

# Crag Comparison

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of routes at each grade \_\_\_\_\_

Crag	page	5.0-5.5	5.6	5.7	5.8	5.9	5.10	5.11	5.12	Topropes	Face or Cracks?	Early Season?	Summary
Bunny Slopes	50		1	2	1	1				2	face	yes	Great intro area with slabby and knobby face climbs.
Circle A Wall	48					1	1	1		1	face	no	Short and fun knobby face that is wet in early season.
Daff Dome	62			1	3	7	3	1		4	face and cracks	yes	Classic multi-pitch cracks and golden slabs.
Ellery Lake	154				1	4				5	face and cracks	yes	Short topropes outside the park.
Galen's Crack	60					2				2	face and cracks	yes	Short, burly offwidth and face topropes.
Harlequin Dome	41				3	2	1			2	face and cracks	yes	Steep, golden, and sunny 5.10s and 5.11s.
Lamb Dome	107					2	2			1	mostly cracks	no	Knobby multi-pitch adventures.
Lembert Dome	76	1				2				0	face and cracks	yes	Multi-pitch playground near "downtown" Tuolumne.
Low Profile Dome	56			2		3	1			4	mostly face	yes	Classic face climbs with a short approach.
Medicott Dome	118	2	2	3	2	11	3			3	face and cracks	no	Many classics at every difficulty. Wet in early season.
Phobos/Deimos Cliff	52					2		1		1	cracks	yes	Steep, golden cracks with a steep approach.
Pothole Dome	74	11	3	1	2	3	1			7	face	yes	Great intro to Tuolumne with many topropes.
Puppy Dome	80		1				1	2		3	cracks	yes	A moderate crack and three hard testpieces.
Pywiack Dome	131			1		2				0	mostly face	yes	Moderate slabs and a steep face.
Stately Pleasure Dome	31	1	1	3						1	face and cracks	yes	Sunny, low-angle granite above Tenaya Lake.
Western Front	61				3	3				6	face	yes	Great 5.9-5.10b slabby face topropes.

## Tuolumne Topropes

Tuolumne is known for its runouts on low-angle face. Compared to the Valley, the faces tend to be steeper, more featured, harder to spot bolts on, and more runout. In general, anyone comfortable slab climbing can get used to Tuolumne fairly quickly, but those without much slab experience should definitely introduce themselves to slick low-angle granite on toprope. Tuolumne has several easily accessible toprope crags for doing exactly that, and it's generally easy to walk or scramble to the top. Some topropes require climbing adjacent routes of a lower grade.

