of fun!

The three hour tour ended too soon, but better to leave wanting more than to be glad it was over. There were definitely times when the kids and I were outside our comfort zone, but we all came back safely with smiling faces and loved the adventure.

We got back in time to cook our mini roast turkey for Christmas dinner. It was a delicious meal, washed down with Santa cake, icecream and berries. We will sleep well tonight with wonderful memories of a very different and magical Christmas Day.