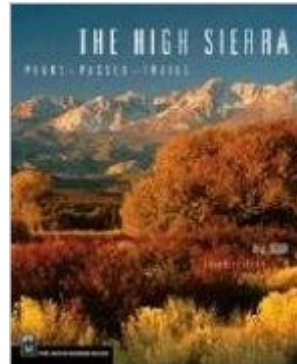


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The High Sierra: Peaks, Passes, And Trails



Synopsis

A guide to the Sierra Mountains that details mountains and trails of Sierra high country where glaciated valleys, pinnacles and spires, moonscape meadows, and alpine lakes - combined with the region's characteristic good weather - offer hikers, climbers, skiers, and cross country ramblers an opportunity for wilderness, exploration and discovery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you must own only one guidebook for the Sierra Nevada, this is the one to get. Here, Secor expands upon his first edition--itself being built on those which have gone before. With each new version, improvement comes from the additional routes, new information, more illustrations. And, errors are found and corrected. The pictures are particularly good this time around, with many of the important routes sketched in. Many climbers will prefer to simply take along a copy of the picture (first getting the publisher's permission, of course) rather than the written description. No matter what your reasons are for venturing into the high country, this book should satisfy all your planning and informational needs, and then some. An unfortunate byproduct is that--at over 460 pages and 2 pounds--few people will want to carry it on their backcountry trips. Simply put, Secor writes excellent guidebooks, and his experience shows. If I have any quibble with his present effort, it is that a number of the climbing routes are unnecessarily detailed and descriptive, leaving little for the first-timer to discover for himself. However, I have heard others say that many route descriptions are too skimpy for their liking, so you just can't please everyone.

If you want to climb as many peaks as possible in the High Sierra, this is your book. Secor describes an enormous number of different hiking/climbing opportunities. He does not bother with the most obvious stuff, such as well-known trails that are easy to find, but instead tells you about places you might not have thought about. There is information on cross-country routes (such as George Creek, Tuttle Creek, and the Enchanted Gorge), which is important because these rough and difficult routes are not discussed in trail guides, and are also overlooked in climbing guides. This book might not be enough information for doing a technical climb on a big wall like Lone Pine Mountain or Tehipite Dome, but will tell you about the approach routes. This is useful if you want to get a good look at these mountains from some neighboring ridge, but don't necessarily want to scale the actual cliffs. It is better for wilderness trekking, off-trail hiking, and mountaineering than it is for pure wall climbing. It is therefore an ideal guide for people who want to cover a lot of ground and see some extremely remote and beautiful scenery rather than stay at one site and go up and down a wall.

I bought this book before heading out to the SF bay area for a summer project last year. I mainly used descriptions of off-trail routes to do some 1-day scrambles on various peaks in the Sierra as well as for an excursion off the John Muir trail on a backpacking trip through King's Canyon NP. This book is meant for off-trail travel and technical climbing (and mostly the latter). If you really only want to stick to the trail it's the wrong guide, but the nice thing about the Sierra is that it's easy to leave the trail. I'm not a technical climber, but because the book is very comprehensive there's still lots of interesting stuff for me. It has shown me a side of the Sierra that, being not familiar with this part of the US at all, I probably would not have seen otherwise.

This may be the most exhaustive climbing guidebook in existence. All bow down to Secor! But I find myself wishing for a bit more. How many peaks are in there with a two-sentence review like, "First Ascent: May 13, 1897 by Elmore and Paola Bohunk. Peak X is class 2 from the north ridge." All this is true, but I could go for more detailed route descriptions of approaches, routes, and of the views from the summit. Some mountains aren't great climbs, but they have good views. On the other hand, the book is already too heavy for most people to backpack with. Secor must have been tempted to add info and split the book into multiple volumes; I think he should keep entertaining that option. I would probably buy them all. In summary, this book is NOT the one-stop-shop for trip planning in the Sierras. I invariably find myself scouring the web for additional, more detailed information than in Secor. But it is a truly unique resource, and I think it's unfortunate to criticize it too much for what it

omits.

Don't buy this book before flipping through it. If you're looking for a climbing guide along the lines of the typical area book, you'll be disappointed -- nothing in the way of route topos, and minimal route descriptions in many cases. If, however, you're looking to get into the wilderness and do some adventure climbing/heavy hiking, this book is perfect. Secor must assume his readers are intelligent and have the necessary skills for backcountry travel, navigation and route finding. The book is best as a general trip planning guide that one may supplement with other sources of information where more detail is wanted. Wouldn't take it on the trail with me, due to weight.

This is an excellent guide to California's Sierra Nevada. Secor provides a great range of reliable information. The first time I depended on him, I came to a high pass and wondered if it really was the class 2 he claimed (doable without equipment and great risk of falling off). It looked harder. I cautiously decided to give it a try--and he was right. His descriptions are brief, but sufficiently precise to be useful. Anyone hiking in the Sierra will want this book

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