

Baxter State Park Technical Rock Climbing Guidelines



Chimney Pond is the center of rock climbing activity at Katahdin. **Please check in with the Gate or Roaring Brook Ranger to inform the Chimney Pond Ranger of your climbing intentions.** Chimney Pond is a 2 hour hike from the roadside. Route information is available at Chimney Pond, both from the ranger and from an informal route book kept by the ranger. Most of the routes are long and the approaches and descents are even longer. Technical rock and ice climbing in Baxter State Park is considered a day use activity. **Please note BSP Rule 2.2: Park users must be reasonably prepared and equipped for the activity they are engaged in, and must take reasonable precautions against endangering themselves or others. Registration of technical rock/ice climbers is required.** Bivouacs are not permitted. The rock itself is highly weathered alpine granite, and though the freezing and thawing action have created many good cracks and holds, it has also produced an abundance of loose rock. **No equipment is available for rental.** Besides climbing gear, recommended equipment includes rain gear, at least 2 liters of water, first aid kit, map and compass. **A working headlamp or flashlight is required and climbing helmets are strongly recommended due to the loose rocks and gravel.** In all climbing routes on Katahdin, there may be old anchors or rappel stations. You should always inspect, back up or build your own anchor, which may require leaving personal gear. Be prepared to build such anchors and bring extra gear. Only leave gear behind if absolutely necessary for your own personal safety.

Respect for the environment and a commitment to Leave No Trace climbing techniques are required of the climbing community. The Park does not allow practices such as placing of bolts, gardening of routes, or chipping or gluing new holds. Remember to practice clean climbing ethics and adopt the following practices for low impact climbing:

- Accept responsibility for yourself and others.
- Pack out all litter.
- Bury human waste away from water (200' if possible) or pack it out.
- Know and respect historic and environmentally sensitive areas.
- Be considerate of wildlife and other users.
- Leave the rock and its environs in its natural state.
- Know and abide by the BSP Rules & Regulations.

Popular Climbing Routes of Katahdin:

The Diamonds: 5.2-5.9; 2-3 pitches. Approach time (bushwhack): 1/2 to 1 hour - moderate. These 250'-400' cliffs just above Chimney Pond have many 2-3 pitch climbs. Though quite alpine in character, they provide the nearest equivalent to crag climbing here. The Diamonds has some crack climbs that may have seeping water after heavy rains. To exit off the Diamonds, rappel down to the base and follow your approach route.

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The Chimney: 5.5; 1 Pitch. Approach time (bushwhack): 1 hour - moderate. This very loose, wet gully is probably the best known route on the mountain, owing to its inclusion in various hiking guides. There is approximately 1,200 feet of scree to climb at the beginning of this route due to the number of avalanches from previous winters. One pitch of 5.5 climbing is necessary to bypass the huge first chock stone.

* The Armadillo: 5.7-5.8; 2-3 pitches plus 4-5 5th class. Approach time (bushwhack): 2-3 hours - difficult with 5th class terrain. This route requires an early start, leaving Chimney Pond by no later than 8:00 am. This route follows a very long and exposed buttress. The crux is a 4" wide crack and is 60' long. Once past the buttress, pitch-climb or simul-climb for several hundred feet on an arête that is 5th class up to South Peak and Knife Edge. The fastest descent back to your vehicle at Roaring Brook is the Saddle Trail to Chimney Pond. Remember to sign out with the campground ranger before hiking down the Chimney Pond Trail (3.3 miles) to the Roaring Brook parking lot.

* The Flatiron: 5.7-5.8; 2-3 pitches. Approach time (bushwhack): 2-3 hours - difficult. The approach is the same as the Armadillo. Once in the Black Gullies at the second vegetative band, turn right for the Flatiron or left for the Armadillo. This climb has a extended approx. 2.5" crack climb and extra gear in this range may be helpful. Like the Armadillo, this is a big buttress route that emerges on Knife Edge, not far from Baxter Peak. It has equally beautiful situations and in some ways, more consistently enjoyable climbing. Some people rappel off the top of the Flatiron slab. If continuing on, 4-6 pitches to reach the summit with loose/unstable rock of 5.5-5.6.

* Pamola #4: 5.5-5.6; 8-11 pitches. Pending approach-many variations. Slab/arête climbing ends on Pamola Peak. There is unstable loose rock in places. This route is one of the longest in the park and requires an early start time from Chimney Pond. Leave no later than 8:00 am.

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Sign in and out at all trail registers. Check with the Chimney Pond ranger for local weather conditions. Let a friend know your plans and notify someone when you return. Baxter State Park rangers will not start a search until after a climber is reported overdue. Technical rescue may be hours away.