YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

El Capitan

May 2011
A new generation of superclimbers is pushing the limits in Yosemite.


By Mark Jenkins
Photographs by Jimmy Chin

With no rope to save him, Dean Potter scales a route on Glacier Point called Heaven.
Above Yosemite

Like Never Before

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The distance between El Capitan and Half Dome summits is 5.8 miles (9.3 kilometers).
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THE ORIGINAL BIGWALL
EL CAP'S STEEPEST FACES

A HISTORY OF CLIMBING IN YOSEMITE

CLIMBING STYLES
Scaling El Capitan

We gratefully acknowledge www.theclimbing.com for permission to re-publish this map of El Capitan, the pinnacle of Yosemite's granite wall, in the Climbers' Handbook. El Capitan is the world's largest granite wall, with over 7000 feet of climbing opportunities. This map shows the main climbing routes and major features of the wall. The map includes all the major climbing routes, from the easy and accessible routes to the more difficult and challenging. The map also includes a legend for the different types of rock formations and climbing styles. The map is updated regularly to include the latest climbing routes and features. For more information, visit www.theclimbing.com.
El Capitan: RISING THE WALL
El Capitan's 3,000 vertical feet of sheer granite has made Yosemite a prime destination for climbers for decades. Climbers spend months—even years—planning and preparing for this climb. The route starts at the base and ascends to the summit. On a peak-season day 50 climbers may attempt El Cap, many on the most famous route, the Nose.

EL CAP MILESTONES
- 1948: El Cap's first ascent
- 1973: First free ascent
- 1995: First free solo ascent
- 2000: First free solo ascent without support

CLIMBING STYLES
- Free solo (no rope)
- Trad climbing (using bolts)
- Free climbing (no rope for protection)
- Topping out (reaching the summit)
- Rescue (in case of an emergency)

Climbing routes:
- Yosemite's Moonlight Route
- Nose Route
- Salathe Wall
- Ledges Route
- Roof Route

El Capitan offers a challenging and rewarding climbing experience at all levels.
El Capitan
ROARING THE WALL

El Capitan's 20,894 feet of sheer granite makes it one of the most challenging natural wonders for climbers. Climbers spend months—sometimes years—preparing their routes, often in sub-zero weather and extreme conditions.

EL CAP MILESTONES

- **1980:** John Long and Don Keesee climb the first 3,000-foot route, the Northwest Buttress.
- **1990:** The Nose route, a 3,000-foot climb, is established by Rodger Morris and Chris Nies.
- **2000:** The first person to climb the Nose in under six days is Pete Whittaker.
- **2010:** The first person to climb the Nose in under five days is Randy Rollins.

CLIMBING STYLES

- **Free Solo:** Climbers attempt to climb without ropes or equipment.
- **Trad Climbing:** Climbers place their own gear and use traditional techniques.
- **Ice Climbing:** Climbers use specialized equipment to navigate frozen terrain.

THE RACES

- **Bass Light Race:** A race of the Nose, summit to start.
- **Bass Light Race:** A race of the Nose, start to summit.
1958
First major ascent: Warren Harding and team climb the Nose in 47 days over a 17-month period.
EL CAPITAN
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