

Expedition Tech Week 2015

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Maximo camping in Atacama desert caves. courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Sharp 6000 meter ridge in Bolivia courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Bike stuck in a sand and ice crevasse. courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Maximo at Coropuna, a new 6000m. courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Fueling up at Tolar Grande, Argentina courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Inca ruins at 6730 meter, Llullaillaco, Argentine courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Ammonite fossil found at 5000 meter courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE



Maximo at summit of Bonete Chico, 6750 meter courtesy Maximo Kausch, SOURCE

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Maximo Kausch going for all 6000ers in the Andes

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(Newsdesk) *They are the new homeless: adventurers hitting the road with what little resources they have. Maximo's dream was born on Cho Oyu. It led to a motorbike, forensic altitude mapping, digital route pioneering, peaks with five names and a huge Inca structure found at 6000 meters. During the last year the climber has been on a unique mission in the Andes. Here goes the story in his own words.*

About 1 year ago I started to climb all the 6000ers in the Andes. I had no idea what I was getting into. "There can't be more than 50 x 6000ers in the Andes," I thought to myself. By the time I realized there are 118 such mountains here, it was too late to back out.

Climbed my 59th 6000m peak yesterday (Ed note: the story was submitted mid August). Supposedly, this is already a world record. But one sure thing I've learned during this trip is that the more mountains I climb, the more I realize I've climbed nothing. The higher I get, the further I can see on the horizon where many more mountains ranges show up. It makes me feel very insignificant. I have 57 peaks left in my plan. If I manage to climb them, God knows what then.

The Plan

I think curiosity was my main incentive to climb all these peaks. After leading an expedition to Mt Cho Oyu in Tibet I had this great idea of climbing as many 6000ers as I could but I didn't really know how to approach them.

It took me 3 years just to find out where all the 6000ers are. While in Europe people discuss if some of their mountains are 1 metre higher or lower, in South America we discuss their actual names or 300 metre altitude discrepancies. Most of the South American maps use really old methods and altitudes are mostly wrong. Names also proved to be a challenge. There are cases when 4 or 5 different names are linked to the same mountain.

Because of the unreliable altitudes that were available I had to download gigabytes of NASA data and work on it for months. ASTER and SRTM data helped me a lot to make a list with more reliable altitudes. 3 months, Google Earth and a lot of patience later - all the foot approaches were mapped and ready in my GPS.

All I had to do now was to climb them!

The bike

A motorbike seemed like a great idea to get around except I had not even sat on one before. Learning how to ride a bike on volcanic ash and virgin terrain proved to be one of the greatest challenges of my whole trip. After a number of falls I've learned enough to bike up to an average of 4700 meters. Initially I started climbing four or five 6000ers per week and then moved up to climbing two in one day several times a week. Pretty dangerous game as I had no backup plans.

Water was another problem. I initially had a 20Lt water container attached to the bike but it ended up being too heavy. For about 1 month all my water came from snow from the top of the 6000ers I climbed. It worked well until I failed one of the summits.

Archaeology

One of the most interesting bits of the project was surely the archaeological finds I had at 14 different sites. In one of them we found a 60 square metre Inca structure built at the top of a 6000m peak. Maybe there are mummies under there, I just don't know. Also found a lot of pieces of wood left by Incas 500 years ago. At the southern 6000ers in Argentina and Chile I found some pretty big fossils of 1 foot long sponges, ammonites and other cretaceous sea creatures. All this at 5000 meters and above!

Wikiloc

In return of a great amount of amazing sceneries and landscapes I've seen, I try to pay back by publishing the GPS waypoints and routes so others can come back. All my routes are available at [Wikiloc](#).

Born in Argentina, Himalaya and Andes expedition leader Maximo Kausch spent 9 years in the UK and 10 years in Brazil where he runs his guiding company [GentedeMontanha.com](#) "I'm homeless right now, spending 8 to 9 months/year on high altitudes," Maximo told ExplorersWeb.

#Mountaineering
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