



AAC Publications

Pico Simón Bolívar, South Face, Ayu

Colombia, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is considered the Heart of the World in indigenous cosmogony and is among the highest coastal ranges in the world.

The general line of AYU on the south face of Pico Simón Bolívar. Photo: Ricardo Rubio.

On December 11, 2024, Alexander Chávez, Brian Kalet, Salomón Torres, and I embarked on an adventure to reach Pico Simón Bolívar (5,720m), Colombia's highest mountain, which would take us through all types of ecosystems, finally reaching tropical glaciers. We were accompanied by a team of 12 porters from the Arhuaco community, including the indigenous leader's son.

We established base camp at approximately 4,850m, and on December 18 began our ascent from the north, climbing the Colón Glacier to the col between Pico Cristóbal Colón and Pico Bolívar. We navigated a crevasse field and stretches of snow and ice up to 65° to reach the col and summited Pico Colón around 6 a.m. During our final ascent, we spotted a striking potential route up Pico Bolívar. We returned to the col around 7:30 a.m. and moved onto the south face of Bolívar.

I led four 50m pitches of mixed climbing (approximately M5), and by 11 a.m. we had overcome the rock face and were at 5,300m. We proceeded along the beautiful east ridge toward the summit of Bolívar, which we reached at noon. We returned to base camp at 4 p.m., highly satisfied with opening a new route—named AYU—and completing the ascent of Colombia's two highest mountains in just 18 hours. Salomón Torres's ascent marks the first time an Arhuaco climber had reached these summits.

—Ricardo Rubio, Colombia

Images



Looking down the second pitch of AYU on the south side of Picoón Bolívar.



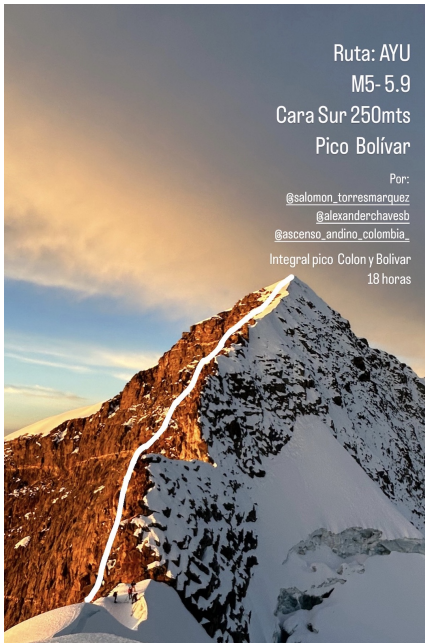
Ricardo Rubio moving through the third mixed pitch on the south face of Pico Simón Bolívar.



The upper east ridge of Pico Simón Bolívar.



On the upper slopes of Pico Cristóbal Colón, looking west at Pico Simón Bolívar.



The general line of AYU on the south face of Pico Simón Bolívar as seen from the summit of Pico Cristóbal Colón.

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