



## **Bike traverse and multiple ascents in the Cordillera Carabaya and Cordillera Vilcanota**

Peru, Cordillera Carabaya; Cordillera Vilcanota

**After a 2019 trip to the Cordillera Central (AAJ 2020) and, last summer, a mountain bike tour of the Pyrenees combined with some ten climbs throughout the range, I wanted to unite both concepts. My goal was to cycle through little-visited massifs of southern Peru, opening new alpine routes along the way.**

I left the town of Juliaca (3,800m), near Lake Titicaca, at the beginning of July, loaded with 45kg of gear and more weight for food and water). From there, I crossed the Carabaya and Vilcanota mountain ranges until reaching Urubamba in mid-August. In all, I traveled about 750km, having ascended five 5,000m peaks (three alone, and four by probable new routes.) The daily cycling stages were limited to around 30–35km due to the average altitude of 4,000m, the low nighttime temperatures, and the great effort of moving a bicycle and load totaling 60–65kg. Approximately half of the route was on dirt tracks. [A PDF of the author's complete trip report, along with topos and maps detailing the ascents, is linked here.]

On July 6, looking for a suitable peak to acclimatize in the Cordillera Carabaya, I hoped to ascend Pumaquilluni (5,225m). However, I was met by the strong mistrust of pastoralists living at its base, so I continued down the trail to the huts of Atompampa instead. Early on the 7th, I hiked west through a valley until observing the wide northeast spur of a peak that the local shepherds call Cerro Apacheta Queroni (5,125m; 14°3'9"S, 70°16'40"W). My route was on mostly decent rock: Rigabor Sanes (250m [climbing distance], AD UIAA III+). I descended the south ridge and east slopes.

From Atompampa, I descended by bike to Macusani. After taking a break in nearby Mazuko, I then retraced my way by taxi to the end of the Antajahua Valley, below the south face of Allinccapac (5,780m). My objective was the south face of Japuma (5,543m; 13°55'3"S, 70°26'2"W). At first light on the 15th, I ascended the east slope of the valley until I reached the foot of the glacier at 5,150m. I ascended the southern glacier (55°), avoiding crevasses, until reaching the southeast ridge. From there, low-angle snow and rock led to the summit (700m climbing distance, PD+ 55° UIAA II). My route may follow the path of the 1954 first ascent (AAJ 1955), though, with glacial retreat, they were possibly quite different ascents. I descended the north face to a lake.

After riding to the town of Phinaya, in the Cordillera Vilcanota, I took a vehicle back to Abra Chimboya (5,100m) on the 29th. From there, I descended past the old mining huts of Mina Chimboya and walked along vicuña paths to reach the southeast face of Jurcay Cuchillo (5,570m; 13°49'5"S, 70°51'39"W; a.k.a. Chimboya or Chabuca). I chose a line trending up and right for its continuity and ascended great quality ice gullies (65–70° UIAA III) to reach the northeast ridge and then the summit: Go Girls! (650m climbing distance, AD+ 70° UIAA III). I descended the south ridge to the end of the south glacier then through rocky steps and moraine to reach Abra Chimboya.

On my next climb, I was joined by Aris Ramos and Jorge "Cocor" Sirvas. On August 5, we left the town of Pitumarca, traveling by vehicle on poor-quality dirt roads into the Quillita Valley. Once there, we walked for one hour, making our base camp at 4,950m so that we could explore climbing possibilities. On the 6th, we left the tents at around 4 a.m. to reach the northeast face of Kunturt'uqu (5,554m; 13°50'56"S, 71°8'9"W). [This peak, a.k.a. Cónдор Tucco or Condortuco, was first climbed from the north (AAJ 1969)]. At first light, we reached the base of an icy couloir below a large serac barrier. We

climbed the couloir up and right (45–65°) until reaching more mild slopes (30°) and varied terrain on the three summit towers (UIAA II–III). The highest point appears to be the third tower (westernmost), where there were extraordinary views of Ausangate and the entire Vilcanota: El Laberinto Del Cóndor (900m climbing distance, PD+ 65° UIAA II). We descended east down the same path until reaching the upper glacier, then diverged to the east summit (5,500m; 13°50'58"S, 71°7'53"W), which we reached without difficulty (30° UIAA II). From there, we descended north, this time passing under the serac barrier on the climber's left.

