



AAC Publications

Nevado Navidad, Sueños de Kwanzaa Traverse

Chile, Northern Patagonia, Aysén Region

A winter view looking east to the group of peaks at the northern end of Parque Nacional Patagonia: (A) Llave de Granito, (B) Summer Solstice Spire, (C) Nevado Navidad, and (D) Cerro Choss. The 2022 route, the Sueños de Kwanzaa Traverse, summited Llave de Granito and Nevado Navidad. Photo By: Linde Waidhofer

When I climb near Parque Nacional Patagonia, I'm usually thinking about collecting samples for my research on the tectonics of Patagonia, but you can't work all the time. During the 2022 holiday season, Terray Sylvester and I squeezed a fun first ascent into a tiny weather window. For this, we leveraged my experience exploring this area geologically—how did these young, nine-million-year-old intrusive rocks pop up tectonically so quickly?—as well as the knowledge gained from other ascents—Llave de Granito (AAJ 2022)—plus some pre-cached water and food.

Starting on December 22, we hiked and scrambled up the western ramparts of Llave de Granito, placing a high camp. On the 24th, we started up Llave de Granito, climbing the descent route we had used in 2021. From its summit, we traversed to the south-southeast, scrambling down nice granodiorite and blocky talus on the south ridge and then across a beautiful flat section with glaciers to the left and granite to the right. We then made two rappels and scrambled down to the col below the next peak on the ridge, which is between Llave de Granito and Cerro Choss (AAJ 2009).

We scrambled up the north-northwest ridge of this peak and then traversed—with one, exposed smeary move—around the west side of a prominent gendarme dubbed the Summer Solstice Spire. From there, two short pitches up very clean and beautiful gray rock with low fifth-class climbing got us to a small cap of snow atop what we called Nevado Navidad (ca 2,000m; 46°37'53"S, 72°19'27"W).

From the top, we retraced our tracks back to the north-northwest, with scrambling, one rappel, and a fun pitch of easy, fifth-class (which we had previously rappelled) taking us to the ridge leading back to Llave de Granito. We then dropped down to our tent via two rappels, using the same descent as in 2021.

In the spirit of the holidays, and because we were climbing during the first days of Kwanzaa, we named our route to Nevado Navidad the Sueños de Kwanzaa Traverse (III, low-fifth class). In the austral summer, as long the rock is rime-free, the entire traverse can be done in approach shoes.

— Gregory P. De Pascale, Chile

Images



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Terray Sylvester below the gendarme dubbed Summer Solstice Spire with the summit of Nevado Navidad behind.



Terray Sylvester on the summit of Nevado Navidad with Cerro Choss behind and Lago General Carrera below.



Gregory P. De Pascale heading up easy terrain to the summit of Llave de Granito.

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