

Namibia Route Descriptions

Spitzkoppe North Wall

This is Africa (25 or 24 A0) *** [B, N, C]**

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This route is located on the North Wall of Spitzkoppe approximately 50 meters before Three Step Chimney on the regular route approach.

A truly remarkable crack climb. If you like chimneys, off-widths, hand jamming, finger jamming and laybacking then this is the climb for you. Amazing that it remained unclimbed for so long. The route was climbed ground up, including placing the bolts and cleaning off the loose rock.

At the time of writing the first ascensionists have not freed the 5th pitch and the grade is estimated.

Gear:

14 Quick draws / extenders

Double/Triple rack of cams BD#0.3 to BD#3, 2 x BD#4, 1 x BD#5, 2 x BD#6

Standard rack of wires and offset wires

Slings for threads

2 x 50m ropes

Pitch 1 (24 Off-width) 45m:

7 Bolts and trad. Big cams essential. Be prepared for a real fight if you are planning to free the pitch. A steep start leads to a ledge inside the chimney, gather yourself for the upcoming battle. Back and foot up the chimney first protected by bolts and then by large cams and the occasional bolt. The chimney turns into an off-width BD#4 crack towards the top of the pitch. Struggle up this to gain a bolted semi-hanging stance.

Pitch 2 (21) 30m:

1 Bolt and trad. Climb up the excellent steep corner crack on good jams. Towards the top of the corner the crack turns to a finger crack where the rock becomes a bit chossy. Don't place gear in the final section of the crack instead place wires in the bottom of the 'middle' crack. Hand jam and carefully bridge up the left of three cracks (the grey one) past good jams and gear. Where the crack pitches closed traverse right to stand on a 'time bomb pillar' and clip the bolt. Climb up and right past the bolt into the roof crack with excellent jamming. Keep heading right continually amazed by the great climbing with good pro, good foot holds and bomber jams. The crack tapers closed at the bolted semi-hanging stance.

Pitch 3 (24) 40m:

3 Bolts and trad. The crack is too small to be helpful. Make a reachy move to a good hold on the face that allows you to clip the first bolt. A hard boulder sequence on the face leads past this and back into the crack allowing you to clip the 2nd bolt. Continue up the crack via sustained laybacks and jamming. Eventually you reach another bolt that is placed to keep your rope to the left of a flake. Climb past the flake treating it with care (it is well connected from the top but the bottom half appears unattached) to a hanging bolted stance.

Pitch 4 (19) 30m:

4 Bolts and trad. Continue up the crack, which is thankfully easier, past a fig creeper into a chimney and up a slab (past 2 bolts) to a bolted stance.

Pitch 5 (25 estimated or 20 A0) 35m:

Mostly bolted but crucial cam placements in the horizontal break before the boulder problem crux. Climb rightwards along an easy slab on good rock until a steep wall forces you up towards the roof. Make delicate moves to gain the rail (crucial gear). Move right and up (crux) into the undercut wall with slippery and delicate footwork on the slab (bolts). Make powerful moves right past the arete and move onto the slab (closely bolted). Once established on the slab move easily right to a bolted stance on a ledge (1 move not yet freed – getting established into the undercling).

Pitch 6 (10) 30m:

Trad. Move right from the stance and up onto a ledge. Walk up a narrow chimney until it is possible to climb up an easy ramp on the right. Climb this to a bolted stance on a ledge. This is the 1st abseil on the normal descent route.

Pitch 7 (easy) 15m:

Scramble right and up to the summit.

Descent:

Follow the regular descent route from the summit. If bailing off the route before the end note that most abseils will require back clipping. The route does have mallons for abseiling but take note that abseiling down the route is difficult.



Rob Powell on the top of the chimney pitch 1.



Vittoria Camisassi retrieving a cam just after the crux of pitch 1 (24 OW) of **This is Africa**.



Vittoria ecstatic to be arriving at the anchors after the pitch 1 off-width.



Rob enjoying the steep crack with perfect jams on the start of pitch 2.



Rob on the top of pitch 2.



Vittoria enjoying the perfect jams on pitch 2.



Rob past the hard boulder sequence at the start of pitch 3.



Vittoria climbing the sustained pitch 3.



Rob fully loaded on the 4th pitch on the 1st ascent.



Rob climbing and bolting on lead on pitch 5 on the 1st ascent.



Rob bolting the crux on pitch 5.