



AAC Publications

Bolivia Overview, 2013

Bolivia

The mountains of Bolivia have seen a resurgence in new routing, largely due to the emergence of a strong cadre of local mountain guides, as well as a number of talented, enthusiastic foreign climbers resident in La Paz. A team of local guides reportedly made the second ascent of one of the hard Slovenian routes, Nada Mañana (ED1), on the northwest face of Illampu, while another has made the complete traverse of the Illimani massif in a single push of 18 hours. Although the traditional season has been the austral winter (June–September), climbs are now being made at all times of year, as locals snatch ephemeral lines whenever conditions allow.

Of note, at a less technical level, are the mountaineering exploits of the Frenchwoman Anne Bialek. By climbing Pomerape (6,282m) in 2013, the La Paz resident became the first known female to summit all 13 of the 6,000m peaks in Bolivia. She first visited the country in 2005 and climbed Huayna Potosí, but it wasn't until 2008–'09, when she relocated from France to La Paz, that she formulated plans to collect Bolivia's highest peaks. On her way she made several important female ascents: In 2011 she climbed the 900m west face of Huayna Potosí, a route that has become harder over the years (D+/TD, 80°), and in 2012 was likely the first woman to do the integral traverse of Illimani

Visiting climbers may find the increasing number of Bolivian sport crags beneficial for acclimatization. The La Paz Sport Climbing Association is responsible for developing the sport climbs near Lago Zongo, and also maintaining the routes at the Aranjuez area of La Paz. (See Zongo Pass report.) Members can usually be found on Saturdays at La Galleta (Aranjuez area). The group also has worked with local authorities to keep El Peñon, a small but very popular venue, open for climbing. The club holds an annual bouldering event—the Bloqueando—in Chalkupunku, a massive boulder field near Sajama.

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Images

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