

# Yosemite Ultra Classics

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S U P E R T O P O S

**Version 3.0**

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Not mentioned individually here are all the first ascensionists who established these wonderful routes, past guidebook authors, Yosemite historians, online forums, emails, and conversation in The Café. In addition, we acknowledge the hard work the following organizations do to improve and preserve the Yosemite climbing experience: Climb For Yosemite, American Alpine Club, American Safe Climbing Association, and the Access Fund. Please support them!



# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	11	<b>North Dome</b>	168
Ratings	18	South Face, 5.8	169
Free Climbing Ratings	19	Crest Jewel, 5.10a	171
Minimize Your Impact	22	<b>Washington Column</b>	120
Cam sizes by brand	32	Astroman, 5.11c	120
Understanding the maps	33	<b>North Dome Gully</b>	135
Yosemite overview maps	34	<b>Half Dome</b>	140
<b>Cookie Cliff</b>	37	Snake Dike, 5.7 R	141
<b>Pat and Jack Pinnacle</b>	40	<b>Sentinel Rock</b>	140
<b>Knob Hill</b>	47	Steck Salathé, 5.10b	141
<b>Reed's Pinnacle Area</b>	53	<b>Lower Cathedral Spire</b>	140
<b>El Capitan</b>	82	South by Southwest, 5.11a	141
East Buttress, 5.10b	83	<b>Higher Cathedral Spire</b>	146
<b>El Capitan Base</b>	57	Regular Route, 5.9	147
<b>Schultz's Ridge</b>	82	<b>Higher Cathedral Rock</b>	168
The Moratorium, 5.11b	83	Braille Book, 5.8	169
<b>Manure Pile Buttress</b>	66	Northeast Buttress, 5.9	171
<b>Swan Slab</b>	68	<b>Middle Cathedral Rock</b>	174
<b>Five Open Books</b>	68	East Buttress, 5.10c or 5.9 A0	174
<b>Sunnyside Bench</b>	74	Kor-Beck, 5.9	176
<b>Church Bowl</b>	82	Central Pillar of Frenzy, 5.9	179
<b>Royal Arches Area</b>	174	DNB, 5.11 or 5.10 A0 R	180
Super Slide, 5.9	174	<b>The Rostrum</b>	188
Serenity Crack, 5.10d	176	North Face, 5.11c	189
Sons of Yesterday, 5.10a	179		
Royal Arches, 5.10b or 5.7 A0	180		
Arches Terrace, 5.8 R	182		

## Warning!

**Climbing is an inherently dangerous sport in which severe injuries or death may occur. Relying on the information in this book may increase the danger.**

When climbing you can only rely on your skill, training, experience and conditioning. **If you have any doubts as to your ability to safely climb any route in this guide, do not try it.**

This book is neither a professional climbing instructor nor a substitute for one. **It is not an instructional book. Do not use it as one.** It contains information that is nothing more than a compilation of opinions about climbing in Yosemite Valley. **These opinions are neither facts nor promises.** Treat the information as opinions and nothing more. Do not substitute these opinions for your own common sense and experience.

### Assumption of Risk

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There may be errors in this book resulting from the mistakes of the authors and/or the people with whom they consulted. The information was gathered from a variety of sources, which may not have been independently verified. Those who provided the information may have made mistakes in their descriptions. The authors may have made mistakes in their conveyance of the information in this book. **The authors cannot, therefore, guarantee the correctness of any of the information contained in this book.** The topographical maps, the photo-diagrams, the difficulty ratings, the protection ratings, the approach and/or descent information, the suggestions about equipment and other matters may be incorrect or misleading. Fixed protection may be absent, unreliable, or misplaced. **You must keep in mind that the information in this book may be erroneous, so use your own judgement when choosing, approaching, climbing, or descending from a route described in this book.**

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## ACCESS: It's every climber's concern

The Access Fund, a national, non-profit climbers' organization, works to keep climbing areas open and to conserve the climbing environment. Need help with closures? Land acquisition? Legal or land management issues? Funding for trails and other projects? Starting a local climbers' group? CALL US!

Climbers can help preserve access by being committed to leaving the environment in its natural state. Here are some simple guidelines:

