

MORO ROCK

Introduction

Moro Rock is a large exfoliating dome hanging over the north side of the Kaweah River drainage below the Giant Forest. Its massive west face captures climbers' attention on the drive up from the southern entrance of the park. While first climbed in 1861, steps were later built on the north ridge and provide a beautiful summit view for visitors and an easy walk off at the end of the day for climbers.

The climbing on Moro is excellent and varied with routes from low 5th class up to 5.12 and anywhere from 40 feet to ten pitches. The west face is 1,000 feet tall and broken by many ledge systems so climbs can be mixed and matched in countless ways. The east face is a bit shorter and the south face is not as steep as the other two but holds several long classic moderates. Portions of the east and south faces have seasonal climbing closures for Peregrine Falcon nesting, please abide by the closures so the whole area doesn't get closed for nesting like Chimney Rocks. Closures are usually from April 1st through August 15th, visit

<http://www.nps.gov/seki/planyourvisit/rockclimb.htm> for more info.

Though the climbing is superb, Moro Rock is not the place to push your limits. Some climbs are very safe and will take all the gear you have, but others rely on 30 year old button heads or knobs that are no longer there. It is up to you to figure out which is which. Even the more user friendly routes can still have serious sections so please take care while exploring the featured and solid granite on Moro Rock. Another objective hazard is the summit viewing platform. I have nearly been hit by several objects, including a full water bottle that started 500 feet above. Wear a helmet!

Directions

Coming from the north or south simply make your way to the Giant Forest and take the road near the museum to Moro Rock/Crescent Meadow. In the summer or on busy weekends the road may be closed to private vehicles during daytime hours, in which case you can park by the museum and take the shuttle out to Moro Rock. If you arrive before or after the shuttle hours you can usually drive out in your vehicle. If you take the shuttle in and miss the last one out you will have to walk almost two miles back to your car.

Special Note on Moro Topos

Moro Rock is a large and complex formation. The topos show major features but not a lot of detail. For example, you can park a school bus on some of the ledges shown but many smaller features are not drawn in. Also, I have not climbed every pitch so do not count on the specifics such as bolt counts or pitch lengths. Use this as a guide to get you to the climbs but you must rely on route finding skills or magic fairy dust to follow them!

MORO ROCK - SOUTH FACE (Update 6/12/2016)

Introduction

The south face of Moro is much narrower than you might expect and it looks almost like an egg with the giant Jungle Ledge cutting across its lower third. Although there aren't as many established routes as there are on the other aspects, the south face has the most popular multipitch route on the formation, the South Face. As with the west face, routes can be combined. A popular combination is to climb South Cracks and finish on South Face. One bonus to the south face is that the danger of falling objects is minimal because there are a few hundred feet of ridge walking to get to the railing at the top of the stairs. I can't think of anything else to say? It's fun!

Directions

From the parking lot, start down the gully on the east side of Moro. The routes start after you begin to go uphill and curve around to the base of the south face. If you see my orange Nalgene water bottle then you accidentally fell way down the gully to the creek and should call for help.



