

## Chauvin Guides International- The Pinnacle Route Description

**Rack-** A normal rack is all that is necessary for this climb.

**T**he Northeast Ridge of The Pinnacle is the most popular technical rock climb on Mount Washington. It's a fantastic route with excellent rock, belay ledges, and situations. The route is also very well protected. It's one of only a few climbs in the East that climbs any kind of a ridge (along with the Whitney Gilman Ridge and the Henderson Ridge in this area) and so should not be missed by climbers looking for this sort of climb. The climb has a very definite alpine feel to it and being so high up in Huntington Ravine gives it a degree of seriousness not often found on the lower crags.

**T**here are a couple of ways to approach this climb. The traditional way is to hike up to Huntington Ravine from Pinkham Notch. This is a hike of about three miles and most people should allow a couple of hours to complete it. Once you are in Huntington Ravine the most obvious landmark is the huge and obvious Central Gully. Central Buttress is just to the left of this and Pinnacle Buttress is the next buttress to the left. Scramble up towards the base of Pinnacle Gully, which separates these two rock formations. The start of the Pinnacle rock climb is about a hundred feet below and to the left of Pinnacle Gully at an easy, left-slanting crack with a tree in it.

**A** quicker approach can be made by driving up the auto road (\$18 plus \$6 for each person besides the driver, road opens at 7:30) about 6.5 miles to where you can hike straight down to the top of Huntington Ravine via the Huntington Ravine trail. This alternative eliminates a couple of hours hiking uphill with climbing gear. At the huge cairn that marks the intersection of the Huntington Ravine and Alpine Garden trails, follow the Huntington Ravine trail steeply down to where you can angle over right towards the base of The Pinnacle. There is a fair amount of scrambling and down climbing on this very steep trail, use caution. Another big benefit of this approach is that when you are done with the climb, it's only a short walk backup to the car.

**T**he Pinnacle Buttress can be climbed a multitude of ways. There are natural lines going almost everywhere. Consequently, there are a great many variations possible to the route description below. You may want to take advantage of the numerous ledges on the buttress to shorten pitches if it is windy and communication with your partner is a problem (wind on Mount Washington?). Also, if the need arises to bail off the route, just move to the left. At almost any point along the entire route it's possible to traverse off left onto much easier ground and scramble through brush and easy rock to the top or bottom.

**Pitch 1-100 ft, 5.3** **C**limb up the easy, left-slanting crack past the tree for about 40 feet to a large ledge. As soon as you reach the ledge, angle back towards the right up easy rock to the base of a shallow inside corner (pin in the bottom of the left wall). Good belay below the pin.

**Pitch 2-130 ft, 5.5** **C**limb the corner (5.5) and then up easier terrain to a good ledge directly beneath a steep wall with a shallow, right-facing inside corner at its base.

**Pitch 3- 50 ft, 5.7** **C**limb the inside corner (past a pin), and move a few steps left to the left hand end of a right-slanting ramp. Get onto the ramp (awkward 5.7) and move up a short ways to a good belay ledge identified by old fixed pins. You are now under a shallow V-slot with a number of pins around it. Climbing straight up from this belay is a 5.8 variation.

**Pitch 4- 30 ft, 4th class** **T**his short pitch is added to prevent rope drag on the next pitch. From the belay, scramble down the ramp to the left to get underneath the prominent shallow chimney. A good belay can be set just to the left of the chimney at a fixed pin which can be backed up.

**Pitch 5- 100 ft, 5.7** **T**he Allis Chimney. This is the crux of the climb (5.7). Climb up onto the slab at the base of the chimney (5.7, tricky). Then, stem up through the chimney past a piton (5.7) and past a chockstone. Exit right above onto another good ledge.

**Pitch 6- 75 ft, 5.2** **E**asy climbing up and across ledges will get you to a belay at the base of the next steep section.

**Pitch 7- 100 ft, 5.6** **C**limb this steep section via left-leaning cracks and then move a ways to the right, climbing past an awkward traverse (fixed pin). After the traverse move up a short ways to a big ledge and belay.

**Pitch 8- 100 ft, 5.4** **C**limb the last steep section rising from the ledge and then follow the ridge to the top.

**Descent-** To descend you first have to go up. Follow the climber's trail up into the talus and then climb up to the rocks until you reach the Alpine Garden Trail. If you drove up, turn right to reach the Huntington Ravine Trail and follow this back to your car. If you hiked up from Pinkham, you have two options. You can turn left and follow the Alpine Garden trail to the Lion Head or Tuckerman Ravine Trail and follow one of these back down to Pinkham. Or, to descend back through Huntington Ravine, turn right on the Alpine Garden Trail and go to the huge cairn that marks the intersection with the Huntington Ravine Trail. Follow this to the right very steeply back down into Huntington Ravine.