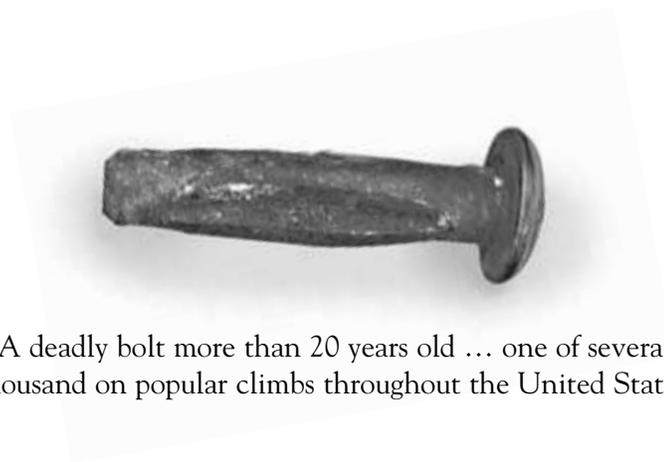
- **ASPIRE TO CLIMB WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE**, especially in environmentally sensitive areas like caves. Chalk can make a significant impact on dark and porous rock—don't use it around historic rock art. Pick up litter, and leave trees and plants intact.
- **DISPOSE OF HUMAN WASTE PROPERLY.** Use toilets whenever possible. If toilets are not available, dig a "cat hole" at least six inches deep and 200 feet from any water, trails, campsites, or the base of climbs. *Always pack out toilet paper.* On big wall routes, use a "poop tube" and carry waste up and off with you (the old "bag toss" is now illegal in many areas).
- **USE EXISTING TRAILS.** Cutting across switchbacks causes erosion. When walking off-trail, tread lightly, especially in the desert where cryptogamic soils (usually a dark crust) take thousands of years to form and are easily damaged. Be aware that "rim ecologies" (the clifftop) are often highly sensitive to disturbance.
- **BE DISCREET WITH FIXED ANCHORS.** *Bolts are controversial and are not a convenience—don't place them unless they are really necessary.* Camouflage all anchors. Remove unsightly slings from rappel stations (better to use steel chain or welded cold shuts). Bolts sometimes can be used proactively to protect fragile resources—consult with your local land manager.
- **RESPECT THE RULES** and speak up when other climbers don't. Expect restrictions in designated wilderness areas, rock art sites, caves, and in sensitive wildlife areas such as nesting sites for birds of prey. *Power drills are illegal in wilderness areas and all national parks.*
- **PARK AND CAMP IN DESIGNATED AREAS.** Some climbing areas require a permit for overnight camping.
- **MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE.** Leave the boom box and day-glo clothing at home. The less climbers are seen and heard, the better.
- **RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY.** Be courteous to land owners. Don't climb where you're not wanted.
- **JOIN THE ACCESS FUND.** To become a member, make a tax-deductible donation of \$25.

### THE ACCESS FUND

*Keeping climbing areas open and  
conserving the climbing environment*

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A deadly bolt more than 20 years old ... one of several thousand on popular climbs throughout the United States.



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We need YOUR help. The American Safe Climbing Association has helped replace more than 3,000 bolts throughout the country and over 1,300 in Yosemite Valley alone. We estimate that there are more than 20,000 bad bolts remaining on popular climbs today. Your \$50 donation will make at least one route safe . . . and that one route could be the next one you climb. The ASCA would like to get there before you do.

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 Phone 650-843-1473 [www.safeclimbing.org](http://www.safeclimbing.org)

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FOR CURRENT ROUTE INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.SUPERTOPO.COM](http://WWW.SUPERTOPO.COM)

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## Introduction

by Chris McNamara

Yosemite is much more than a valley with 3000-foot rock walls and incredible climbing. It is an outlet for the energies of the world's most passionate and adventurous people. Yosemite inspires the souls of climbers and non-climbers to reach for something beyond themselves and to travel to a place—physical and mental—where they have never been before. Few climbers can resist Yosemite; nearly every climber who has the opportunity to get to Yosemite manages to make the trip.

The first visit to Yosemite is overwhelming—there's so much rock on an incomparable scale. First, the big walls dominate your view: El Capitan, Half Dome, and Sentinel. They seem too massive to be of this world, let alone climbable. Next, you look at all the small cliffs between their giant neighbors. Wait a minute . . . those "small" cliffs are more than 500 feet high! Is this place real? It's all a bit hard to comprehend at first. There is little to which you can compare Yosemite's walls other than tall buildings, which isn't much of a comparison. All this rock of such unfathomable size fills you with both fear and anticipation. Yet as daunting as the rock faces in Yosemite appear to be, they scream to be climbed. And that's why you've come here.

### Yosemite Climbing Skills

At first, Yosemite climbs feel weird and insecure. They demand strength and technique not easily acquired at your local gym or crag. The slick, glacier-polished rock has few handholds. Instead, you jam your hands and feet in cracks and smear your feet on, well, sometimes on nothing. There is more balance and subtlety involved

than brute strength. When your natural instinct is to grab and pull, often you need to relax and balance.

At first, don't be surprised if you find yourself yelling down to your partner, "This 5.9 feels like 5.11!" The good news is that Yosemite climbs are within your grasp—they just take extra patience and resolve. Take solace in the fact that all new Yosemite climbers get humbled at some point but they eventually develop the subtle skills necessary to move up Yosemite granite. The more time you spend on the rock and the more technique you build, the more climbing opens up to you. Suddenly the thousand-foot-tall walls shrink a little and don't seem as intimidating. Before too long you're planning your ascent of The Nose of El Cap.

