

Bhagirathi III (6454 m.ö.h.)

"**Bhagirathi III - 2000**" is the name of an expedition to Bhagirathi III in the Indian Himalayas. We - Henk Kuiper and Petter From - aim to reach the top by free-climbing the very steep, technically demanding west pillar. The expedition will take place over a period of nearly two months this autumn.



Bhagirathi II, IV, III and I

"After an era of traditional mountaineering and a few big wall sieges with extensive use of artificial climbing techniques, the attempt to completely free climb the west pillar of Bhagirathi III offers a new dimension to Swedish Himalayan expedition climbing. These guys have proved before to be able to handle tough challenges and they will definitely be successful on even this demanding climb."

Göran Kropp

Adventurer, ascents of Mount Everest ('96,'99), K2 ('93)...

"Trying to develop Swedish Himalayan climbing towards international standards myself (Nanga Parbat Winter Expedition, '96), I'm very delighted - as well as proud as a member of the Gothenburg Climbing Club - to see the establishment of this daring Bhagirathi III free climbing project."

Rafael Jensen

Vice president and member of Expedition Committee of the Swedish Mountaineering Federation, ascents of Muztagh Tower ('90), K2 ('93)...

The mountain

Bhagirathi III is one of the impressive peaks of the Garhwal, situated in the Indian Himalayas. With its summit at 6454 meters, it is the 3rd highest peak of the Bhagirathi group.



"Estrella Imposible"

The route

Our objective is the pillar on the left-hand side of the impressive, overhanging west face. The pillar was first climbed in 1984 by a Spanish team. After initial preparations on the lower section, they climbed in capsule style from base to top in a period of 11 days. They named the route "Estrella Imposible" ("Impossible Star") and graded the climbing at ED,VI,A3+. The route follows 1000 meters of vertical granite, followed by a 200-meter section of mixed rock and ice and a top part of steep ice.

The challenge of climbing this mountain lies in the technical difficulty, rather than its height. Contrary to previous ascensionists, we will attempt to freeclimb the route, i.e. not use any points of protection for the actual climbing. This style of climbing is unique both for this route and Swedish expedition climbing.

Since the pillar does not have any ledges to put up a tent, all nights on the mountain will be spent in a portaledge (hanging tent).

The team

- Henk "Huub" Kuiper (34), butch, electronic engineer at Volvo Cars in Gothenburg, 16 years of climbing experience.
- Petter From (26), Swedish, sales manager at High Sport climbing store in Gothenburg, 12 years of climbing experience.

So far, our most demanding alpine route together has been the extremely difficult "Weg durch den Fisch" on the Marmolada south face in the Italian Dolomites. We climbed this 1200 meter long rock route over a period of three days last summer. The route is graded ED+,VII+,A4.

A full story of the climb was published in both the Swedish climbing magazine Bergsport (nr.103) and the Dutch climbing magazine Limits (nr.42, also front cover). Interviews with both of us are published on Internet at www.highsport.se.



Henk "Huub" and Petter

The expedition

We plan to depart from Sweden around August 20th and return two months later. The whole month of September is reserved for climbing. A liaison officer and a group of porters will assist the transportation between Delhi and base camp at the foot of the mountain.

Chance of success

The success of the expedition is highly dependent on the weather situation. At good weather conditions, we estimate our chance of success as high as 90%.

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