

North American Classic Route Description

The Yellow Spur, Eldorado Canyon (West Face of Redgarden Wall)

Grade III, 5.9

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GETTING THERE:

Eldorado Canyon State Park is only about 3 miles south of the outskirts of Boulder and 25 miles NW of central Denver, which helps explain its popularity. Since the area east of the canyon is a complex metropolitan area, it would be best to get a recent map if you are coming from anyplace other than directly north (Boulder) or directly south (Golden.) Those directions are provided here: From Boulder, take highway 93 (Broadway) south to South Eldorado Springs Drive. Turn right (west) and continue for about 3 miles to the park entrance (turns into a dirt road). There is a developed parking lot with toilets here. There is a nominal fee for parking or walk-in access, but overnight parking is not allowed. From Golden, take highway 93 north for about 13 miles, then turn left on the same road mentioned above (signed).

The approach: Hike up the road from the parking area for a few hundred feet. A large metal foot bridge crosses the creek to the North. Take it, and hike the trail up canyon for a few hundred feet until a trail starts steeply up the hillside just past the last major rock wall. A sign here indicates the Redgarden wall. Climb this trail, which goes directly up a gully but stays close to the rock wall. Ladders have been built over the steepest areas. The west face of redgarden will be visible above, with the Yellow Spur located close to its left skyline. (having a photo will make identification easy). Continue just past the base of the spur, then locate the second large ledge that leads back to the right (the first goes to the base of the "Vertigo" route. Scramble onto it, climb over an awkward little bulge with a small tree, and arrive shortly at some caked-on chalk and pin scars below a break in a long roof band.

Pitch 1, V1: (Original start): Climb directly up thin cracks and small holds (5.10, difficult to protect with small stoppers.

Pitch 1, V2: (Normal start): Climb a short dihedral 20 ft. to the right of V1 (5.9). Cut back left about 20ft to a point where there are big well chalked holds leading over the roof (5.9). After pulling the roof, head right to a tree belay. (about 30 ft. of elevation gain)

Pitch 2: Go up left, then up a fantastic dihedral with face moves at the end, to another tree, 5.8

Pitch 3: Head up cracks and corners to a rotten band; continue over a bulge and another crack to a beautiful, exposed ledge, also 5.8

Pitch 4: Traverse right on the broad ledge for 15-20 feet (class 2), then head straight up a large dihedral with fun easy moves to a good ledge on the left. (5.4)

Pitch 5: Continue up the dihedral to the huge roof, then hand traverse right along a sharp diagonaling edge (well marked with chalk). Make an awkward move around the corner (crux, 5.8) to a good crack. Climb the crack, then step right to an exposed stance on a small triangular ledge. This

is directly on the skyline with great views in all directions.

Pitch 6: Climb straight up, make a delicate step right into a thin crack festooned with fixed pitons that diagonals up and right (5.9+, sustained). You'll arrive at a detached flake below a bolt line. The bolt line is the direct original line at 5.10. The more recent and popular variation is to traverse left on a steep wall with small but positive holds (5.7, seems harder on lead). Belay on the arête.

Pitch 7: Head up the spectacular arete to the summit of Tower One. (5.6, no protection after the first 50ft)

Descent: Do a hand traverse down the arete to the head of an obvious gully, which is the beginning of the East Slabs Descent. Scramble down the easy gully for about 200 ft to some trees and large boulders. The top of "Ruper" will be approximately on your right and the beginning of the East Slabs descent will be down and to your left. Now turn back west (marked with a cairn) and scramble up into a notch. Head down into it and find some big new bolts on the wall to the left. The free-hanging rappel from here (stretchable with 50m rope, much better with 60m) ends in a gully. Scramble up easy rounded rock toward the west to a small ridge. Drop down about 15 feet to the tree for the Vertigo raps (one double or two single rope raps), which get you right back to the ledge at the base of the climb. This descent is much quicker than going all the way down the East Slabs if you've left anything at the base of the climb.

Suggested Gear:

- 60m rope strongly advised for the rappel descent; otherwise 50m is fine.
- stoppers, #3 - 9, [1 each]
- #3 Camalot [1]
- #2 Camalot [2]
- #1 Camalot [2]
- Aliens, #1-5 [blue-red] [2ea]
- Single slings [6]
- Double sling [1]
- Draws [6]