

## North American Classic Route

### Description



## Wiwaxy Peak, Grassi Ridge

Grade III, 5.7-

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**The Approach:** Contact Yoho Park for details on taking the bus to Lake O'Hara; reservations are required, and are difficult to get in peak tourist season. Or, get up early and walk the 11km up the road. From the wardens' cabin below Lake O'Hara, cross a bridge over Cataract creek and follow the along the creek for about 440m until below an obvious avalanche slope. If coming from below, drop down to the creek from the road right across from the campground and hike a few hundred meters upstream to the same spot. Follow many cairns up a faint climber's path up the avalanche path. The trail will lead toward a large snow-filled gully. The gully would be routine with crampons and axe, but if you don't have them, cross it below a band of steep rock and traverse a considerable distance left on ledges until you find a weakness to allow climbing through the cliff band easily. Continue on easy grassy ledges to the highest tree at the base of the buttress. Rope up here.

**The Climb:** Many variations are possible on this highly climbable rock. This is the way we did it, and hopefully provides a little better feel for the route than the "start at the bottom and climb to the top" type of description in the guidebook we used (Doughtery)

P1: Climb the steep broken chimney above the tree to a belay at fixed pins. (5.5, 45m)

P2: Continue with similar climbing up the chimney. Poor quality at first, but steepens for last part to a very large ledge. (5.6, 35m)

P3: Unrope and hike to base of next buttress (3rd, 70m)

P4: Move right to a steep corner, then do an ascending traverse back left to the crest. Classic, steep face climbing on big holds. (5.6+) End on big ledge.

P5: Steep pitch on the arete; belay when you run out of rope (5.6+, 60m)

P6: Mostly 3rd class close to the arete, but with a small bump of easy 5th in the middle (50m)

P7: Start about 10m right of crest, climb very steep pitch straight up. Fixed pin halfway. Crux pitch. 3 pins at the anchor. (5.7-)

P8: Straight up excellent monolithic rock, covered with black lichen. When it gets steep again, traverse right for 10m, then back left to the crest to gain a large ledge (35m)

P9: Walk up a horizontal grassy ledge to the next buttress, then 3rd class up to the right to wherever you feel like belaying again.

P10: 5.3 rock just right of the crest. (50m)

P11: A short steep wall (5.6) offers quality climbing, but leads to another huge horizontal section.

P12: Walk up the horizontal section to the final steep band. This can be belayed, or scrambled if you find the easiest way through (right of crest, 4th or easy 5th). Walk to summit.

The Descent: Unfortunately not as straightforward as you might hope. Follow cairns down the NE ridge. Several difficult spots slow progress about 1/3 of the way down (4th or easy 5th, exposed). Easier ledges lead down to a final set of steps that could be downclimbed if you are in the mood, or rappelled (sling around large horn). While descending, look across to the West to spot the traverse trail across the face of the small subsidiary peak. The face looks intimidating face on, but is easy walking. Continue to the saddle, then go down a large gully toward Lake O'Hara. You'll intersect the maintained trail a few hundred meters above the lake. This will be welcome after the steep, long, and loose gully. Walk to the lake and catch the bus down the hill (free, even if you didn't ride it up!)