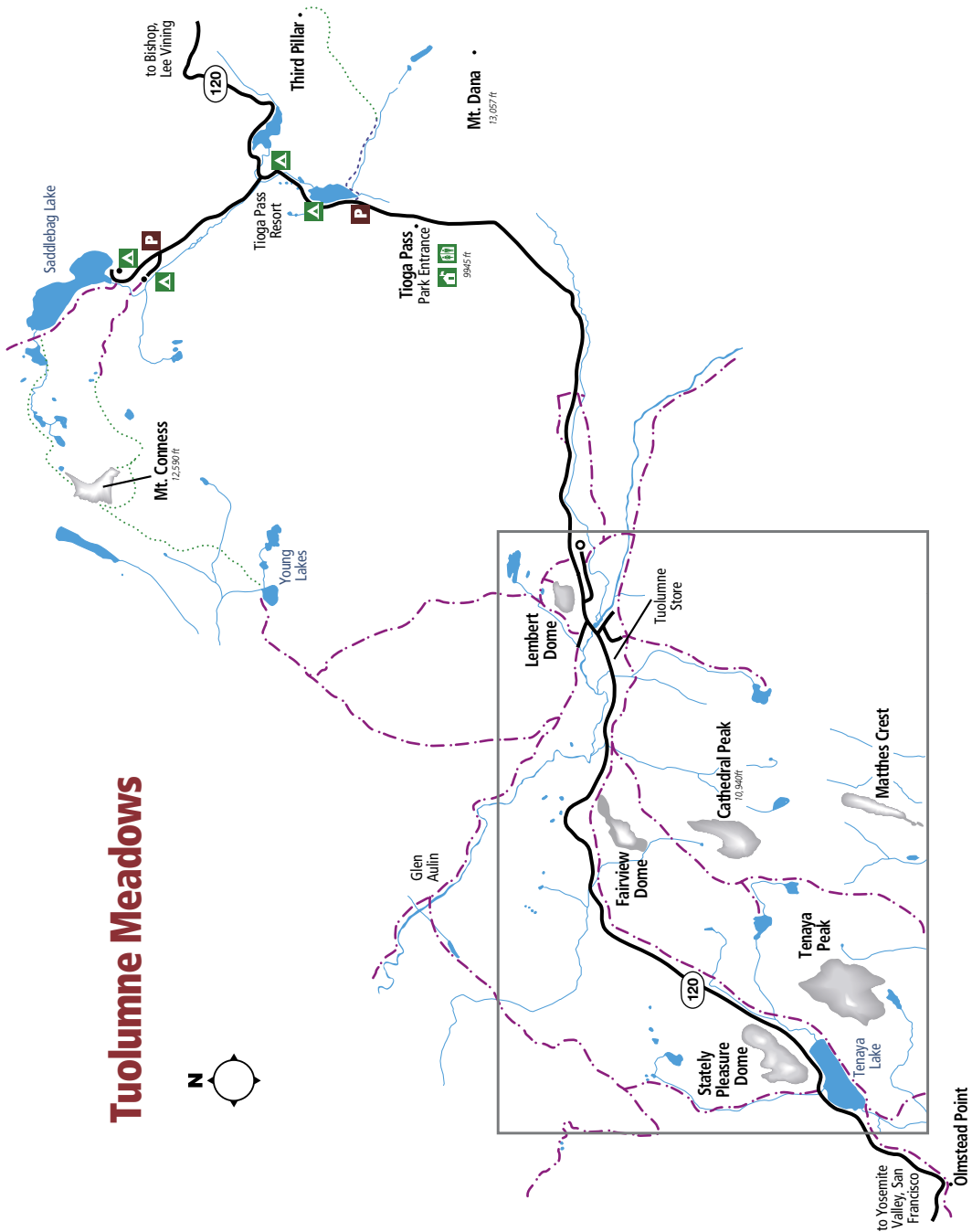


Chris McNamara

In the table below, we've listed toprope climbs contained in this guidebook along with key beta.

Area	Route	Rating	Anchor Access	Technique
Pothole Dome	TR #1-3	5.0-5.6	walk	face
Pothole Dome	TR #4-6	5.0-5.6	walk	face
Puppy Dome	Puppy Crack	5.6	walk	hands
Bunny Slopes	Biscuit and Gravy	5.8	climb 5.6	face
Ellery Lake	Gold Mine	5.9	scramble 3rd class	fingers, hands
Western Front	Deadheads Delight	5.9	walk	face
Western Front	Green Eggs and Ham	5.9	walk	face
Western Front	Touch of Grey	5.9	walk	face
Bunny Slopes	Black Diamond	5.9 R	climb 5.7	face
Ellery Lake	Dihedral	5.10a	walk	fingers, stem
Lamb Dome	Little Sheba	5.10a	scramble 3rd class	fingers, hands
Low Profile Dome	Darth Vader's Revenge	5.10a	climb 5.7	face
Western Front	Ace in the Hole	5.10a	walk	face
Western Front	March of Dimes	5.10a	walk	face
Medlicott Dome	Donuts	5.10a	climb 5.7	face
Daff Dome	Fingertips	5.10a R	climb 5.8	face
Ellery Lake	Roof	5.10b	scramble 3rd class	face
Low Profile Dome	Shit Hooks	5.10b	climb 5.7	face
Western Front	New Tricks for Old Dogs	5.10b	walk	face
Medlicott Dome	Come and Get It	5.10b R	climb 5.10a R	face
Galen's Crack	Galen's Crack	5.10c	walk	fist, offwidth
Low Profile Dome	Orange Man	5.10c	climb 5.7	face
Medlicott Dome	Beer	5.10c	climb 5.7	face
Daff Dome	Hogwash	5.10c R	climb 5.10a	face
Ellery Lake	Arête	5.10d	scramble 4th class	face
Ellery Lake	Groove	5.10d	walk	fingers, face
Harlequin Dome	Chinese Handcuffs	5.10d	walk	fingers, hands
Galen's Crack	Falkenstein Face	5.10d	walk	face
Daff Dome	It is Finished	5.11a	climb 5.9	face
Daff Dome	Tips Ahoy	5.11a R	climb 5.7 R	face
Circle A Wall	Apex Predator	5.11b	climb 5.10a	face
Low Profile Dome	Memo from Lloyd	5.11b	scramble 3rd class	fingers, lieback
Phobos/Deimos Cliff	Blues Riff	5.11b	climb 5.9	face, fingers, lb
Pothole Dome	Potluck	5.11	scramble 3rd class	hands, roof
Puppy Dome	Do or Fly	5.11c	scramble 4th class	hands, fingers, roof
Harlequin Dome	Heat Sensitive	5.12b	climb 5.11b	face
Puppy Dome	Grenade Launcher	5.12c	scramble 3rd class	overhung face

