

Chauvin Guides International- Toe Crack Route Description

Rack- A standard rack is all that is really necessary for this climb. Some may want to double up on large nuts or midsize cams.

Toe Crack is the beautiful, clean hand crack just to the left of Standard Route. The climb gives outstanding jamming and protection throughout the whole length of the crack. A must-do climb that is very popular. Use the Thin Air approach to get to the start of this climb. Enter the woods a short ways past the climber's bulletin board at a sandy pull out on the left. There should be a sign here marking the trail to Thin Air. Follow the trail past a large boulder and up to the cliff. Follow the trail to the left up the steep, broken trail and go about 60 feet uphill past the big obvious chimney that marks Standard Route. The start is a narrow left facing corner that turns into a flake, located at the bottom of an impressive section of the Thin Air face.

Pitch 1- 100 ft, 5.7 **C**limb the easy corner and follow it to the right as it turns into more of a flake. Continue to the right, passing a fixed pin and reach a large inside corner facing left where you can get good gear. Make a tricky step down and around the corner to the right to reach the base of the Toe Crack. Climb the crack (fantastic jamming) until you're level with a small ledge on the right where there is a tree growing out of a horizontal crack. Belay here. The tree can be easily backed up with gear in the horizontal crack. It's possible to either belay right at the tree or extend your anchor down and stand on another good ledge just below. Because of the traversing nature of this pitch beware of rope drag and watch that you don't set your partner up for a swing.

(Variation 1) At the big corner, instead of stepping down and around to the right, it's also possible to climb straight up and angle right to join the Toe Crack part way up. You miss some of the best part of the crack but may have an easier time controlling rope drag and protecting your second.

(Variation 2) Some people belay at the base of the crack. If you do this, have a plan for getting your second down and around the corner to your stance safely. **(Variation 3)** It's also possible to climb up from directly below to the base of Toe Crack. To do this you start just uphill from the Standard Route chimney at an easy dike. Climb the easy dike past a bolt and then move left up a thin crack. Move left again up a crack and flakes to the start of the crack. This start is 5.8 and about 60 feet. The gear is OK but a little tricky to find and place.

Pitch 2- 120 ft, 5.6 **C**limb the crack until it ends. Step left at this point and do some beautiful face climbing up an arete past fixed gear to the large tree at the entrance to the cave on Standard Route. **(Variation 1)** When the crack ends traverse left and up to the double bolt anchor with chains just below the Thin Air bolted anchor. Good gear can be placed on this traverse but you have to work a little to find it. Excellent gear can also be found just above and to the right of the belay ledge to protect your second at the end of the traverse.

Now what? Ascent options- From the double bolt anchor it's easy to continue up Thin Air. From the tree belay it's easy to continue up Standard Route or Repulsion. From the tree it's also possible to traverse left and up to the big ledge above the tree on Thin Air. Easy climbing but no protection on the traverse. **Descent options-** From the double bolt anchor, two ropes easily get you down to where you started. One 60 or 55 m rope makes it possible to rappel down to a series of ledges which will get to the ground if you pendulum to the left (South) as you go down. Watch that you don't rap off the ends of your rope. From the tree, two 60 or 55 m ropes will get you to the ground or close enough to down climb just the very bottom of the easy left facing corner at the start of the climb. If you only have one rope you'll have to rap down Standard Route.