

more accurately shown on the recent (1999) 1:135,000 topographic map by Walter Guzmán Córdova as a glaciated peak that is four kilometers northeast of Laguna Chiar Khota.

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CORDILLERA QUIMSA CRUZ

Mocoya Valley and Eastern Taruj Umana Valley, Various Ascents. On July 22, Will Hair, Bobby Model, Dave Shewell, Kevin Fredrick, and Rai Farrelly left La Paz on an exploratory rock climbing trip to the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz. Beth Malloy joined the group a few days later. Although the Quimsa Cruz Range is the smallest, lowest and least-visited of Bolivia's four main cordilleras, it is easily accessed and offers a stunning array of climbing. The southern portion of the range consists of glaciated peaks, though none higher than 5800 meters, and the northern portion of the range is an area of granite peaks and spires.

A seven-hour jeep ride from La Paz brought the group to the dusty and lonely mining town of Viloco. Four miles beyond Viloco, the character of the range changed dramatically, and towers of granite could be seen high in the mountains. The first valley past Viloco is the Mocoya Valley, and we based our climbing activities here for the next 13 days. We hoped to establish a number of first ascents, but we weren't sure what to expect. The granite in the area is of exceptionally good quality, but upon closer inspection many of the cracks tend to be discontinuous, flaring, and dirty. Also the south-facing walls, by far the most impressive and potentially unclimbed, saw very little sunlight and were often icy with patches of snow. The rock on the high ridges (generally above 4800m) was amazingly featured with knobs for face climbing, but lacking much for natural protection. Two Argentineans camped in the valley informed us that quite a bit of climbing had been done in these valleys over the last few years by a variety of South American parties.

We were able to climb two towers in the Mocoya Valley. The first was a spire on the west face of what is called Middle Tower (5297m), which we climbed via five pitches of 5.10 to 5.11 wide cracks. The second spire (4796m) was located directly above our camp. Since we found no evidence of any previous ascent, we assumed it to be a first ascent (Urban Dog Spire, 5.10).

The majority of our climbing took place in the Eastern Taruj Umana Valley, the next valley north of our camp. A well-used miners' trail climbs up to the col that separates the valleys, providing easy access to a number of beautiful spires and walls. Referring to names given by the German expedition of 1988, we climbed Pico Penis, several routes on the west side of Grobe Mauer, and Peak Pelao.

Although most of the major lines and peaks have been climbed, the area is a wonderful place to explore, with miles of spires and jagged ridgelines. The valleys are filled with lakes and provide beautiful camping among huge granite boulders. As a note to the new generation of climbers, the bouldering is phenomenal, and we established a number of fine problems in the Mocoya Valley.

During July and August the weather is stable with brilliant blue skies, although the days are short and cold. Local climbers from La Paz suggested April and October as being much warmer months to climb rock in the Quimsa Cruz.

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