# Tuolumne Meadows



# Fairview Dome

Fairview is the preeminent dome in a region geologists claim has the highest proliferation of granitic domes on earth. The symmetrical 900-foot-high north face displays fascinating evidence of exfoliation. Enormous overhangs and arches clearly demonstrate that for millennia the outer shell of rock has been peeling off as the elements pry at natural flaws. Although there were obvious ways to bypass the curving overhangs, the face remained unclimbed as late as 1958.

## Approach

Park in an obvious six-car pullout in trees—the only pullout on the south side of the road—3.4 miles west of the Tuolumne Store and 4.2 miles east of Tenaya Lake. From the pullout, follow an obvious trail that heads directly from the left (southeast) corner of the parking lot toward the dome. Follow climbers' trail signs; please do not stray from the trail. When the trail splits near the base of the dome, stay on the left trail for the Regular Route or the right trail



Greg Barnes

for Lucky Streaks. Great Pumpkin starts 50 yards right of Lucky Streaks.

## Descent

There is only one descent route: walk south down the giant knobby slab of the dome. The descent is mostly 2nd class with one 3rd class section. Bring approach shoes unless you want to kill your toes! Climbing shoes are not needed for the descent.

After getting down to the bottom, contour back right along the face until you reach the base of Lucky Streaks, then follow climbers' signs back to your car.

From the top of Great Pumpkin, traverse 200 feet of 4th class straight back from the edge to a bowl on the 2nd/3rd class descent. It's wise to stay roped for this section. From there, join the normal descent route.



Chris McManara

## Regular Route 5.9★★★★★

Time to climb route: 6–8 hours

Approach time: 20 minutes

Descent time: 40 minutes

Sun exposure: afternoon to sunset

Height of route: 900'

The Regular Route of Fairview is listed in *Fifty Classic Climbs of North America*—“routes which ambitious climbers dream of doing”—and there is no doubt it’s one of the climbs to dream about in Tuolumne Meadows. The route follows the longest steep line in Tuolumne and contains pitch after pitch of sustained and rewarding cracks. Views of Daff Dome and the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River are outstanding, surpassed only by the 360-degree panorama from the summit. The climbing features good pro and variable cracks. As you climb higher the climbing eases and speeds up.

FA: Chuck Pratt and Wally Reed, 8/58.

FFA: Steve Roper and Mark Powell, 1962.

### History

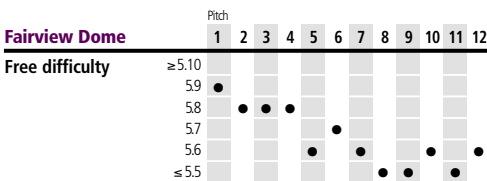
Few mountaineers have the good fortune to stumble upon a climbing area as undeveloped as Tuolumne Meadows was in 1958. One such lucky person was Wally Reed, who felt like a child turned loose in a toy store as he puzzled over which should be the first big climb of the region. Reed had noticed half a dozen intriguing route possibilities, but his thoughts kept turning to the symmetrical 900-foot-high north face of Fairview Dome. On its steep north face were two long, conspicuous cracks; the right-hand one looked promising, for it shot up 300 feet and ended in broken rock.

At the 450-foot level was a huge crescent-shaped ledge, and if it could be reached, the remainder of the route looked easier.

Early in the summer of 1958 Reed met 19-year-old Chuck Pratt, who at that time had been climbing for less than a year, and asked him if he would be interested in making an attempt on the north face of Fairview. Pratt agreed immediately, flattered that a man who had labored on El Capitan with Warren Harding would ask him along on a new route. When Pratt arrived in Tuolumne and saw the marvelously direct route Reed had picked out, he knew at once it had the ingredients for a memorable climb.

