

CHIMNEY ROCKS

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Intro

The Chimney Rocks area is comprised of roughly six granite formations with routes from 1 pitch to 700 feet. There are dozens of beautiful climbs with everything from clean cracks to thin slab, and even some knobs. Many routes are trad, but close to 20 of the routes on Crystal Wall are bolted so there is something for everyone.

Chimney Spire, the most popular formation, has at least thirteen routes of it's own, with Duet (5.8++) being the most popular. The other formations include Chimney Rock, Crystal Wall, Dinner Wall, The Monk, Moccasin Ridge, and Sasquatch Spire. The area has a sporadic first ascent record as attention grew and waned over the years. Many of the routes were pioneered by employees at a nearby Christian Camp that is now closed.

Although the area has some of the best, and most easily accessed, climbing in SEKI, it only has a short window when it is open. The dirt road accessing the formations closes with the first snow and the entire area is closed during peregrine nesting season from April 1st to August 15th (or until nesting has ended). It is still possible to ski the road when the gates are closed but please do not enter the area during the falcon closure. Crystal Wall used to remain open year-round but climbers abused the privilege and went into closed areas, resulting in a complete seasonal shutdown of the area. Work is being done to regain the trust of the forest service so please do not jeopardize access for everyone. For closure updates and information you can reach Sequoia National Forest wildlife biologist Jeff Cordes at (559) 338-2251 x380.

