



## AAC Publications

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### **Caraz II, Southwest Face, Fango, Mushrooms and Cornice**

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

**In late August, Aritz Monasterio (Peru) and I made the first ascent of the southwest face of Caraz II (6,020m), stopping 20m before the summit due to unstable ridge conditions.** The face is somewhat hidden from view but had been on Aritz's radar for some years. [Caraz II is about a kilometer north-northeast of the main summit of Caraz (6,025m). The heavily fluted southwest face begins above the broad glacier to climber's left of the better-known east/southeast face. See AAJ 2005 for a description and photo of routes on the east/southeast face and northeast ridge of Caraz II.]

Leaving on August 22 from Laguna Parón, we took three days to reach the base and establish a final camp at 5,300m. On the morning of August 25, we left our tent at 3 a.m., negotiating the jagged glacier through deep, sugary snow and progressing very slowly to the face. Above the bergschrund, the ice conditions improved for the middle part of the climb. On the other hand, the ice structures and mushrooms hanging overhead made the ascent quite psychologically taxing. The upper climb was characterized by weak, hollow ice that made progress slow and safe belaying difficult.

From the last anchor, I climbed the final meters of the southwest face and continued onto the summit ridge. Approximately 20m before I reached the top, a massive part of the ridge collapsed, sending me (along with big blocks of snow and ice) onto the opposite, northwest face. Eventually I stopped, hanging free under a huge overhang. Fortunately, Aritz's anchor held, and I was able to ascend the rope.

After this, we decided not to continue. We reached the highest point of the climb (about 6,000m) at 5:30 p.m. and then descended via the same route. We abseiled first from a snow anchor and then with several V-threads until we reached the glacier, where we had to abseil one last time before finally arriving at the tent around 1:30 p.m. on August 26.

We called our route Fango, Mushrooms, and Cornice (400m, MD+ 70°–80°). The Spanish word fango means "mud" or "mire," which is what the deep, sugary snow on the route felt like.

— Ibai Rico, Spain

## Images



Aritza Monasterio at camp on the glacier below the southwest face of Caraz II.



Aritza Monasterio follows a very steep, "tubular" ice fluting on the southwest face of Caraz II.



Aritz Monasterio leading on the upper southwest face of Caraz II. Ibai Rico writes, "The ice structures and mushrooms hanging overhead made the ascent quite psychologically taxing."



Ibai Rico at the team's high point on Caraz II with the summit in view. Rico's tracks can be seen trailing off where the summit ridge collapsed and sent him falling onto the opposite, northwest side of the mountain.



Fango, Mushrooms, and Cornice (400m, MD+ 70-80°), the first route up the southwest face of Caraz II (6,020m).

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