The first pitch of the climb went free and fast. But higher, as the cliff steepened, the two men were forced into direct-aid techniques. Since he had never done such extensive aid work, Pratt regularly tangled his feet in his aid slings, much to the amusement of Reed, who was completely at home on a long piton ladder. Twice it was necessary to belay in slings, an awkward technique Pratt had done only on practice climbs. So attentive were the men to their world of stone that when the sun disappeared behind a nearby ridge, they were caught by surprise. From a small ledge 400 feet above the ground, the pair hurriedly abandoned the face, satisfied that the route was feasible at least as far as what they called Crescent Ledge.

It was not until August that the two climbers found time to return. They decided to carry bivouac gear on this attempt, which was a wise decision, for it was dusk when they reached Crescent Ledge, and the temperature quickly plunged to the freezing point. Insulated in their sleeping bags, the pair watched the moon rise over the Sierra crest and illuminate a world glowing with granite.



Early the next morning Reed and Pratt began noticing subtle changes in the character of the rock. In the vicinity of Crescent Ledge, flakes and knobs began to appear, and the excited climbers stowed their aid slings and rapidly gained elevation. A four-foot ceiling that cut across the face at the 600-foot level looked formidable, but hidden, juglike holds permitted the obstacle to be free climbed easily. By noon, the two men had reached the rounded summit, amazed by the fact that they had covered the final 500 feet so easily.

In the decades following Reed and Pratt's first ascent, many more climbs have been established on the weathered knobby granite of Tuolumne, but none as long, and few so pleasing from afar.

— *Excerpt from Fifty Classic Climbs of North America, Steve Roper and Allen Steck.*

### Strategy

This is one of the best climbs in Tuolumne, so expect a big line and slow parties. It's common to have to return many times before getting a chance to get on the route, and coming mid-week does not help. Early season can be a good way to beat the crowds, but the compromise is that the whole crux section is flowing with water, which raises the grade a notch or two. Also, you must start the route from a receding snow field and it can be difficult trying to keep the rope(s) dry. Late season is another strategy, but often the temperatures have dropped and because the route gets nearly no sun the rock can be frigidly cold.

The best strategy for fast teams is to start the route in the early afternoon after confirming that there are no slow parties above. For most folks, coming early and waiting in line is often the only option. Depending on the speed of the teams in front of you, this can be frustrating. Remember that returning another day is a smarter idea than starting late with slow parties above.

The Regular Route eats up nuts, therefore a double set is recommended. In addition, there are no fixed rappel anchors so nuts

are needed if retreating. Extra nuts, slings, and rappel rings or extra biners are a good idea for any team uncertain of their ability. 60m ropes allow much better belay options, especially for the first pitch. The crux on the first pitch requires good footwork on small polished edges and a great trick is to toprope some 5.10 faces the previous day, making the edges on the Regular Route seem huge. Almost every section of difficult climbing higher up can be mellowed by stemming and good footwork.