Directions

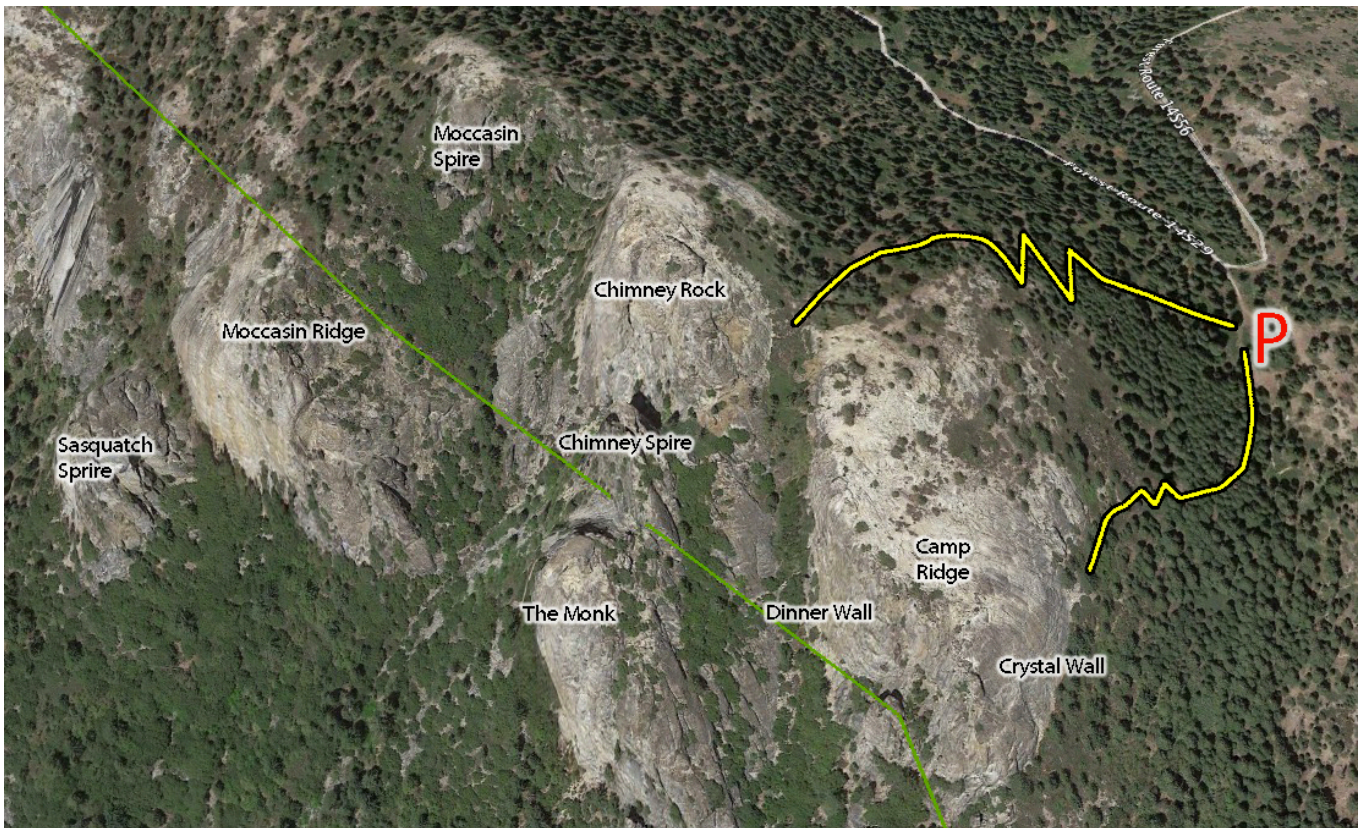
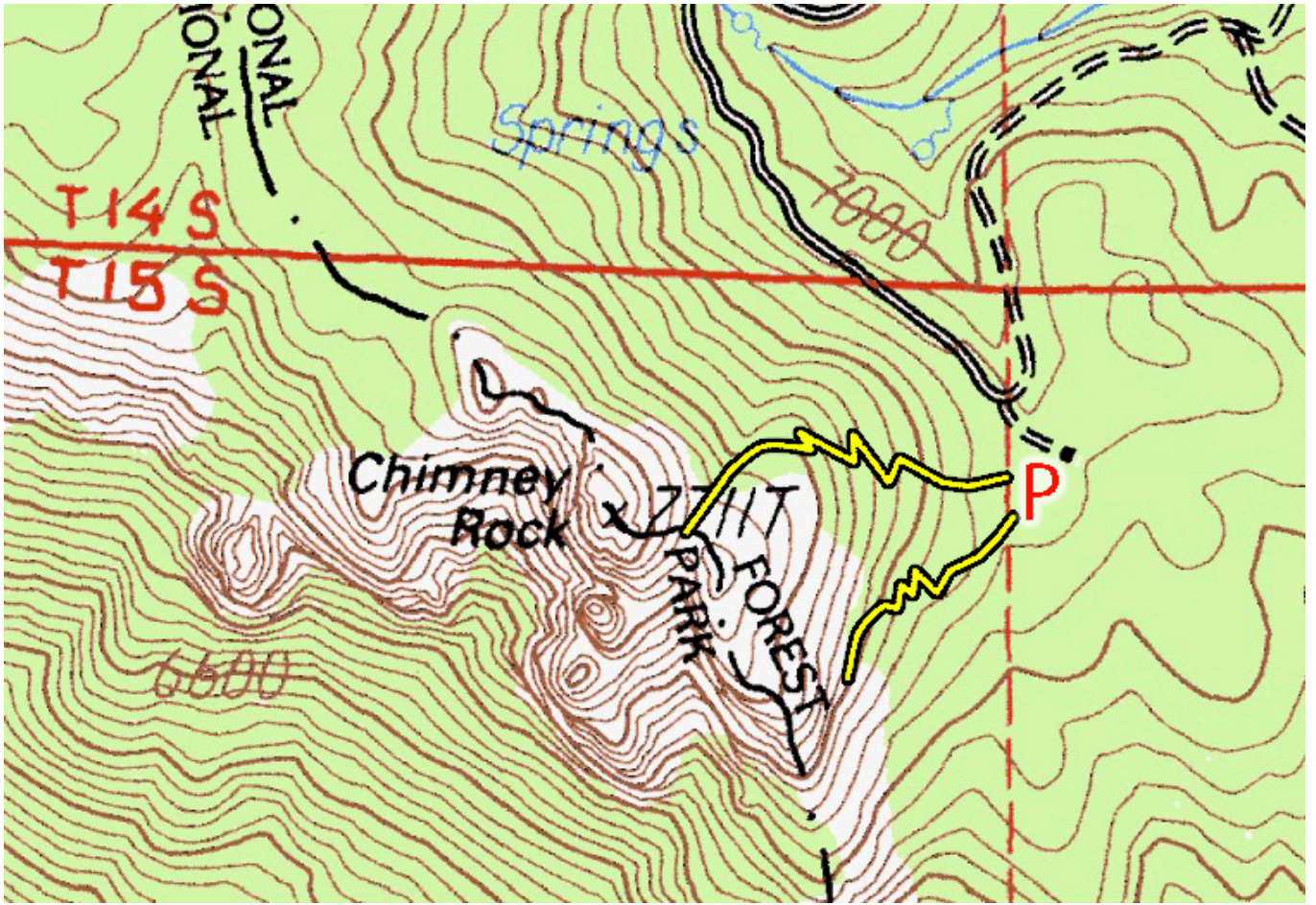
From Fresno take highway 180 east into Kings Canyon National Park. From Visalia take highway 198 east into Sequoia National Park. The two highways are connected and called the Generals Highway within the parks,

