



AAC Publications

Kokgart region, various ascents; At Bashi range, various ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Western Kokshaal-Too

Our International School of Mountaineering expedition (nine members and three guides) initially set out to explore the Kokgart region of the West Kokshaal-Too, starting in late August. This lies to the west of the established climbing in the range, opposite the military base of Orto Kaskasu. Sights were set on the impressive main peak, which the locals call Peak Kokgart (4,541m), but this proved too tough an objective, as did most of the other large peaks. However, several lower peaks were climbed by routes up to grade AD. The area would seem to offer countless technical challenges in the TD to ED grades, with imposing mixed faces up to 800m and fine ridges of compact, marbled limestone.

The team then moved to the central At Bashi range and had a more fruitful time, establishing a base camp at ca. 3,892m and doing seven first ascents of peaks, including the big snow mountain (4,751m) marked on all detailed maps of the range. We gave this mountain the Kyrgyz name Idyn Tolgon Kezi, meaning "full moon." The more pointed peak to the west of this, Peak Ortosu (4,626m), provided a good mixed outing (AD) up the west flank and onto the north ridge.

Moving around to the north side of the At Bashi range, we stopped at Tash Rabat, famous for its ancient caravanserai, which happens to be located in a valley full of towering limestone cliffs. ISM teams established the first routes here in 2010 and added three more on this trip, including the 400m Spine Line Ridge, a fine alpine outing at AD+.

The final destination of the trip was the Son Kul region, Kyrgyzstan's limestone canyonlands, where a new canyon to the south of the established climbing areas was explored and found to provide excellent climbing. Eleven routes were established, up to 350m in length and E2 grade (5.10b), making about 30 routes in the canyons in total. We left eager as ever for our next trip to Kyrgyzstan.

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Images



Peak Ortosu (left) and Idyn Tolgon Kezi (a.k.a. Full Moon Peak) in the central At Bashi range.



The limestone peaks of the Kokgart region, with Peak Kokgart (4,541m) in center-right.

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