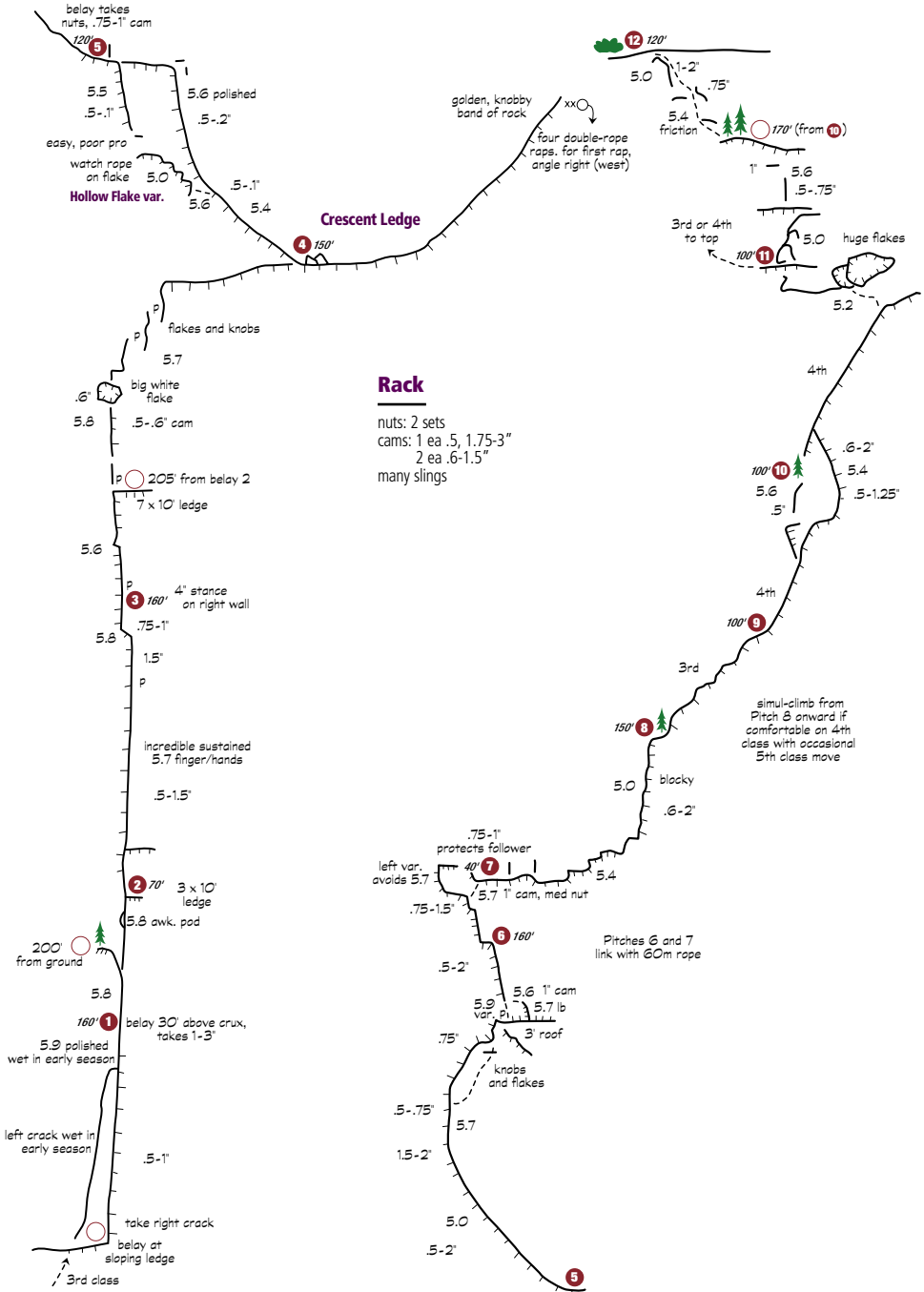
The main safety rule on Fairview, like on any long route in Tuolumne, is NEVER to climb when puffy clouds are in sight—even a tiny one. They usually indicate later thunderstorms, which can easily be deadly high on the exposed dome.

Windjackets and warm gear can be important on the cold north face. The best strategy is to harness and rack up at the car and carry everything with you, thereby avoiding the need to return to the start of the route and robbing marauding rodents of the chance to dine on your pack. Always bring headlamps and consider safety gear depending on your skill level and the season. Nights are freezing even in mid-summer.

For strong parties who get an early start, consider finishing up the day on West Crack, right across the road on Daff Dome (Dome Across From Fairview).

### Retreat

Retreat with two ropes by leaving natural pro. At most places on the route, two or three nuts plus slings can be used to safely set a retreat anchor. With two 60m ropes you can reach the ground from the tree on the last rappel, otherwise you'll need to either leave gear or downclimb. From Crescent Ledge you can rappel other routes with two ropes. The anchor conditions on these rappels are unknown.



**Rack**

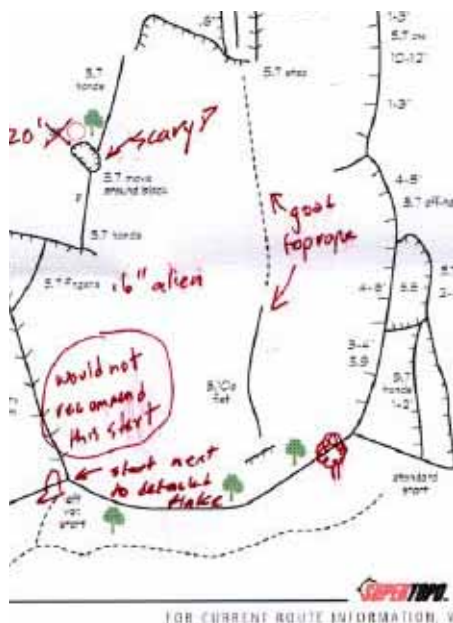
nuts: 2 sets  
 cams: 1 ea .5, 1.75-3"  
 2 ea .6-1.5"  
 many slings

simul-climb from Pitch 8 onward if comfortable on 4th class with occasional 5th class move

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To: [chris@supertopo.com](mailto:chris@supertopo.com)

The topos ruled. here is some feedback

Jam Crack ...