From the Generals Highway between the Big Baldy trailhead and the Stony Creek Lodge, take Road 14S29 West. There is a sign that reads "National Forest Organizational Camps, San Joaquin Far Horizons." Follow the main road and signs for about four miles until the road makes a hard left down the hill and begins to worsen. Just before this turn a spur continues off the right side of the road to the parking area.

At this point you can take a trail (by the old sign post) south to approach via Crystal Wall (10 min), or West to approach via Camp Ridge to the notch above Chimney Rock Spire (20 min). The trail West leaves from the north side of a downed tree that blocks part of the loop at the end of the road. The two trails can be connected by scrambling along the north side of Crystal Wall. Follow the path of least resistance to other formations, which are usually accessed from the top.

See the maps for more detail and be sure to pay attention on the approach. Although it's short and looks easy, several people have gotten lost on the way back to the car and been benighted.



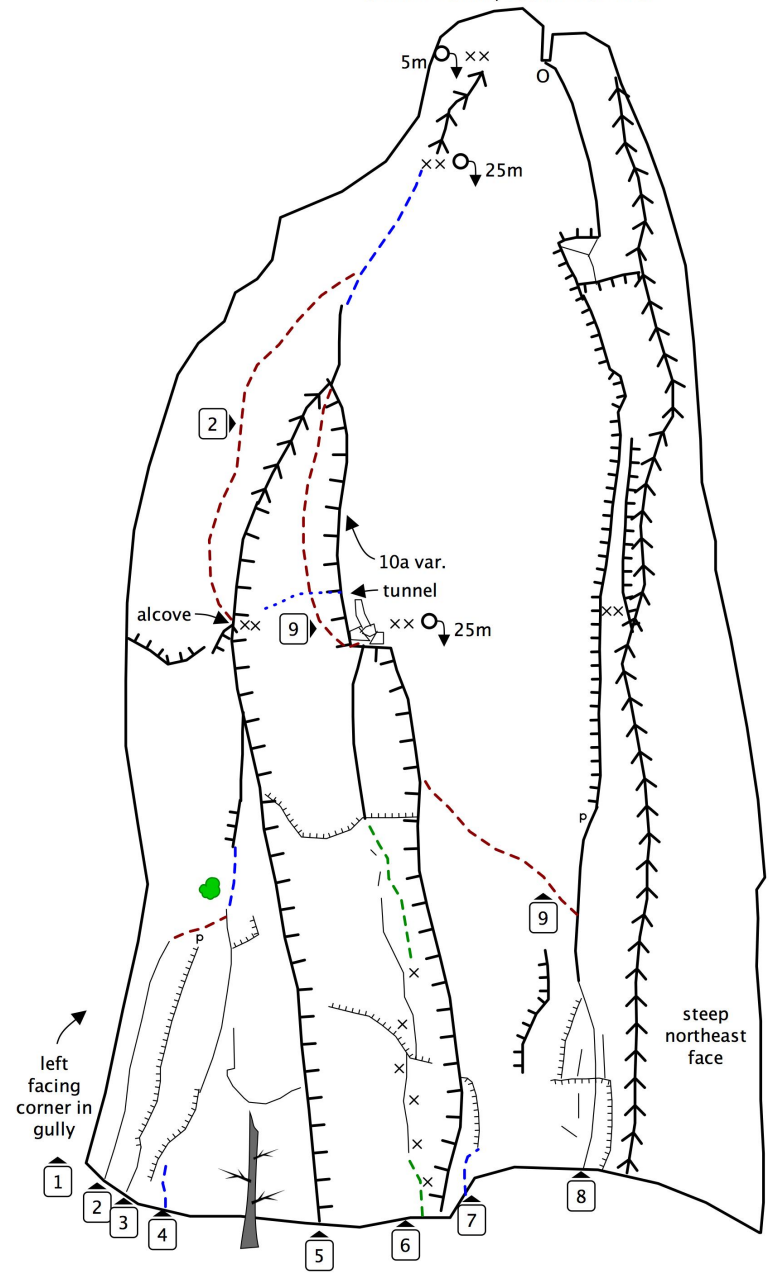


Chimney Spire, Southeast Face

1. Face Down and Spread 'Em 5.12c
2. Healing the Child 5.10+
3. Chief Cornerstone 5.10a
4. Regular Route (Beckey Route) 5.10b
5. Only the Good 5.10+
6. A Few Good Men 5.11
7. Duet 5.8++ or 5.10a
8. Wall of Early Morning Fright 5.9
9. East Face Escape



CHIMNEY SPIRE, SOUTHEAST FACE



Map with text by [unreadable]

CHIMNEY ROCKS – CHIMNEY SPIRE, SOUTHEAST FACE (Updated 10/30/2018)

This is the first part of the spire seen from the upper approach trail described in the introduction. Take the use trail towards the giant right facing corner of Duet, not down the gully between Chimney Spire and Chimney Rock.

All routes that end on the summit can be rapped with one 60m rope down Duet. See topo.

Note on the steep northeast face: Two of the three one pitch crack climbs on this face disappeared with a rock fall sometime around 2011. There are crack systems and the occasional bolt or old webbing stuck high on this wall. If you have current info on this wall please let me know. Unless it's a secret and you're mean, then you don't have to share ☺

1. **5.12c** 1 pitch **Face Down and Spread 'Em** *Small to hand size gear, a couple bolts.*
Down the 4th class gully on the SW side there is a short left facing dihedral with bolted anchors at the top. Climb it!
FA: Vaino and Toivo Kovas, 1986
2. **5.10+** 2 pitches **Healing the Child** *Small and medium gear.*