Unfortunately, there are few easy climbs to introduce you to Yosemite climbing. We searched the Park for every easy and moderate route worth climbing and put them in this book. However, there still isn't much at the lower end of the spectrum. If you're looking for 5.7 and easier climbs, be prepared to bunch up on a few crowded routes. It's not until you climb 5.8 and harder that your options start opening up in Yosemite. If you cannot lead 5.8 or harder, it's a good idea to climb with someone who is familiar with the area and can give you pointers, set up topropes, and lead you up multi-pitch routes.

Most climbing in Yosemite is traditional climbing where you climb cracks and place your own gear. But the crack technique here is difficult, and it's not an ideal place to learn. It is best to have your gear-placing, anchor-setting, and rope-managing skills dialed before visiting. Your best bet is to start top roping the very lowest grades of cracks. Once familiar with the rock, try out some one-pitch leads and then move on to the multi-pitch climbs.

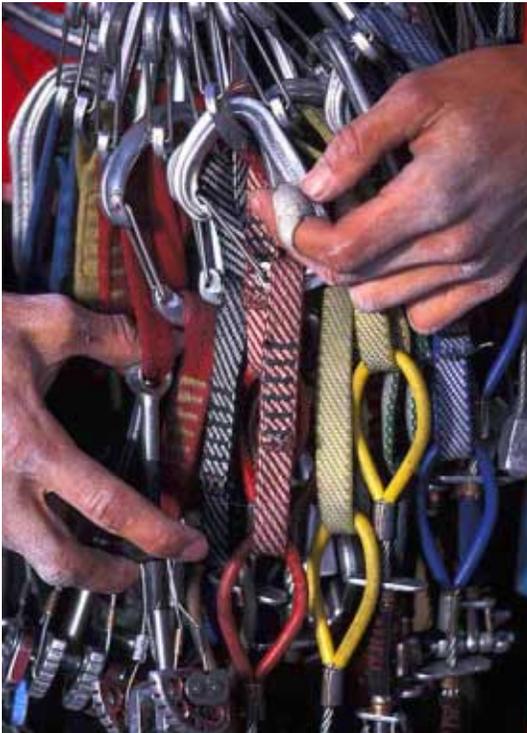
Overall, Yosemite is not a great sport climbing destination, but we highlight about 40 well-bolted climbs, mostly in the 5.10 and 5.11 range. In general, most bolted climbs easier than 5.10 are runout except for about ten well-bolted 5.8 and 5.9 routes in this book.

## Equipment

It's hard to climb in Yosemite without a full trad rack of cams from .5-4" and two sets of stoppers. For the bigger cracks (1-4") almost any brand of cam will do. For the thin pin-scarred cracks, Aliens work best. On most climbs you will also want about eight quickdraws and eight slings to reduce rope drag because many pitches wander. A cordalette is useful for equalizing gear in a natural belay.

Most pitches in Yosemite are 90 to 130 feet long so a 50m rope works fine. However, a 10mm x 60m rope has become the Yosemite standard because it allows you to link pitches and it gives you more options for setting up topropes at the crags. For some crags and most multi-pitch routes where you must descend by rappel, you will need a second rope to get down. (8mm is a good diameter).

On long routes, avoid the hassle of climbing with a pack by using a Camelback and clipping your lightweight hiking shoes to your harness. The Camelback holds enough water for most long climbs as well as space for a few essentials such as food, a small LED headlamp, super-compact rain shell, sunscreen, and cell phone.



Corey Rich

## Anchor Conditions

Since 1997, the American Safe Climbing Association has replaced more than 1,300 bolts in Yosemite Valley. While most popular climbs now have safe bolts, be aware that some bad bolts remain. View which routes the ASCA has replaced at the ASCA web site, [www.safeclimbing.org](http://www.safeclimbing.org) and please make a tax-deductible donation. Even a mere five dollars will replace at least one bolt. And that bad bolt could be the one that blows on somebody!

## Essential Yosemite Beta

Below we list some fundamental information for planning a trip to Yosemite. However, for more updated and extensive information you should visit the Yosemite Beta Page on the SuperTopo web site: [www.supertopo.com/climbingareas/yosemite.html](http://www.supertopo.com/climbingareas/yosemite.html)

## Getting There

### Air Travel

The closest major international airports are Oakland International (3.5-hour drive) and San Francisco International (4-hour drive). Of the two, Oakland is preferred because it's less chaotic and 30 minutes closer to Yosemite. Sacramento International is also a 4-hour drive from Yosemite but has fewer connecting flights. Fresno Yosemite International is only a 3-hour drive but offers the fewest flights. Since all of these airports are about the same distance from Yosemite, shop around for the best fares. Some climbers fly into Los Angeles International, which is a 7-hour drive to Yosemite.