\* Although the topo is very clear, you might want to add the words "15' left" after ".... either belay 15' left at the bolted anchor or continue ....". The reason I say that is the first time I led the climb I just kept climbing up the very thin, maybe .10d section between the top of the 5.7 crack section and the bolts. It looked really hard so I down climbed and realized I was supposed to be further left.

After Six ...

\* 1st Pitch ... You might (or not) want to repeat a comment I've heard several times that the 1st pitch is the "hardest 5.6 in the valley". It's awkward after the dead tree and on the polished section in the middle of the pitch ... gravity wants to pull you out of the crack to the right. It's OK after starting the traverse to the right.

\* I've always belay at the ledge in the Manzanita bushes just to the left of where the 5.6 variation 2nd pitch goes up. It's solid using the bushes

## Lucky Streaks 5.10d 99999

**Time to climb route:** 3–4 hours

**Approach time:** 15 minutes

**Descent time:** 45 minutes

**Sun exposure:** noon to sunset

**Height of route:** 600'

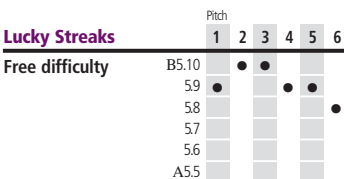
Looking up from the base, Lucky Streaks may look intimidating. However, the rock is covered with knobs making the climbing easier than it appears. The quality of this route rivals that of the Regular Route on Fairview Dome and Crescent Arch on Daff Dome. The pitches tend to be long and the protection bomber (except for the first pitch).

FA: Bob Kamps and Tom Higgins, 7/67.

### Strategy

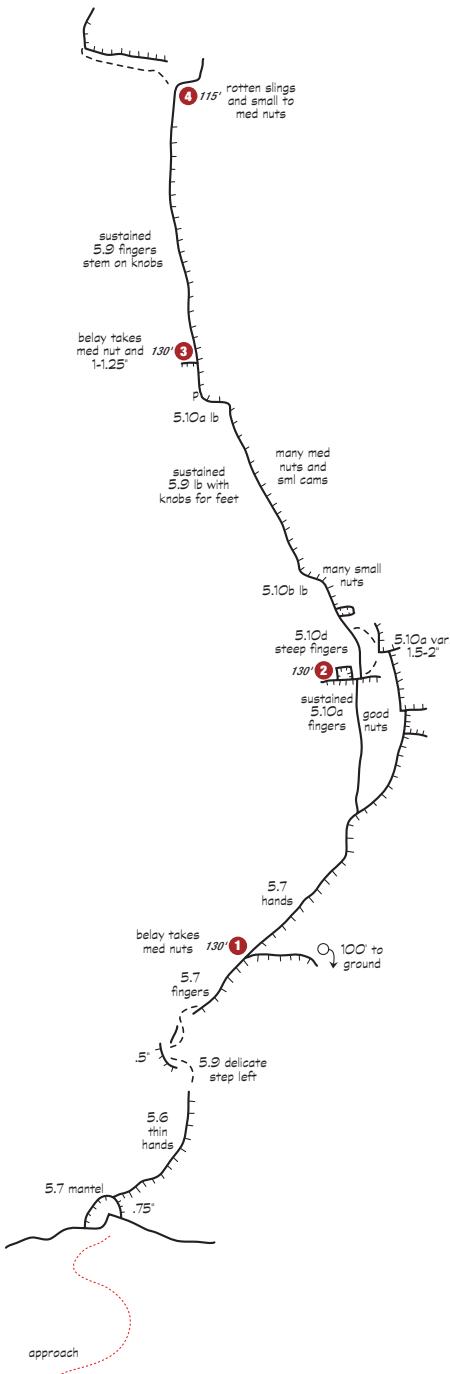
This route is popular so start early. Because the pitches are long and the cracks often take just a few sizes of gear, it's important to strategically use nuts and cams. Carrying a 60m rope does not give you an advantage over a 50m rope. All belays are either at a ledge or a good stance.