P1 At the far left side of the face is a thin crack. Climb it until the gear runs out, then work right to the big corner system and up to bolted anchors in an alcove.
P2 Climb up and left from the alcove on the featured face, finding sparse pro among the knobs and shallow cracks.
FA: Will Toms
3. **5.10a** 1 pitch **Chief Cornerstone** *Small and medium gear.*
As you walk left from the approach trail, past the giant left facing corner and just past the undercling at the start of the Regular Route there is a thin crack. Start in the crack, then move right into a small dihedral. Follow it as far as you can until moving right to join other routes in the giant corner system and end in the alcove.
FA: Jolley, Siebert, 1979
4. **5.10b** 2 pitches **Regular Route (Beckey Route)** *Mostly finger size gear with a few hand size.*
P1 10-15 feet left of the giant left facing corner is a down/right facing small undercling/corner. Work into that and then follow finger cracks all the way to the main corner and up into the alcove with anchors.
P2 Stem and work up between the big pillar and the main wall, at the top of the pillar climb up the main face to bolted anchors. Another 20 feet of exposed 4th class reaches the anchors on the summit.
FA: Unknown, probably not Fred Beckey
5. **5.10+** 1 pitch **Only the Good** *Gear from small to 3" with doubles of 1-3".*
Follow the huge left facing corner in the middle of the face up to the anchors in the alcove.
FA: Rick Mosher
6. **5.11** 1 pitch **A Few Good Men** *6 (maybe more) bolts and small gear.*
A few feet left of the giant right facing corner that marks the Duet route a string of bolts follows a discontinuous crack through small overhangs. Follow the bolts and then a larger crack onto the big ledge with blocks.
FA: Barry Chambers, John Garrison, Frank Oliveira, 1993
7. **5.8++ or 5.10a** 2 pitches **Duet** *Singles up to 4" and nuts, more if you're nervous.*
P1 Start near the base of the giant right facing corner. Climb the right side of a little flake/block thing and then work left into the main corner. Follow the corner (crux) all the way to the ledge with a bolted anchor.
P2 Standard way is to tunnel behind the big pillar and move the belay to another bolted anchor. Then join the Regular Route and stem up the corner and follow the face to another bolted anchor. The 5.10a variation stems up the right side of the pillar directly above the first anchor. From the end of this pitch another 20 feet of 4th class lead to anchors on the summit.
FA: Rick Mosher