### Train Travel

The train is not the fastest way to Yosemite but it's a cool way to travel. From Emeryville (a 20-minute bus ride from San Francisco) take Amtrak to Merced and board the Via Bus to Yosemite. There are three runs from Merced in the morning and one at 5:25 P.M. The cost is \$20 round trip from Merced to Yosemite. From Los Angeles, Amtrak has a bus to Bakersfield that connects with a train to Merced. From there take the Via Bus to Yosemite.

**Bus Travel**

Short of having a car, the bus is the best way to get from a major airport to Yosemite. From Oakland, San Francisco, or Los Angeles take the Greyhound Bus to Merced and then the Via Bus to Yosemite. Plan a full day of travel if riding the bus. From June to November you can only reach Yosemite from Mammoth by the YARTS bus.

**Car Travel**

There are four state highways that access Yosemite: 120 from the west, 120 from the east, 140 from the west, and 41 from the southwest. The fastest access from the San Francisco Bay Area is 120. Highway 140 is the best option if coming from Los Angeles or Fresno. Highway 140 is also the lowest elevation road and offers the best winter access if 120 and 41 have chain controls (chains are rarely required on 140).

Highway 120 from the east (aka The Tioga Pass Road) offers the best summertime access from Bishop, Utah, Nevada, and eastern states. However, this road closes after the first major winter storm (usually in November) and doesn't open until the snow melts (usually late May). To access Yosemite from the east in winter, you must get to the west side access roads by driving north through Tahoe or south through Bakersfield.

Rent a car at any airport or major city. International climbers who stay in the United States for more than a month often buy a used car in San Francisco or Los Angeles and sell it (or scrap it) at the end of their trip. To find a cheap car, look in the local papers or on [www.craigslist.org](http://www.craigslist.org).

Many people stay in Yosemite without a car. Renting a car is expensive and it's possible to reach most climbs by the free park shuttle bus. However, the shuttle does not serve areas west of Camp 4, including El Capitan, Leaning Tower, Cookie Cliff, and Reeds Pinnacle. To reach these areas without a car, hitchhike or ride a bike.

NOTE: Major changes are planned for Yosemite that will greatly affect transportation inside the Valley. Check the SuperTopo web site for the most current information on changing car restrictions and bus routes.

**Driving times and distances to Yosemite Valley**

From	Time (hours)	Distance (miles)
Boulder, CO*	20:00	1,254
Fresno, CA	2:20	90
Truckee, CA	4:00	240
Los Angeles, CA	6:00	311
Mammoth, CA*	2:30	95
Oakland, CA	4:00	172
Sacramento, CA	4:00	174
Salt Lake City, UT*	12:00	707
San Francisco, CA	4:00	192
Tuolumne Meadows	1:30	60

\*Driving times are 2 to 4 hours longer when Tioga pass is closed, usually from November to May.

**When to Climb**

Yosemite has some of the best weather of any climbing area in the United States, but nasty storms occur throughout the year. Because the climbs start from elevations between 2,800 and 7,500 feet, there is usually some place with good climbing temperatures most of the year. Spring and fall have the best climbing weather. Summer cragging is usually uncomfortably hot but the longer and higher routes can be cool enough. Winter can have good climbing weather but can also have months of severe Sierra storms. A dry November is our favorite time in Yosemite—perfect temps in the sun and no crowds. For current road and weather conditions call 209-372-0200 AND check the many online forecasts.

**Seasons**

**November–March** The Valley empties of climbers and tourists, which creates a more pristine setting and unspoiled feel in the Valley. During this time there is usually an equal number of clear and stormy days. Most of the long routes at higher elevations are too wet or cold, but there are many sunny and dry cragging areas, mainly west of the Highway 140/120 junction in Lower Merced Canyon. When bad weather rolls in, things get nasty very quickly. Pacific storms usually bring three days of heavy snow or



rain but can last up to a week or longer. Usually it only takes a day for most sunny crags to dry out after a storm. If a two-week storm system rolls in, it's time to ski or snowboard at Badger Pass in Yosemite or head to Joshua Tree. If camping in the Valley during the winter, prepare for long cold nights.

**April–May 15** Walls and the Valley are still uncrowded. It's warmer, but there is the same 50/50 chance of getting either good or miserable weather. If you are traveling from far away this is a risky time to visit, especially if you only have a week or less of vacation. Most of the long climbs are still too wet or cold, but the crags are dry.

**May 15–June** Perfect weather and big crowds of both tourists and climbers. Long days make this a great time to do a lengthy multi-pitch route.

**July–August** The Valley is still crowded with tourists, but the climbs are uncrowded as most people head to Tuolumne for cooler weather. While Valley floor temperatures are often in the 90s and 100s, temperatures on the walls 500 feet above the Valley are usually comfortable in the 70s and low 80s. Prepare for the heat with plenty of extra water.

**September–October** The Valley is crowded with tourists and climbers. The weather is generally perfect except for the occasional lingering heat wave. The first winter storm usually arrives in late October or early November.