The third pitch 5.10d crux can be avoided by a 5.10a variation to the right. However, this variation is runout and the rest of the pitch is technical stemming protected by thin gear. Should you choose to climb up the thin crack variation on Pitch 5, be careful of the detached flake. In addition, the 5.7 face above is quite runout.



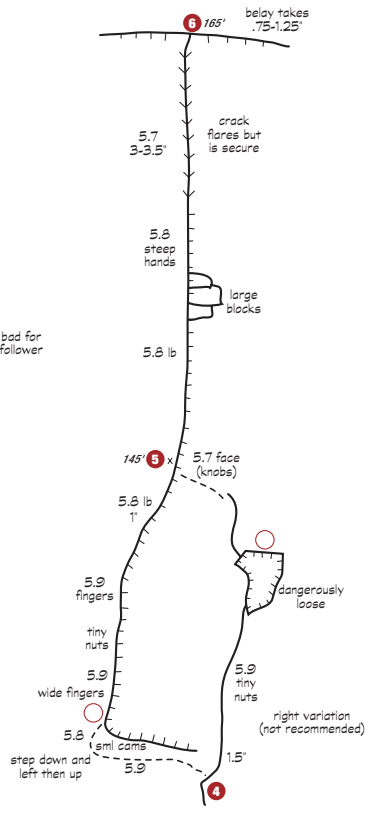
### Retreat

Carry two 50m ropes to retreat. The first and second belays have fixed rappel anchors. If you retreat from above, you will need to leave gear.



**Rack**

- micros nuts: 1 set
- nuts: 2 ea sml, med
- 1 ea lrg
- cams: 2 ea .4-.2"
- 1 ea 3-3.5"



## Great Pumpkin 5.8 R⑨⑨⑨⑨⑨

**Time to climb route:** 2-4 hours

**Approach time:** 20 minutes

**Descent time:** 30 minutes

**Sun exposure:** mid-morning to sunset

**Height of route:** 500'

Great Pumpkin is an improbable face and flake climb up the right side of Fairview Dome. Seriously runout for both the leader and follower, it is not to be taken lightly. However, for those comfortable on very runout 5.8 face in Tuolumne, it is an outstanding romp up perfect granite. The remaining 1/4" bolts were replaced by the ASCA in 2002.

FA: Bob Kamps and Bud Couch, 7/69.

### Strategy

The route is somewhat popular so it's a good idea to get an early start. Due to the sun exposure, Great Pumpkin is usually perfect regardless of when you climb it. In cold weather, start around noon when the route is in the sun; in hot weather, start early. Sections can be wet, especially after heavy thunderstorms. A snowbank is often present at the base in early season.

The first pitch is a rude awakening for those not used to the typical runouts on Tuolumne face climbs. After 60 feet of easy climbing comes a field of knobs and edges with no apparent protection. Meandering climbing for 30 feet requires patience and concentration until you gain a single protection bolt. From there, tricky routefinding up left, then back right for a long slick traverse, subjects both the leader and follower to long fall potential.

The second pitch has fun climbing up flakes with somewhat suspect pro that leads to a huge move right on friction. Placing extra back-up pro before this crux is wise. More flakes and a great shallow corner system past a few more tricky sections gains the belay ledge. Be sure to sling the tree (or clip retreat webbing) for the follower.

The third pitch has tricky climbing with poor protection. A slung horn/knob is the only pro for a thin traverse 30 feet off the belay ledge. Easier but still runout climbing leads to a bolted anchor 70 feet off the ledge. It's best to belay here.

The last pitch climbs awesome knobs past two bolts and a belay station (best skipped) to a long runout. About 40 feet from your last pro is a 5.8 section, followed by the last bolt at about 60 feet from the optional belay. From here, easier climbing leads to the top.

Like all longer routes in Tuolumne, don't get caught on Great Pumpkin in a thunderstorm.

Strong parties often climb both Great Pumpkin and the Regular Route or Lucky Streaks in a day. Start with Great Pumpkin to let the crowds on the more popular crack systems disperse.

### Retreat

Retreat by rappelling with two ropes; however, it may not be possible to regain the first belay due to the traversing nature of the route, so an alternate belay would need to be constructed somewhere below the midway ledge.

Great Pumpkin	Pitch			
	1	2	3	4
Free difficulty	B5.10			
	5.9			
	5.8	●	●	●
	5.7			
	5.6			
	A5.5			

**Rack**

- nuts: 1 set
- cams: 2 ea. 4-1.25"
- 1 ea. 1.5-3"
- long slings

