



Pico de Orizaba, Itzaccihuatl, and Nevado de Toluca, New Routes

Mexico

In May, Max Álvarez and Diego Montaña climbed a probable new route on the northwest face of Itzaccihuatl (5,230m), Mexico's third-highest peak. The climb involved two steep mixed pitches, followed by a stretch of alpine ice (AI3) leading to a glacial headwall and the summit. They named the route La Hernia (WI4 M4 AI3), as it marked Montaña's first serious climb after surgery.

The new line is not far to the right of Directa al Pecho, a difficult route up the northwest face climbed by Fernando "La Araña" Lipkau and Lenin Zabre Ramírez in 1955, when a larger glacier covered much of the face.

Álvarez and Daniel Araiza also explored the west side of Pico de Orizaba (5,636m), the third-highest mountain in North America, in October, finding a new route on the icy flanks of the Sarcófago, the rocky peak north of Orizaba's summit. Their line ascends three pitches of steep, thin water ice through a rock band before angling left across mixed ground to reach the top of the face just north of the Sarcófago.

The new climb was named the Serpent's Tail (WI4/5) after a route on the west face called the Serpent's Head, climbed by Wink Barrons and Barry Blanchard in January 1988. The earlier climb was far to the right of the 2017 route.

Montaña said that water ice routes on both peaks are rarely in condition and that both the new climbs had "sketchy" ice and loose rock.

In September, Montaña, Sergio "Tiny" Almada, and Carlos Petersen climbed a three-pitch rock route on the north side of Nevado de Toluca (4,680m): Mata y Patata (5.11 X A1).

– Dougald MacDonald, with information from Diego Montaña

Images

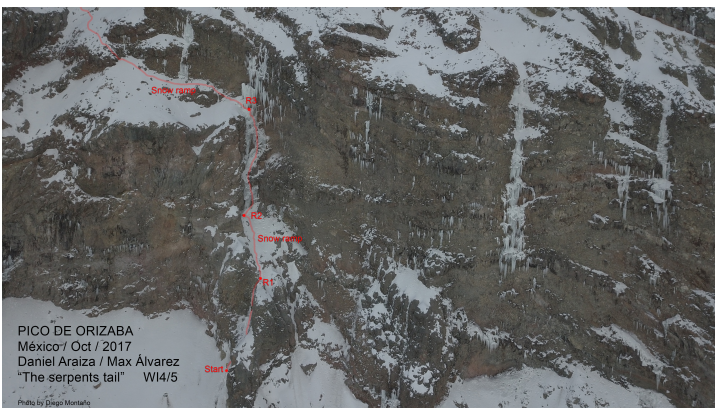
"La Hernia" Max A. Diego M.
Pared NW del pecho IZTACCIHUATL



Detail of La Hernia.



La Hernia on the northwest face of Iztaccihuatl.



Detail of the Serpent's Tail on Pico de Orizaba.

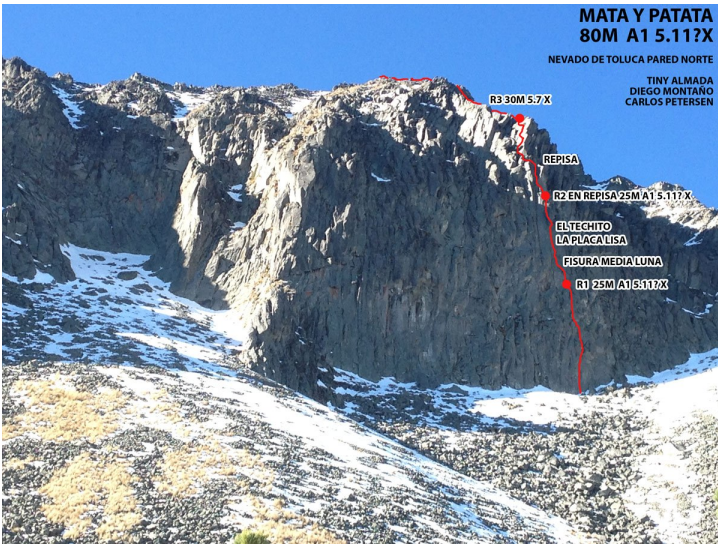


Photo-topo for Mata y Patata, Nevado de Toluca.



Approach to the Serpent's Head on Pico de Orizaba before the first ascent in January 1988.



The west side of Pico de Orizaba (5,636m) showing the line of the Serpent's Tail. The arrow at far right marks the approximate location of the Serpent's Head (Barrons-Blanchard, 1988).

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