8. **5.9** 2 pitches **Wall of Early Morning Fright** *Gear up to 5''*.
P1 The obvious big crack system up the right side of this face. Climb cracks, corners and blocks aiming for the obvious crack system above. Follow the cracks to the bolted anchor at the bottom of the squeeze chimney.
P2 Climb the squeeze then stay in the main system up and left. Chimney out of a little alcove (optional belay) and follow the path of least resistance to the notch on the summit.
FA: Dave Willis, Dan Price, 1974. FFA: Bruce Hendricks, Slick Watts, 1980
9. **5.8** 2 pitches **East Face Escape** *Gear up to 3''*.
P1 Start up Wall of Early Morning Fright on the right side of the face. After 40 feet, traverse left under the steep headwall to the big dihedral of Duet and follow it to the big ledge.
P2 Go to the far left end of the ledge and climb the arête, eventually onto the main wall and to the same anchor near the summit as Duet.
FA: Dave Willis, 1975. FFA: P. Willis, 1976

CHIMNEY ROCKS – CHIMNEY SPIRE, NORTHWEST FACE

This is the tallest part of the formation. To reach it take the upper approach as described in the introduction. Once you're near the spire head down the gully between the spire and Chimney Rock. After climbing descend by rappelling Duet as seen on the SE face topo.

Note on the steep northeast face: Two of the three one pitch crack climbs on this face disappeared with a rock fall sometime around 2011. There are crack systems and the occasional bolt or old webbing stuck high on this wall. If you have current info on this wall please let me know. Unless it's a secret and you're mean, then you don't have to share ☺

1. **5.10d** 4 pitches **Kitty From Hell**
Doubles to 4" and nuts.
P1 As you head down the gully look for a very obvious clean crack in a green block low on the spire. Climb the corner below it, through the widening crack and onto a ledge with a single bolt and small gear for an anchor.
P2 Climb past the bolt and step left around the corner to a finger crack. Climb the finger crack and then exit right into an alcove with large crystals.
P3 Climb through the crystals and follow the crack until stepping right onto a nice belay ledge.
P4 Follow the obvious crack system up and right towards a corner, over a chockstone, and into the notch in the summit.
FA: Herb Laeger, Eric Rhicard, 1989.
2. **5.11c** 5 pitches **Power Crystal**
Unknown gear.
Supposedly this route ascends cracks somewhere to the right of Kitty From Hell, but I have not found this route or know anyone who has. It's supposed to be approached by traversing ledges from the west gully. I did see a bolt out to the right of Kitty From Hell so there's a route there somewhere.
FA: Ron Carson, Vaino Kodas, 1987

