

ABAK (3525 Meter)¹

April 25, 2003

Good old Abak!²

I hadn't "done it" in winter for at least 10 years. Lack of partners being, by far the main reason.

Marco D. and I decided to climb Abak and of course ski down before the end of the season. This was about the last weekend that we could do it and still ski all the way down to Shemshak. The Shemshak ski area was already closed but there still was some snow practically all the way down to the hotel.

I had arranged (or thought so) for someone to start the chairlift so that we could start our climb from the top of Shemshak, which would save us abt 1.5 hours of unnecessary climbing - Since there is a chairlift there is no reason not to use it!

But notwithstanding recommendations from my friend Astollah S. who is the number 2 at the ski federation and Ali Bandali who is also a good friend and one of the well known ski instructors of Shemshak, the chairlift could not be started (combination of administrative red tape, plain carelessness and laziness) - next time I think I'll have to go to a higher level, though hopefully not all the way to the president to get it done! That's part of hiking and mountaineering in Iran: Only rely on yourself!

So we spent the night at the Hotel Shemshak, which is terribly rundown but still better than driving the same day from Tehran or sleeping in a tent.

We started at 6 am from the hotel³ and reached the Abak peak 4,5 hours later. As you may be able to guess from the photo there is a lot of ups and downs and crossing of 2 small valleys. The actual vertical climb is about 200 meters more than what it would seem from the figures and quite tiring coming back because of the slanted terrain and having to take off and put on your skis many times because of part of the way being covered with snow and parts with rocks and mud.

It took 3 hours to come down!

Abak takes a lot of effort for the little skiing it offers but the mountain is very beautiful, the snow conditions are at worst good but usually excellent and it is only an hour's drive from Tehran. So all things considered it is a highly recommended tour.

We were back in Amanieh⁴ in time for lunch and more important a well-deserved nap!

Micky Houtcieff

Note: See photos on page 2

¹ According to my GPS. For other details, location, etc. please refer to my report of August 23, 2002

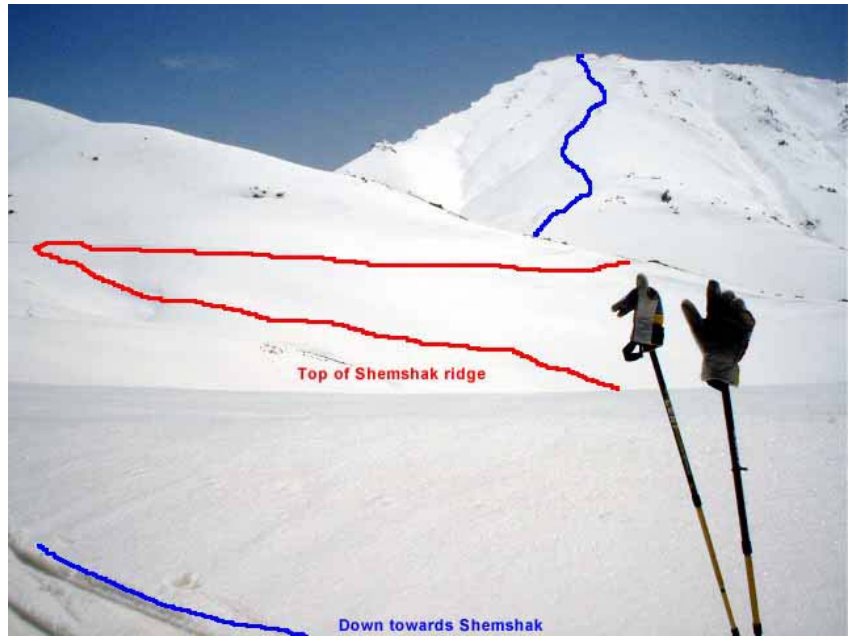
² Please also see my report on Abak last summer.

³ Altitude: 2544 meter.

⁴ Residential area in the North of Tehran.



General view of Shemshak and Abak (2 weeks later).



The way up, (crossing the valleys) in red. The way down, in blue.