2nd Class

6

7

8

Jungle Ledge

1

2

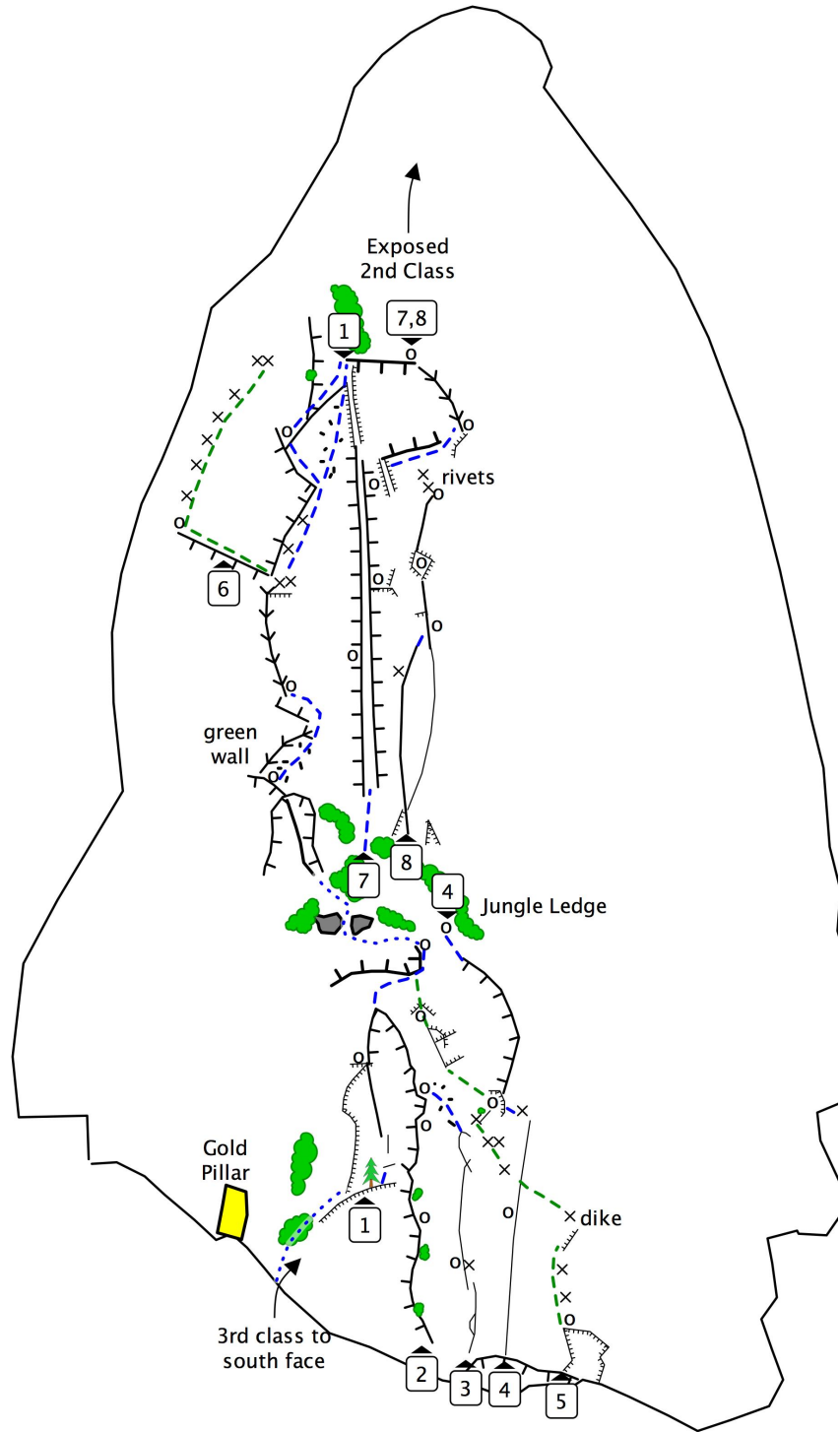
3

4

5

- 1. South Face 5.8
- 2. South Corner 5.8
- 3. South Cracks 5.9
- 4. One Thin Line 5.10
- 5. Toeing The Line 5.10b
- 6. Art of Deception 5.10+
- 7. South Chimney 5.10b
- 8. Slowburn 5.10d A1

Photo: Rene' Ardesch



Exposed 2nd Class

1

7,8

6

7

8

4

Jungle Ledge

Gold Pillar

1

2

3

4

5

3rd class to south face

dike

rivets

green wall

MORO ROCK - SOUTH FACE

1. **5.8** 7 pitches **South Face** *Small to 3"*

P1 Once below the south face there is a block to stand on for a view. From here you can see the obvious cracks of South Cracks and the right facing South Corner. Continue along the base and head up a gully before you get to the gold pillar. After glimbling through a tree there is a small ledge that goes out right with a tree, start here. Regular start goes up the face to the right of the tree, into a crack which transfers into another crack and ends at a ledge. Althernate start goes up the thin left facing corners to the left of the tree and ends at the same ledge. Both are 5.8.

P2 Climb the easy and clean open book, go up the slabs above and traverse around the right side of the blocky roof to get to Jungle ledge.

