



## AAC Publications

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### **Mururata, New Route on Satellite Peak and South Face Solo**

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

**Climbing the south face of Mururata (5,775m) was part of my dream to climb all the high, extreme ice faces in Bolivia via their most attractive routes.** On my first attempt, in September 2015, I went with a group of Bolivian guides and friends from La Paz. It is a long approach to base camp at ca 4,600m by Lake Arkhata. We arrived late, and the next morning we were all a bit tired. Five of the group, including Marco Capriles, Gustavo Lisi, Juan José Miranda, and his girlfriend, Tofi, were attracted by a couloir on the southeast face of an unnamed satellite peak opposite (west of) the main south face of Mururata and went off to climb it. This proved to be a nice new route of ca 450m with two steeper pitches in the middle section. I left base camp alone and went to the south face, climbing up Goulotte Marie but turning around before the summit and downclimbing, because I assumed the rest of the group would be forced to wait for me. I was wrong and was the first to return. [Although later claimed by several parties, Goulotte Marie was first climbed in June 1987 by Slovenians Filip Bertoneclj, Bojan Pockar, Bojan Pograjc, and Jernej Stritih. The face at this point is ca600m high.]

My next attempt was with Chris Clarke, Rodrigo Lobo and his girlfriend Leticia. Chris thought he'd spotted a shortcut to base camp after looking at Google Earth, but after seven and a half hours of walking we knew it was not shorter at all. Next day we were rather unmotivated and just walked around a bit, checking out a new line on the left side of the south face. The landscape is beautiful and far from the crowded, well-known sites, so every minute was worth it.

On my third try I walked up solo, with no tent, and just enough gear to make the ascent. I left La Paz at 4 a.m. and went slowly, conserving energy. I spent the night in a small fisherman's shelter by the lake. Cloud banks rose from the Yungas. Next morning was clear but windy, a sure sign that bad weather was on its way. I went slowly at first, reaching the bottom of the face in two and a half hours. I then speeded up and climbed the Goulotte Marie in three hours. It is a logical line, with a short section of WI4 and another short but serious passage of M4 where the ice had not formed or had disappeared.

During the last 200m the weather turned, and on the top it was snowing heavily. I couldn't climb down the same way, so I opted for the long, glaciated normal route to the west. This was the hardest part for me, as it proved endless and crevassed, and I sank to my knees in wet snow. Eventually I reached firm ground and attempted to call a driver to pick me up at the beginning of the dirt road. Unfortunately, the phone company had cut me off, wanting me to visit them and clarify if my address was still up to date. It was 30km to the main valley. Partway down, at the village of Choquekhota, which I reached in nine hours from the summit, I was offered a blanket to sleep in a farmer's house. At 5 a.m., I caught public transport back to La Paz. I wasn't finished, because at 2 a.m. the following morning I left again to collect my gear, cached at the lake, in a "single push."

This was most likely the first solo of the rarely climbed south face. The southeast ridge, to the right, was reported to have been soloed in the late 1980s by Bernard Francou.

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## Images



The start of the main difficulties of Goulotte Marie, above the initial snow slopes.



The fisherman's hut, Lake Arkhata, and the south face of Mururata. (1) Normal Route up the west glacier. (2) Guias AGMTB (2013). (3) Goulotte Marie (1987). (4) Southeast ridge (Hudson-Laba-Whewell, 1970).

## Article Details

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