



AAC Publications

The Potato, Northwest Face, Baked and Loaded

Arizona, Coyote Domes Wilderness, Mendoza Canyon

While establishing some routes in Mendoza Canyon, about 45 minutes west of Tucson, I took dramatic pictures of the nearly 1,000-foot northwest face of a formation called the Potato (5,676'), which had a couple of old routes on its east face but none on the northwest side. After more than a year away from Arizona, I felt that wall calling to me. I convinced my good friend David Tellechea to wander out in Mendoza and see if we could identify a worthy line on the Potato's exfoliating granite.

After camping at the mouth of the canyon, we made the three-hour approach on February 1, 2025. At the civilized hour of 1 p.m., we were finally roping up to climb.

The first pitch went up a beautiful, polished slab. After a couple of hours, we were three pitches in and had already sent what would be the crux of the route, a right-leaning 5.10 crack that exited onto a steep face, where gear seemed to appear just when you'd want it. Deciding the line was worth a return trip, we made an anchor and rappelled, stashed our gear, and got back to the Jeep shortly after dark.

A week later, on February 8, we were up and hiking at 6 a.m. The approach still took three hours. We climbed to our high point and continued to swing leads all day. The climb went entirely with removable protection. Nine pitches and a short scramble later, we were on the summit. As we went down, we built rappel anchors so the route could be climbed and descended with a single 70m rope. The only semipopular route in the vicinity is on an adjacent formation, the Bullet, and is named Lock and Load. So we named our Potato route Baked and Loaded (950', 9 pitches, III 5.10 PG-13).

—Aaron Davis

Images



Baked and Loaded (950', 9 pitches, III 5.10 PG-13), on the northwest face of the Potato, in Mendoza Canyon, Coyote Domes Wilderness.



Baked and Loaded (950', 9 pitches, III 5.10 PG-13), on the northwest face of the Potato in Mendoza Canyon.



Baked and Loaded (950', 9 pitches, III 5.10 PG-13) on the northwest face of the Potato, with belays marked.



David Tellechea leading the crux third pitch (5.10) on Baked and Loaded (950', 9 pitches, III 5.10 PG-13).



David Tellechea following the spicy fourth pitch on Baked and Loaded.

Article Details

Author	Aaron Davis
Publication	AAJ
Volume	67
Issue	100
Page	
Copyright Date	2026
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions