

North American Classic Route Description

Mt. Gimli, South Ridge
Valhalla Range, Southern BC, Canada

Grade III, 5.8

Author: Gary Clark, 8/20/2001

Copyright by the author(s) and by North American Classics: naclassics.com

Disclaimer: No written description is a substitute for route-finding skill. Use your own judgment in all cases rather than depend on the information here, for which neither the author nor the publisher makes any claims of accuracy or usefulness.

GETTING THERE:

From the North: Take highway 23 south from Revelstoke, ferry across Upper Arrow Lake at Shelter Bay [free, every 30min] to Galena Bay and continue south. At Nakusp, take hwy 6 toward New Denver. Continue to Slocan, which is the last chance for gas, groceries, & restaurant. 1 km past the exit to Slocan, take "gravel pit road" to the west. Turn right near km post 15, and follow the blue "Valhalla" signs to the trailhead. There is a toilet here, and Gimli is clearly visible to the north.

From the South: Follow highway 3A, then 6 from Castlegar, BC to Slocan. See above.

The trail is flat for the first couple of kms, but once you cross the creek on a log bridge, it climbs relentlessly the rest of the way to a small sandy saddle just a few hundred metres from the base of the South Ridge. Camp on the sand rather than on the grass to minimize impact. There is a toilet here, 30m. down the other side of the pass and to the south. Water is usually available at a grassy area on the east side of the pass 50m from camp, but may be very skimpy early in the morning, and disappear altogether late in the summer after the small snow bank that feeds it is gone

Approach from saddle: A trail heads up and left from the col. Start up this, then exit right to contour over to the toe of the buttress. the talus slope drops down steeply to the right at the base of the ridge. If you go to its lowest point around the corner you'll see a large steep dihedral. This is the 5.10 variation that joins the regular route at the 2nd belay stance. The regular route begins left of the toe of the buttress. Another variation begins up the talus slope to the left, at a 5.5 chimney & crack to bypass the first two pitches of the regular rte.

Regular route, Pitch 1: Start on easy slabs left of an obvious dihedral with a crack in the back. Traverse to the crack, where the fun begins. Continuous, well protected 5.7 to 5.8 climbing takes you straight up to a stance with slings. There are a couple of short lieback problems on this pitch, and lots of jamming. 40m, 5.8

Pitch 2: Follow crack directly up from belay. Difficulty eases quickly. Tend right toward a notch in the ridgeline. Round this to an awkward stance on a chockstone in a chimney. [slings for a 50m rap to the west]. 40m, 5.7

Pitch 3: Head up and right, initially on rounded holds and ledges. Gain the crack system of your choice; those further right around the corner are a bit easier. Belay on a large ledge on the south face. 35m., 5.7.

Pitch 4: Climb the short clean crack in the corner from the left side of the belay ledge. Head up easier ground towards another short perfect crack to the right. easy terraces lead to a belay at

the base of steeper rock. 5.6, 40m.

Pitch 5: Climb a crack system very close to the ridgeline. Spectacular positions and consistent, excellent climbing make this one of the finest 5.6 pitches on the continent. 50m.

Pitch 6: The roof pitch. Looming 25m. above is the ceiling that provides the crux of the route. Moderate [5.6] cracks lead to it, providing excellent protection. Use small holds on the face to turn the ceiling on the the left. Just over the roof are big positive edges for the hands; the challenge is getting to them. Belay just above the roof if you can arrange an anchor - rope drag from here to the next good belay stance at a series of ledges 10m. further on can be a serious problem.

Pitch 7: Climb the ridgeline via right-leaning cracks. Belay when you reach markedly easier ground. Another excellent pitch, 5.6, 40m.

Another short [10m] wall with good cracks lies above, which you might choose to belay [5.2]. Above it is ~200m. of 3rd class ridgeline to the south summit. Scramble easily down to the notch, then gain the trail to the true summit.

Descent is via the East Ridge. Look for cairns leading you off the summit block to a convoluted route down an initially steep wall [4th] to easier scrambling below. Continue past several gullies until you find one with a large, free standing pillar at the top. You can traverse back to the base of the route from the bottom of the gully, or head down to intersect the trail. This is the standard non-technical route up Gimli.

Suggested Rack: {Standard alpine rock rack with extras finger-hand sized}

stoppers, #3 - 9, [1 each]

#3 camalot [1]

#2 camalot [2]

#1 camalot [2]

Aliens, #1-5 [blue-red] [2ea]

{A few finger sized chocks can replace some of the cams if you're saving weight}

Single slings [6]

Double sling [1]

Draws [6]