

## **Cordillera Carabara Expedition 2011 - Tom Ripley**

After four days acclimatizing in Puno Hamish and Tom arrived in Macusani, the nearest town to the range, to discover that nobody spoke English or understood their limited Spanish. We were lucky to bump into Daniel, a Spanish catholic priest on a year's exchange, who spoke good English. After much explaining he finally understood where we wanted to go. (we had been unable to locate a map to the area in Lima!) He kindly drove us and our gear to the end of the nearest road and arranged for two donkey's to carry all our gear to the edge of Laguna Chambine, where we planned to camp.

After acclimatizing sufficiently and making a reconnaissance of the face we returned to base camp and sat out a period of bad weather. On August 22 we made the first ascent of our main objective the South Face of Chichicapac. The most obvious line up the face was threatened by seracs, so we climbed a direct line up the centre of the face, encountering sustained and insecure mixed climbing, until the top headwall forced us leftwards. A short, but very loose rock chimney led us to the top part of the face. A long tricky pitch, followed by easier but very loose terrain, led to an easy snow slope and the summit plateau.



*South Face of Chichicapac, with the line we took marked in red.*

Having spent ten hours on the face we summited just before five that evening. Anxious to descend in daylight (sunset is at 5:30) we quickly descended the West ridge, before making a short abseil onto a small glacier that lead us to back to our bivouac tent.

Being in the Southern Hemisphere conditions on Chichicapac's south face were similar to those that would be found on a European north face. The majority of the face was mixed climbing, involving powder snow on loose rock. The difficulties were quite sustained and most of the pitches were about Scottish IV/V with a couple of crux pitches of VI. The rock was generally terrible and protection sparse. Our route was 700 metres long with an overall alpine grade of TD.



*Hamish (left) & Tom on Summit of Chichicapac*



*Tom leading low down on the face*

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