



AAC Publications

Chaupi Orco Norte, West Ridge

Peru, Cordillera Apolobamba

Chaupi Orco Norte (ca 6,000m), with the west ridge along the right skyline. The climb began with a steep ascent of the icefall at far right. Photo by Nate Heald.

In November, Canadians Samuel Gagnon and Valery Bilodeau, Samuel Crispin (Peru), and I drove past the mining town of La Rinconada to a valley on the eastern slope of the Andes, to access the west side of Chaupi Orco (6,044m). We followed a dirt road to a large mining area at the head of the valley. A miner named Avad allowed us through the gate and offered us his sheet-metal hut to stay in.

On November 9, we woke to 20cm of snow and an icy wind from the north. For two days, we could not see Chaupi Orco. The Maps.me app said that Chaupi Orco Norte (ca 6,000m) was higher than the main peak, so we went for that. The morning of the 11th cleared long enough to get some photos of the face and a route leading onto the west ridge. By afternoon it was raining again, but the forecast said it would be clearer the next day.

We left a bivy cave just before midnight and made our way onto the glacier, then up a large cascade of ice. This was fun AI3, with great views of Ananea (5,853m) and Callijon (5,829m). From the top of the cascade, the route was mostly walking, with two sections of steeper AI3 that we pitched out. As we hiked the summit slopes, the clouds came in and we did not get extended views of the other peaks; it wasn't obvious to me if the main or north peak of Chaupi Orco was higher. We descended the route, with some rappels, and made it to our bivy just before dusk.

Our route on Chaupi Orco Norte gained about 800m above the glacier and was around AD in difficulty.

— Nate Heald, Peru

Images



Moving up on Chaupi Orco Norte. The team climbed an icefall to reach the west ridge of the mountain.



Chaupi Orco Norte (ca 6,000m), with the west ridge along the right skyline. The climb began with a steep ascent of the icefall at far right.



Descending steep ice after the ascent of the west ridge of Chaupi Orco Norte.

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