**Staying in the Park**

Yosemite Valley is a small tourist town filled with buildings, roads, cars, and people. The bad news is that the restaurants, stores, and motel-like rooms take away from the natural beauty of the park. The good news is that these same things make the Valley quite accommodating. You will find pizza, burgers, groceries, climbing gear, a medical clinic, motels, swimming pools, rafts, bike rentals, and if you find yourself in an unfortunate situation, a jail.

Month	Average precipitation	Max/min temp in degrees F
January	6.35"	47/25
February	6.64"	55/26
March	5.87"	58/30
April	3.29"	65/34
May	1.48"	71/39
June	.51"	80/46
July	.29"	89/50
August	.06"	89/50
September	.55"	82/48
October	1.68"	72/39
November	3.49"	57/30
December	7.10"	49/26

**Camping**

Camp 4 is the historic center of American climbing. It is also Yosemite's only walk-in campground and the cheapest place to stay. No reservations are required, but during peak season (May–October) expect a long wait to secure a campsite. The cost is \$5 per person per night with a 14-day limit on your stay. Each six-person site is a twenty-foot-square patch of dirt with fire pit and picnic table. If there are fewer than six people in your group you will share the site with others. There is a bathroom and a sink in the middle of Camp 4, but no warm water or showers. A bulletin board next to the Ranger Kiosk offers the chance to find climbing partners, friends, and used climbing gear. All other Yosemite campgrounds require reservations during peak season. Call 800-436-PARK to make reservations or go online to: <http://reservations.nps.gov>

There are a variety of places to camp outside the park boundary on Forest Service Land. Check out the Forest Service web site for more info: [www.r5.fs.fed.us](http://www.r5.fs.fed.us)

**Lodges and Cabins**

In addition to campsites, there are more plush accommodations available in Yosemite. If you are ready to pay the big bucks, you can stay at the lovely Ahwahnee



Hotel, or for a more modest price you can crash in a motel-like room at the Yosemite Lodge or a canvas-topped cabin in Curry Village. Also, vacation homes are located just minutes out of the Valley in Foresta (with views of the summit of El Capitan and Half Dome). Check out the awesome cabins at [www.4yosemite.com](http://www.4yosemite.com) or call 800-723-4112 and ask about the climbers' specials. In the summertime your best bet is to make reservations well in advance of your visit. Spaces fill up early for lodges and cabins in the tourist season of June–September.

### Food

Groceries are available in the Valley at the Village Store, Curry Village Store, or Lodge Store, but it is much cheaper to buy groceries in Oakdale, Merced, or Oakhurst on the drive to Yosemite.

There are a variety of restaurants in the Valley that serve everything from pizza and deli sandwiches to the spendy stuff at the Ahwahnee Hotel. Here is a quick listing of some of the Valley restaurants by location:

**Yosemite Lodge:** “The Cafe” (cafeteria), Mountain Room Bar and Grill.

**Yosemite Village:** Degnan’s Deli, The Loft (pizza and pasta), burger stand.

**Curry Village:** Pizza Deck (with bar), cafeteria, taco shop, all-you-can-eat buffet.

### Showers and Laundry

Showers cost \$2 (towel included) and are available at Housekeeping or Curry Village. Laundry is available at Housekeeping.

### Climbing Gear and Climbing Guides

The Mountain Shop (209-372-8396), located in Curry Village, is one of the premiere climbing shops in The West. From bouldering pads to haulbags to the latest route beta, they have it all.

You can get climbing instruction, arrange for a guide, and also rent gear from the Yosemite Mountaineering School and Guide Service. There are also a variety of climbing shops in the San Francisco Bay Area where you can purchase gear. In San Francisco: Mission Cliffs and The North Face. In Berkeley: REI, Wilderness Exchange, Berkeley Ironworks, and Marmot Mountain Works.

If you are coming from the east side of the Sierra, then visit Wilson’s Eastside Sports in Bishop or Mammoth Mountaineering Supply in Mammoth—both have an extensive selection of rock climbing and mountaineering gear.

### Bears

Bears have damaged cars for as little as a stick of gum or an empty soda can. If you want what’s yours to remain yours, remember three things: bears are hungry, smart, and strong. Bears are responsible for close to a thousand car break-ins every year in Yosemite, as all the shattered glass in the parking lots will tell you.

When bears smell food, even if it’s locked in your trunk or glove compartment, they shift into high gear. They get turned on by odors of containers that used to contain food, and for toothpaste and sunscreen. Bears don’t even need to smell food; they see something like a grocery bag or an ice chest, and associate it with food. In fact, they don’t need to see that much. If a bear notices clutter inside a car, he’ll think, “I wonder what’s under all that stuff?” and go to work.

Breaking into a car is a trivial exercise for a bear. He inserts his claws at the top of the door frame and pulls down. Then he climbs in and trashes the car. You can’t outsmart or out-muscle a bear. Stash your food in one of the bear-proof storage lockers provided by the Park Service at all campgrounds and throughout the Valley. Proper food storage is essential to protecting your property and more importantly the life of the bear. When a bear starts to endanger people it may be killed by the Park Service. Visit [www.nps.gov/yose/bears.htm](http://www.nps.gov/yose/bears.htm) for more info.

### Poison Oak

Poison Oak grows sporadically throughout the Valley, especially in the Lower Merced Canyon west of the 120/140 junction. Find someone to show you what it looks like and be especially careful in the winter when poison oak loses its leaves and is difficult to see.

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### Cell Phones

Should you or your partner get hurt while climbing, cell phones shorten the rescue response time. However, cell phones in the outdoors are annoying so keep them put away except for in emergencies. Cell phone coverage in Yosemite is spotty. There is generally decent reception between El Cap Meadow and Curry Village. As you gain elevation on a climb, the reception often improves. West of El Capitan the coverage deteriorates quickly. A good number to have programmed on your phone is the road and weather report: 209-372-0200.

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### Rest Days

What do you do when Valley temperatures hit the 90s? Head for the water. Rent rafts from Curry Village and float down the Merced River, or just dip into the water next to El Capitan Meadow. There are two great swimming holes 40 minutes outside of the Park boundaries. About 10 miles west of the Highway 120 entrance station, take a left immediately after a large bridge.

Here you will have your choice of jumping off 15- to 25-foot cliffs or just kicking back next to the water. West of the Highway 140 entrance station is the Octagon, which features a rope swing, sketchy cliff and tree jumps, and great spots to kick back and have a BBQ. The directions to this place are more devious so you will have to hunt down a local Yosemite climber for information. In winter, when the Valley is too snowy, go ice skating at Curry Village or head to Badger Pass for some skiing or snowboarding. There are also a number of interesting exhibits in the Valley such as the Indian Museum, Visitors Center, and the Ansel Adams Gallery.

Don't forget the many great Yosemite hikes. Here's our favorite: park at El Cap Meadow and hike to the base of The Nose. Next, skirt the base right for about 30 minutes all the way to the edge of the Southeast Face around Zodiac. Look for booty (dropped gear from El Cap climbers) and bring a bag to pick up trash.



Justin Bellie

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## SuperTopo Mission

- Help climbers ascend and descend routes quickly, efficiently, and safely by creating the most accurate and informative climbing topos ever published.
- Capture the mystery, adventure, and humor of climbing by publishing the histories, anecdotes, and outrageous stories of each route.
- Promote clean climbing by publishing the most up-to-date rack info as well as hammerless ratings for each pitch.
- Stress the importance of low impact climbing and promote stewardship of the environment.

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## Visit [www.SuperTopo.com](http://www.SuperTopo.com) before each climb

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There is much more beta available for free on the SuperTopo web site: [www.supertopo.com](http://www.supertopo.com). Visit the web site before your climb to be sure you have the latest information.

The web site offers additional free beta for each climb:

- photo galleries
- trip reports
- route condition updates
- closures and rockfall warnings
- sign up for “route beta email alerts”

The web site is packed with general Yosemite info:

- free downloadable color topos
- road and weather conditions
- everything you need to know about staying in Yosemite
- good routes for first time Yosemite climbers
- general trip planning info



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## Ratings

Rating climbs is never easy, especially in a place like Yosemite with a tradition of sandbagging. In the past, even though a climb might have 5.11 moves by modern standards it could be kept at 5.10 “just because it has always been that way.” In this book we toss the sandbagged ratings in favor of accurate ones. After all, if ratings don’t accurately compare climbs, and if some 5.10s are harder than 5.11s, what is the point of a rating system? As a result, about 5 percent of the climbs in this book have been bumped up in rating from past guides. For instance, Waverly Wafer was 5.10c and now it’s 5.11a. The Steck-Salathé was 5.9 and now it’s 5.10b. This move will no doubt be controversial to some but we feel the majority of climbers will appreciate more accurate comparisons of climbs. That said, ratings are decided by discussion and consensus, so we would like to hear your criticism and feedback. Please send a note to [chris@supertopo.com](mailto:chris@supertopo.com) or post a message on our forum at [www.supertopo.com](http://www.supertopo.com).

Keep in mind the subjective nature of rating cracks. Everyone has different sized hands and feet so a 5.9 hand crack to someone with big hands might be a 5.10 fist crack for someone with small hands.

Ratings of offwidths and chimneys will seem much different than those for face routes and finger cracks. Because offwidths and chimneys are initially so foreign and unpleasant, few people dedicate the necessary time to learn the techniques. As a result, it’s no surprise that when a 5.11 sport climber jumps on his first 5.9 offwidth it usually feels like 5.12! The key point here is that it took many months and

probably years to develop face climbing technique. It will take at least that long to develop offwidth technique to the point where you can climb as hard on offwidths as you can on face climbs.

Also, because some routes with the same rating are harder or easier than other routes at that same rating, we’ve listed all the climbs in order of overall difficulty in the Appendix. For example, both Commitment and Arrowhead Arête are rated 5.9, but the latter is a much longer and more demanding climb, which is reflected by its position in the Climbs by Rating list in the Appendix.

Some climbs have an optional “A0” rating. A0 means a section you can get through by pulling on bolts or making a pendulum. For example, on Royal Arches (5.10b or 5.7 A0) the 5.10b section can be avoided with a pendulum.

## Free Climbing Ratings

USA Yosemite Decimal System	UIAA	France	UK	Australia
5.1	I	1	M	4
5.2	II	2	D	6
5.3	III	2+	3A   VD	8
5.4	III+	3-	3B   HVD	10
5.5	IV	3	3C   S	12
5.6	IV+	3+	4A   HS	14
5.7	V-	4	4B   VS	16
5.8	V+	4+	4C   HVS	18
5.9	VI-	5	5B   E1	19
5.10a	VI	5+	5A   E2	20
5.10b	VI+	6A	6A   E3	21
5.10c	VII-	6A+	6B   E4	22
5.10d	VII	6B	6C   E5	23
5.11a	VII+	6B+	7A   E6	24
5.11b	VIII-	6C	7B   E7	25
5.11c	VIII	6C+	7C   E8	26
5.11d	VIII+	7A	7A   E9	27
5.12a	IX-	7A+	7B   E10	28
5.12b	IX	7B	7C   E11	29
5.12c	IX+	7B+	7C   E12	30
5.12d	X-	7C	7C   E13	31
5.13a	X	7C+	7C   E14	32
5.13b	X+	8A	7A   E15	33
5.13c	XI-	8A+	7B   E16	34
5.13d	XI	8B	7C   E17	35
5.14a	XI+	8B+	7C   E18	36
5.14b	XII-	8C	7C   E19	37
5.14c	XII	8C+	7C   E20	38
5.14d	XIII-	9A	7C   E21	39
5.15a	XIII+	9A+	7C   E22	40

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## Minimize Your Impact

by Mark Fincher and Lincoln Else

The National Park Service is responsible for ensuring that Yosemite's beauty and ecological health remain unimpaired for future generations. Congress heightened this duty when it designated the walls of Yosemite Valley as Wilderness in 1984. Wilderness is defined as a place that retains "its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions." This means that, somehow, the park is to remain natural despite hundreds of thousands of people hiking and climbing in it each year. This won't happen without your help. Climbers, like other visitors to Yosemite's wilderness, need to minimize their impact if we are to fulfill our obligation to future generations.

### How you can help

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- **Stay informed.** Check the climbing bulletin boards at Camp 4 for the latest information: rules, closures, upcoming events, and other climbing news.
- **Spread the word.** Talk to other climbers about ways to climb smart and limit your impact. If you see someone acting in a way you think is inappropriate, let them know how you feel.
- **Get involved.** Help with local clean-ups, trail projects, and other climbing community events. When you're out on your own do your part to pick up trash, clean anchors, and minimize what impacts you leave behind.

### Approach and descent trails

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Some of the worst climbing impacts in Yosemite result from people approaching and descending from climbs. Many of the

approach trails in Yosemite are on steep terrain, and even a small amount of use in these areas can quickly destroy vegetation and cause erosion. Some approach trails in Yosemite have eroded more than three vertical feet in just 20 years. In other areas multiple trails leading to the same climb compound the problem.

#### What you can do:

- Take a minute to look for a well used and established trail before starting off. In some popular areas the Park Service has marked one established trail to keep others from forming (look for a carabiner symbol on a post).
- If there is no obvious trail try to walk on rock whenever possible.
- Slow down on the descent. Two people running down a loose slope can erode as much soil as twenty people walking.
- If you found a good trail on the approach, take the time to find it again on the way down instead of taking a shortcut.
- When you're giving out beta for the climb, do so for the approach as well.

### Litter

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No one admits to littering, yet in a four year period Park Rangers and volunteers removed 75 large garbage bags full of trash from the summit of El Cap.

#### What you can do:

- Don't litter, and carry out any trash you find.
- Don't stuff trash into cracks. The rock is not a landfill.
- Clean fixed gear when you can, and replace old anchor slings with earth-toned webbing. For bolt anchors, use "quick links" instead of webbing.
- Try to minimize your use of chalk, especially near trails and other high profile areas.

### Peregrines and other animals

Yosemite's walls are home to many animals. Some live elsewhere in the park, but some such as peregrine falcons, swallows, swifts, and some bat species, nest or feed primarily on or near the cliffs. Climbing near these animals can cause serious negative impacts.

#### What you can do:

- Check the climbing information boards or the park's wilderness website for current peregrine closures. These closures usually run from January 31st to August 31st but may be adjusted to fit the birds' nesting schedule. When these closures are in place, respect them and tell others to do the same.
- Leave your dog at home. Dogs harass wildlife and even the smell of a leashed dog at the base of a wall can alter the behavior of other animals. Dogs are not allowed away from paved trails, roads, and bikepaths.

### Human waste

Improperly buried human waste is a problem near parking areas, at the base of climbs, and on the summit.

#### What you can do:

- Take the time to dig a deep hole (at least 6 inches) in the soil to bury your waste and pack out the toilet paper.

### Vegetation (Gardening)

National Parks like Yosemite were created in part to protect plants and animals. Plants on frequently climbed routes often die from repeated trampling, while those on less popular routes may be able to survive if the first ascensionists didn't kill them and subsequent climbers tread lightly.

Gardening (an ironic euphemism for the deliberate destruction of plants), cutting trees and shrubs, and using a wire brush to remove lichen from holds are all illegal.

#### What you can do:

- Plants have a chance to survive on less popular routes if you tread lightly. If you must pull or step on a plant or tree, do so in a way that causes the least harm.

- Never place a rappel rope directly around a tree—use an earth-toned sling instead.

### Camping

Impacts from climbers camping at the base of long routes are becoming far too common: fire rings, soot scars on the walls, tent platforms, constructed windbreaks, litter, and habituated wildlife. Two large wildfires have been caused by climbers' bivy fires. Camping is not allowed anywhere in the Valley except in designated campgrounds, and a wilderness permit is required for all camping in Yosemite's backcountry.

#### What you can do:

- Stay in a designated campground in the Valley. Wherever you camp, leave the area looking exactly the same as when you arrived.
- If you top out after dark and have to bivy, find a natural, sheltered campsite instead of excavating a platform and building a windbreak. If you need a fire to make it through the night, find an existing fire ring (there are numerous rings at the top of climbs where people commonly bivy: Royal Arches, Middle Cathedral, etc.) and remove the combustible materials around it.

### Making climbing history

Yosemite is viewed around the world as one of rock climbing's true gems, and people will climb here long after we are gone. As a final piece of advice for how you can help protect the future of Yosemite, learn its past. The history of climbing in this park is a tale replete with determination, adventure, and desire to preserve true wilderness. It is our job to preserve that wilderness so that others who come after us can experience it as it ought to be.

# Cam Sizes by Brand

Ref Size*	BD Camalots	CCH Aliens	Metolius Cams	Trango Big Bros	Wild Country Friends
0.4"	.1 red	.33 black	00 gray		
0.5"	.2 yellow	.375 blue	0 purple		0 red
0.6"	.3 purple	.5 green	1 blue		.5 orange
0.75"	.4 gray	.75 yellow	2 yellow		1 yellow
1"	.5 pink	1 red	3 orange		1.25 brown
1.25"	.75 green	1.5 orange	4 red		1.5 sky
1.5"	1 red	2 purple	5 black		2 pink
1.75"	1 red	2.5 gray	6 green		2.5 royal
2"	2 yellow	2.5 gray	7 blue		3 navy
2.5"	2 yellow		8 purple		3.5 purple
3"	3 blue		9 burgundy		4 black
3.5"	3.5 gray		10 dark blue		4 black
3.5-4.5"	4 purple			1 red	5 silver
4.5-5.5"	4.5 red			2	
5.5-7"	5 green			3 green	6 plum
7-8"				3 green	
8-12"				4 blue	

\*"Ref size" is the optimal crack width for a given camming unit. It is not the range given by the manufacturer.

# Understanding the maps

## Topo Symbols

Right-facing corner		Roof		Bolt	
Left-facing corner		Ledge		Rappel anchor	
Straight-in crack		Slab		Face climbing	
Groove		Belay station		Pine Tree	
Arete		Pitch length		Oak-like Tree	
Flake		Optional belay		Bush	
Chimney		False belay		Knob	
				Hole	

## Notes on Rack

- "nuts" refers to any nut, stopper, or chock. "micro" = #1, 2; "sml" = #3-5; "med" = #6-8; "lrg" = #9-13
- for cams, "2 ea .75-1.5" means bring two sets of all sizes between .75" and 1.5". Check the cam size chart to see which cam corresponds to which crack size.

## Notes on Topo

- "belay takes .6-1" means, while leading the pitch, save enough .6-1" cams and nuts to build a natural anchor.
- a number next to a tree is its height.

## Topo abbreviations

- ow = offwidth
- lb = lieback
- p = fixed piton
- R = runout (dangerous fall)

## Metric system conversions

- 1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
- 1 foot = 0.305 meters
- 100 feet = 30.5 meter
- 50 yards = 45.7 meters

## Overview graphics

Low-clearance dirt road	
High-clearance dirt road	
Road or State Route	
Federal Highway	
Hikers' trail	
Climbers' trail	
Cross-country travel	

## Star Ratings

- ★★★★★ - undisputed classic
- ★★★★ - excellent climb
- ★★★ - good climb
- ★★ - okay climb
- ★ - barely included in this book