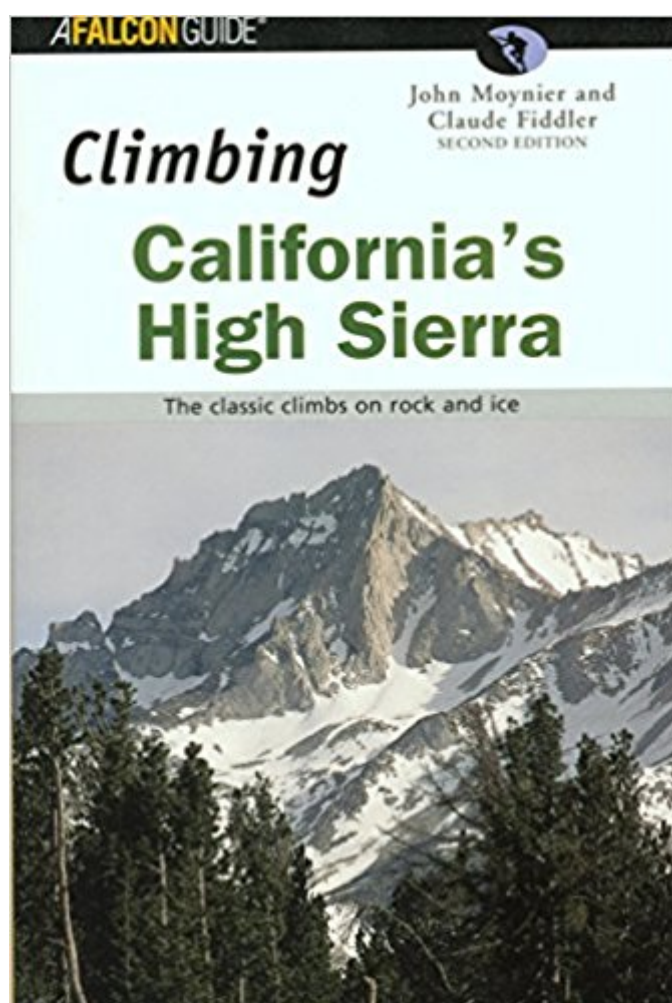


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Climbing California's High Sierra, 2nd: The Classic Climbs On Rock And Ice (Climbing Mountains Series)



Synopsis

In addition to detailed route descriptions, topos, and route ratings, the book offers a history of climbing in the region. A must-have for California climbers and for any climber traveling to the Sierra.

Book Information

Series: Climbing Mountains Series

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: FalconGuides; 2nd edition (December 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0762710853

ISBN-13: 978-0762710850

Product Dimensions: 9 x 5.9 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #667,017 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Mountaineering > Excursion Guides #776 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Mountaineering > Mountain Climbing #1034 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Hunting & Fishing > Fishing

Customer Reviews

Named the Range of Light by John Muir and rising 10,000 feet on its eastern side, California's High Sierra has attracted climbers for more than a century. These mountains are home to clean granite, easy approaches, and classic routes to the summits of the highest peaks in the continental United States. Climbing California's High Sierra provides the information needed to scale more than 100 of California's most challenging peaks. The climbs range from scrambles up Mount Stanford, to snow and rock routes on Red Slate Mountain, to technical routes on Mount Whitney. Look inside for detailed descriptions of routes, alternative routes, and descents. You'll also find: a brief history of climbing in the Sierra; descriptions of first ascents; maps, photos, drawings, and photo overlays of routes. Use this guide to discover the rewards and challenges of climbing California's High Sierra. (6 x 9, 448 pages, b&w photos, maps)

John Moynier is a veteran climber and author of *Avalanche Aware*, *The Basic Essentials of Climbing*, and two guidebooks. Claude Fiddler is a well-respected Sierra rock climber.

This is actually the second edition to "Sierra Classics: 100 Best Climbs in the High Sierra," although it has a new name. I gave the first one 5 stars and I feel just as strongly about this one. There has been some minor tweaking of the route selections, but the total number described is about the same. There is more narrative in this edition, and it is smoother reading. Way more than just a guide book, the many historical notes make the book very entertaining reading. I think that many people, picking it up to find out about a particular peak or route, will extend their visit and end up reading it cover to cover. There are more topos than before, and rock climbers will appreciate that. Personally, I prefer the thrill of discovery in the Sierra, and would rather work out the details on my own. As with the first edition, I am familiar with a number of the routes described in the book, and the authors have done a fine job of selection. While most of them are 5th class, class 3 and 4 climbs are also represented. So there is something for everyone.

This book is more a collection of climbing history and anecdotes than a profound guide book. In particular for easier climbs (less than 5.9) the technical route description is usually less than 2 sentences. Consistent information on wall height, number of pitches, typical climbing times, rock quality and necessary gear are missing completely. Only for some routes (mostly rated 5.10a or higher or very popular ascents in the Mt. Whitney range) handdrawn topos are provided that let you guess some of the details in advance. The only valuable information available for EVERY route is a photo of the mountain with the line of ascent. In case of a third edition the authors should familiarize with international standards. A more formal approach will prevent neglecting the large number of climbs that they have NOT done by themselves.

This is THE book to get ideas on what to climb. It's aimed at serious (but not elite) rock climbers and mountaineers. There are plenty of 5.9, 5.10 routes, but also many 3rd class routes, so even non technical climbers can get some use from the book. It has a few ice routes (in the Palisades and Evolutions), but focuses on rock. Most rock routes in the book are hard by my standards (and use sandbagged trad grades), but most are 5.10 and under. The book does not waste a lot of paper on the route descriptions, which some people may not like. It's the "anti-SuperTopo". Here's a sample route description of the class 3 East Arete on Mt. Carl Heller: "Route: From the end of George Creek Road, follow the rough route up the George Creek drainage to the lake below the east ridge of Mt. Carl Heller. From here, the route follows the obvious crest of the knife-edged ridge over steps (Class 3) to the summit." "Descent: Descend the south ridge (Class 3-4) until you can follow easier terrain down the west face. Cross back over Vacation Pass to reach the lake." (The approach to

George Creek was described at the beginning of the section). So, short and to-the-point. It's not always a bad thing, but just don't expect a flowery route description. Given the terse style, the lengthy history sections are a bit out of place, but usually interesting. I would agree with Bob Rockwell's review, but it might be worth mentioning that Bob Rockwell is quoted in the book, so presumably he knows at least one of the authors. So, if you want ideas of what to climb, use this book. If you want route descriptions, look for them elsewhere.

This is the 2nd edition of Moynier's and Fiddler's High Sierra "best of" guide. John Moynier and Claude Fiddler are very experienced Sierra climbers/guides with hundreds of routes and dozens of firsts to their respective credits. The authors have painstakingly selected over 100 outstanding routes ranging from moderate class 3 peak bagging exercises to Grade V walls and Grade VI linkup routes. The represented climbs are among the most popular and most sought after climbs in the range. Climbers of all skills and goals will benefit from this guide. They provide topos, verbal approach, climbing and descent descriptions and a rich historical perspective on climbing in the Range of Light. Improvements in this guide include more detailed topos, a larger selection of alternate routes, more historical anecdotes, and a refined selection of climbs. While this book is an excellent stand alone guide, many climbers would benefit from RJ Secor's Peaks, Passes and Trails as a companion guide. I rate this book 5 of 5. Most climbing guidebooks are dry material... just the facts Ma'am. But this one colors all of the technical data with stories of old heroes and epic struggles. Buy it so these guys will be tempted to write more!

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