On my final climb, the southwest face of Sargentuyocc, a rocky peak of 5,120m (13°54'36"S, 71°24'55"W; a.k.a. Alcañillocc/Alcañiyocc and Coscocawarena), I was joined by Diana Gómez and Jorge "Cocor" Sirvas. After exploring the approach to this lofty mountain during the preceding days, we left the rock climbing-rich area of Chacco Huayllasca on the morning of the 11th. We first hiked up to a col at 4,700m, which had stunning views of the mountain, then descended to the bottom of the valley, from where we scrambled up grassy and rocky slopes (UIAA III) to the foot of the southwest face. From there, we alternated leading up eight pitches (UIAA III–V). The rock was very compact and difficult to protect; we mainly used narrow pitons, a few cams, and nuts. Despite the moderate grade, the climb was entertaining and highly aesthetic: El Sueño de los Meteoritos (370m, D UIAA V). We descended carefully to the north peak, north through the valley, then east toward Chacco.

[Editor's note: On November 11, 2021, Berna Weigand (Spain) and Jack Sierralta (Peru) climbed a second new route on the right side of Sargentuyocc's southwest face: Tayta Parawayra (240m, TD 6b).]

Reflecting on this journey alone by bike, the sharp cold and the intense and constant effort did not allow me to nose around everywhere I would have liked. However, there is an incredible sense of freedom that one experiences when cycling. The sensations of going forward and crossing the mountains by my own means coupled with improvised, exploratory alpinism, made this my almost-perfect adventure.

— **Sergi Ricart Ibars, Spain**

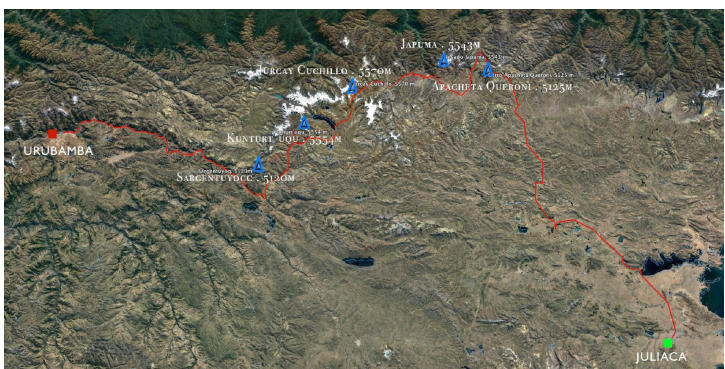
## Images



The 2021 route up the southeast face and northeast ridge of Jurcay Cuchillo (5,570m) in the Cordillera Vilcanota.



Southwest face of Sargentuyocc (5,120m), showing El Sueño de los Meteoritos (370m, D UIAA V). A second route was climbed up this face, farther right, in November 2021.



An overview of Sergi Ricart Ibars' bike-and-climb trip from Juliaca to Urubamba with climbs throughout the Cordillera Carabaya and Cordillera Vilcanota.



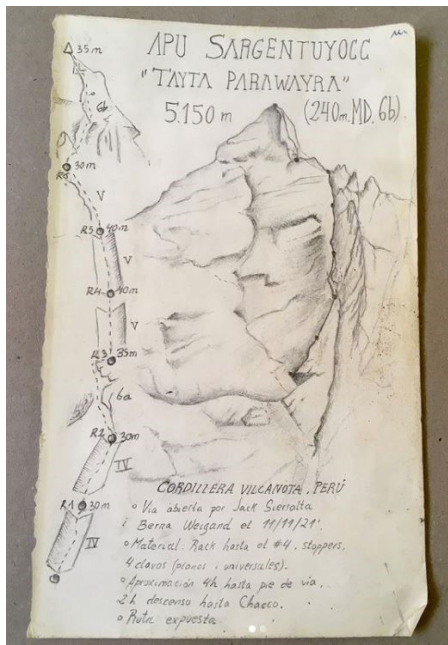
Jorge "Cocor" Sirvas leads pitch seven on the southwest face of Sargentuyocc (5,120m).



Camp in the Cordillera Vilcanota.



The right side of Sargentuyocc's southwest face with the route Tayta Parawayra (240m, TD 6b).



Topo for the route Tayta Parawayra (240m, TD 6b) on Sargentuyocc's southwest face.

## Article Details

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