-Once on Jungle Ledge, move the belay by climbing between to large boulder/blocks and heading up and left towards the green overhanging wall.

P3 Continue up the blocks to a ledge next to the green wall with knobs above.

P4 Climb up the knobs and go around the roof on its right. Traverse back left above the roof to the main chimney/crack system.

P5 Up the crack system until you see a stance with a two bolt belay off to the right.

P6 Run it out on the slabs above, past two new bolts, place some small gear in a seam on the right, then make an exposed move up and left onto a sloping ramp that looks sort of like a chimney on its side. Belay at the base of a crack that goes up and right.

Alternative 5.9 finish is to continue up steep knobs after the runout slab instead of going left onto the ramp.

P7 Follow the crack that goes up and right. Either follow it into the bushes and easier terrain or divert up and left into a large left facing corner with a small tree. Both finishes end on the ridge and you can walk from there.

FA: Carl Jensen, Arthur Johnson, Howard Koster 1939

2. **5.8** 3 pitches **South Corner** *Small to 3" and one 6"*

P1-3 Climb the obvious right facing corner on the south face up to the slabs and then Jungle Ledge.

FA: Unknown

3. **5.9** 3 pitches **South Cracks** *Small to 3"*

P1 Climb the curving crack, past a pod, transfer to the other crack and belay next to the bolt.

P2 Continue following the cracks until they face, then climb knobs up and left to the corner.

P3 Climb up the corner and cross the slabs to connect with the South Face at Jungle Ledge.

FA: Unknown

4. **5.10** 3 pitches **One Thin Line** *Lots of small gear and some up to 3"*

P1 The obvious long, straight and thin crack to the right of South Cracks. Starts next to a stump up on the face. Follow the crack and belay about halfway.

P2 Go to the end of the crack, clip one bolt and go up and left to a stance belay.

P3 Follow the right facing corner out right and up to Jungle Ledge.

FA: Dave Hickey, James Cook 9/87

5. **5.10b** 5ish pitches **Toeing The Line** *Small to 3" and runners for bolts*

P1 Shot pitch onto the blocky ledge towards the right of the base of the south face. The Nicento variation climbs the right facing corner on the right side of the blocky ledge.

P2 Two bolts into a right facing corner that ends at a dike. Go left, clip a bolt and cross over the thin crack of One Thin Line, clip another bolt and go up to a two bolt anchor.

P3 Another bolt into a thin right sloping crack with a bush that ends at the same stance belay as P2 of One Thin Line.

P4 Up and left along a crack that goes next to some roofs. Belay under the last arching roof.

P5 Up to Jungle Ledge.

FA: Art DeGoede, Mike Daly 7/90

6. **5.10+** 2 pitches **Art of Deception** *5 bolts and some small gear. Possibly a bolted anchor.*

P1 From the only bolted belay on the South Face route (P5), go out left on the ledge almost onto the west face of Moro.

P2 Follow the bolts and face climb to the anchor, 3rd class off.

FA: Jeff Scheuerell, Art DeGoede, Dave Jop

7. **5.10b** 5 pitches **South Chimney** *Small to 6"*

P1 From Jungle Ledge go up the big chimney in the headwall. Belay on left.

P2 Continue up the chimey to a ledge on top of a pillar on the right.

P3 Up the chimney, traverse out right below the big roof and belay next to a small chimney.

P4 Traverse right under the roof until a crack system goes up and left.

P5 Follow the crack system up onto the bushy ledge.

FA: Carl Jensen, Arthur Johnson, Howard Koster 1939 as the original finish to South Face

8. **5.10d A1** 5 pitches *Small to 4" and some rivet hangers*

P1 From Jungle Ledge go up the grassy crack to the right of South Chimney. At its top, step right into another crack and a stance belay.

P2 Climb up the crack into an alcove.

P3 A 4" crack goe up. Belay at the top of the crack before the rivets.

P4 The only aid move. Up a couple rivets and climb under the big roof. Traverse right until a crack system goes up and left.

P5 Follow the crack system up and left to the bushy ledge.

FA Mike Daly, James Cook 8/89