



AAC Publications

Antisana Este, South Face, Sí Hay Merengue

Ecuador, Andes

On December 13–14, 2020, Juliana García, Francisco Pulluquitin, and I completed the first ascent of Antisana Este (5,580m, 0°29'14"S, 78° 8'28"W) from its base via the south face. This face is located between the central (main) and south summit in a southeast-facing cirque rarely explored due to its remoteness. In the past, the few unsuccessful attempts on this side of Antisana were approached by hiking around the southern summit. This time, we used the normal route on the west face to reach the saddle between the south summit and the central summit; from there, we descended east and northeast into the cirque until reaching a camp at the base of the south face (5,000m).

On the second day, we started navigating the lower glacier at 2:30 a.m. and eventually gained elevation up the right side of an obvious debris funnel. After passing a rock band above the bergschrund, we climbed straight up snow ramps to a second rock band at two-thirds height, which we traversed left. At the western edge of the outcrop, we used a steep gully to access the final serac barrier. This was the most challenging part of the route, presenting short sections of vertical alpine ice and hollow rime. We navigated this section by climbing up and right to a spur dividing the south and east faces of this peak, eventually finishing up a snow ramp on the south face.

We reached the summit ridge at noon and then continued west along the ridge to reach the east summit. To descend, we continued west toward the central summit to join the normal route. Merengue is one of the words used in Spanish for rime; that's why we named the route Sí Hay Merengue (500m, TD AI4 M3 50° snow), which means "Yes, there's rime."

— Joshua Jarrin, Ecuador

Previously Unreported Routes in the Antisana Group: The summit of Antisana Este (5,580m) was first reached by Chilean climbers Miguel Andrade and Hugo Torres in 1974 by walking east along the ridge from the main summit. The adjacent peak Antisana Noreste was first climbed in 1972 by Leonardo Meneses and Hugo Torres, likely also from the main summit via the connecting ridge; this attractive summit may hold some opportunities for new routes. It is important to note that numerous routes and variations from MD to ED- were established on neighboring peak Antisana Sur (5,570m) in the early 2000s, all of which went unreported in the AAJ. The sought-after peak was once referred to by South American climbing historian Evelio Echevarría as "one of the finest peaks in Ecuador."

From north to south, the ten known routes on the peak include: (1) the 1964 first ascent route from the north-northwest (see AAJ 1965); (2) the 2001 Connelly-Stock route (IV 65°) up the northwest face (see AAJ 2001); (3) the 1982 route up the northwest face (see AAJ 1984); (4) variant to the 1982 northwest face route (600m, MD 100°), climbed by N. Miranda and R. Acosta on November 27, 2005; (5) Truenos y Centellas (650m, TD 90° UIAA IV), on the west face, climbed by I. Espinosa, F. Jácome, and G. Navarrete on October 26, 2005; (6) Espolón del Chiquitín (700m, D+ 90° UIAA V), on the west-southwest face, climbed by F. Iza, R. Sandoval, B. Shlauri, and R. Solari on October 26, 2005 (shares terrain with Truenos y Centellas on the upper snow slopes); (7) Cosa de Niños Chismosos (700m, ED- 6a+ A2 90°), on the west face, climbed by R. Cáceres, S. Carrasco, I. Espinosa, and N. Miranda on April 20, 2006; (8) the 1993 route up the south face and ridge, Vía de la Plegaria (UIAA V, see AAJ 1995); (9) the left variant to the 1993 route, called El Que Piensa Pierde (650m, D 65°), climbed by X. Carrera, R. Garrido, J. García, P. García, A. Lazzat, and M. Moine on April 20, 2006; (10) the right variant to the 1993 route (650m, MD+ UIAA V+), climbed by J. F. Dueñas, A. Lazzati, E. Oña, H. Pineda, F. Salcedo, and F. Varela on October 26, 2005.

The Ecuadorian climbing magazine Montaña, July 2006, Issue 23 contains complete information and illustrations of these routes; a PDF can be downloaded at the highlighted link.

– Erik Rieger

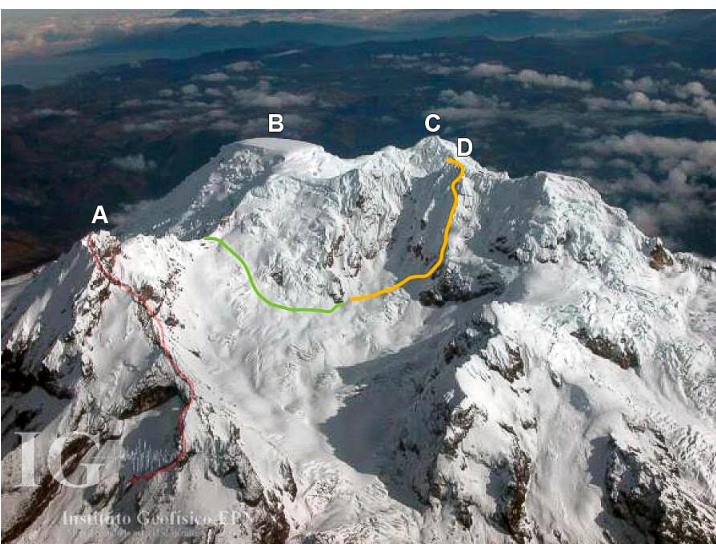
Images



The 2001 Connelly-Stock route (IV 65°) up the northwest face (see AAJ 2001).

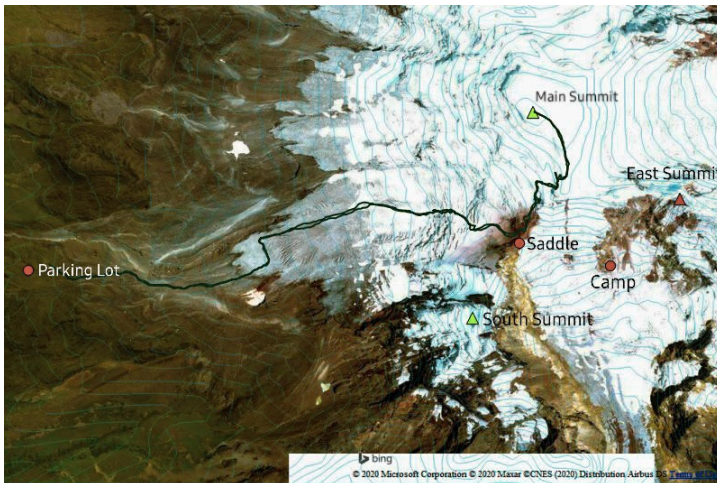


Juliana García on the south face of Antisana Este (5,580m), with the south summit of Antisana on the right and Cotopaxi on the distant horizon.



Aerial photo of the Antisana massif from the southeast indicating its four principal summits: (A) Antisana Sur, (B) Antisana Central, (C) Antisana Noreste, and (D) Antisana Este. The red line shows

the probable location of the Freire-Llano-Oswaldo,1993 route to the summit of Antisana Sur called Vía de la Plegaria (UIAA V, meaning "The Way of Prayer," see AAJ 1995). There are two variations to this route, climbed in April and October of 2006, respectively: El Que Piensa Pierde (650m, D 65°) and the other (650m, MD+ UIAA V+). At least five other routes exist left of this spur on the south, west, and northwest aspects of the peak ranging from MD to ED in addition to the Bernbaum-Droira-Pazmino, 1964 first ascent route from the north-northwest. The green line shows the 2020 approach from the normal route on the west side to the saddle between south and the main summit and then down to the team's camp below the south face of Antisana Este. The yellow line shows the route Sí Hay Merengue (500m, TD AI3 M3 50° snow) on the south face of Antisana Este.



The black line shows the normal route to the main summit of Antisana, which ascends the west side of the mountain. On day one, the climbers ascended to the saddle between the central summit and south summit and then descended down to a camp below the east summit. On day two, they climbed to the east summit and then traversed to the central summit, descending the normal route on the west side.



Walking up the final summit ridge of Antisana Este (5,580m).



Joshua Jarrin finding his way through the final seracs on the south face of Antisana Este (5,580m).



Sí Hay Merengue (500m, TD AI4 M3 50° snow), which means "Yes, there's rime," on the south face of Antisana Este (5,580m).

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