



AAC Publications

Cerro Amparay, North Face

Peru, Cordillera Vilcabamba

I have been working as a surgeon at the mission hospital in Curahuasi, Peru, and from the hospital I can see several beautiful peaks of the Vilcabamba Range. In 2021, friends and I climbed Cerro Chaupiloma (AAJ 2022). The neighboring peak to the northeast, Cerro Amparay, has been on the to-do list since then. I tried an ascent from the southeast during the rainy season, in January 2024, but had to abort about 50m below the summit because of bad weather and rockfall danger. After that, using satellite images, I planned a new route from the north.

Detail of the 2024 route up the north face of Cerro Amparay. Photo: Lukas Steffen

On June 7, Matthias Rehder (Germany) and I left Curahuasi and drove for ten hours to the Chalán Valley, northwest of the mountain. We left our car at 2 p.m. at 3,500m (13°22'09.5"S, 72°40'12.0"W). Thanks to a local horse herder, we found a trail through the thick woods and made it to a campsite at 4,500m before nightfall.

We left camp at 2 a.m. and hiked south toward the glacier, reaching the ice at 5,000m around 4 a.m. The lower part of the glacier was heavily crevassed; some sections were steep and required ice screws. The upper part was easier, with 30°–40° firn. The last 50m to the summit had some loose rock.

We summited (13°24'12"S, 72°40'4.65"W) under blue skies at around 8 a.m. My altimeter showed 5,427m and my cell phone 5,418m. There were no traces of past climbers on the summit. We built a small stone tower on top, where we had beautiful views of the neighboring peaks: Chaupiloma (5,339m), Soray (5,428m), Salcantay (6,279m), and Padreyoc (5,771m).

We descended the glacier more on the eastern side to avoid crevasses and found it much easier than our ascent route. We reached camp around noon and went down to the car the same day.

—Lukas Steffen, Switzerland

Images



Descending from Cerro Amparay after the first known ascent, via the north face. The climbers ascended the glacial arm on the right to reach the summit.



Detail of the 2024 route up the north face of Cerro Amparay.



Cerro Amparay from the east. (The 2024 route is not visible.) In back on the right is Nevado Padreyoc.



Cerro Amparay from Chaupiloma to the southwest. The north face glacier route on Amparay is just beyond the left skyline ridge.

Article Details

Author	Lukas Steffen
Publication	AAJ
Volume	66
Issue	99
Page	207
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions