



## AAC Publications

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### **Jurau A, Northeast Face, Kuntur**

Peru, Cordillera Huayhuash

Jurau A from the northeast, with the approximate lines of (1) Chancos y Chacras (2018) to just below the top, and (2) Kuntur (2025) to the northeast summit. Photo by Koky Castañeda

**Over three days in June, we climbed to the northeast top of Jurau A (5,640m, -10.281129, -76.880440) by an all-free route on the northeast face.** We called our route Kuntur (“condor” in Quechua) in reference to the four enormous birds that flew over us during the climb. Regardless of the effort, difficulty, and good and bad moments on our ascent, these birds’ grand expression of nature marked us the most—it’s something we’d never had the pleasure of witnessing during seven seasons in Peru.

On June 20, after a 4.5-hour approach, we camped at Laguna Siulacocha at 4,300 meters. The next day we started at 5:45 a.m. and reached the base of the limestone wall, at 4,680 meters, in a little under two hours. Our packs weighed close to 20 kilograms. We climbed for 8.5 hours through the steepest pitches of the route, all on rock, before setting up an uncomfortable bivouac at 5,000 meters.

We started again at 7:15 a.m., moving over loose rock before transitioning to ice and mixed pitches. We reached the northeast top (ca 5,560m) at 5:30 p.m. on June 22, finishing with the day’s last light after a considerable beating.

We rappelled in the dark, descending 250 meters over two hours before stopping because we badly needed to sleep. In the morning, we left our bivouac at eight and racked our brains, looking for the best rappel line through a sea of limestone. Finally, after ten rappels to the left of the ascent route and much downclimbing, we reached the base of the wall.

We ended up with a very long route: 1,575 meters of climbing, with rock difficulty up to 6c, snow and ice up to 70°, and M5 mixed climbing. We left no fixed gear, making the climb clean and serious. [The new route climbs the center of the northeast face of Jurau A. In 2018, José María “Chemari” Andres and Samuel Gómez from Spain climbed a line up the left side of this face (starting on the east face) over three days in June: Chanchos y Chacras (1,000m, 6c M4+ 65°). Dangerous snow conditions turned them back just 20 meters below the northeast summit.]

Kuntur is a great rock route in the style of the climbs on La Esfinge in the Cordillera Blanca, though it’s on limestone instead of granite. It’s a little bit higher and longer than the Esfinge climbs, and the final pitches being rock and snow made the ascent even more complete. The key pitches, although not that difficult, are difficult to protect and in most cases don’t allow falls. We left no fixed gear, making the climb clean and serious.

Despite the climb’s difficulty, it was more difficult overcoming the climbing season’s mental challenges. First was a fatal accident involving three climbers on Artesonraju whose attempted rescue we assisted. Then there were the companions who we lost in accidents in ranges across the world: nine friends in just two and a half weeks. These tragedies affected us deeply throughout the expedition. So when we reached the summit, it felt like a great weight was lifted off our shoulders.

—Eneko and Iker Pou, Spain

## Images



Photo-topo showing the route Kuntur on the northeast face of Jurau A.



Jurau A from the northeast, with the approximate lines of (1) Chancos y Chacras (2018) to just below the top, and (2) Kuntur (2025) to the northeast summit.



Iker Pou starting up a diedral (roughly V+) on a lower part of Kuntur.



Iker Pou near the top of the wall, opening an exposed 6c pitch (approx. pitch 18).



Brothers Eneko and Iker Pou at their first bivouac, after climbing the first half of the wall.



Iker Pou starting the first pitch (around V+) after the first bivouac on Kuntur.



Eneko Pou on the upper section of ice and rock on the second day of the new route on the northeast face of Jurau A.



Iker Pou with Laguna Cangrajanca far below, following a pitch near the summit of Jurau A.



Eneko Pou leading a mixed pitch (around M5) near the summit of Jurau A.



Brothers Iker and Eneko Pou on the northeast summit of Jurau A (5,560m) after climbing their new route Kuntur.

## Article Details

|                |                        |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Author         | Eneko and Iker Pou     |
| Publication    | AAJ                    |
| Volume         | 67                     |
| Issue          | 100                    |
| Page           | 210                    |
| Copyright Date | 2026                   |
| Article Type   | Climbs and expeditions |