

Mini-Guide Lower Domingo Baca

This describes the collection of short trad and mixed routes that are found on the assorted boulders and slabs in the lower Domingo Baca canyon area. These are all easy to moderate routes (but I am sure there are harder offerings here) and range from 50 to 160 feet. The rock is good quality, with finer grain crystals than found at 3-gun springs. I started dinking around in this area in the mid-90s looking for a spot to fix my winter climbing addiction. Based on the old pitons, museum quality ring-bolts and fragments of slings this area had been used and explored from the 70s on.... So every thing you do has probably been already done, and I am sure someone has soloed most of these slabs: so be it!!!

Why bother? Has the snow or brutal winds forced you out of the upper Sandias? Are craving the feel of granite in the middle of the winter? Are you tired of 2+ hour driving from Albuquerque to climb when there is a ton of rock right in your back yard? Then you can play here. All these routes face south, are at a low elevation in the Sandias, and can be climbed in the middle of the winter on a sunny day. If it is in the high 40s in Albuquerque and the wind is not blowing you can climb here (even though 50 and 60s feel better). Looking at the names you will see that many of these climbs were done in January and February during some of the notoriously dry and warm winters. We usually find our selves climbing here in early spring or late fall, and by linking a lot these climbs can put in a full day. There are no trails connecting any of the formations, and the brush and cactus can be intense if you wander in the wrong directions. Long climbing pants are strongly suggested.

Warnings: This area is a haven for rattle snakes. So if you are in the climbing here in the warmer months, be very CAREFUL! Rumors abound that there is a snake den in one of the bolder clusters. I never see them in the dead of the winter.

Warnings: Domingo Baca is within the wilderness area. This means please keep your impact to a minimum, and try not to attract the attention of the occasional hiker who wanders through. Leave webbing only if necessary, and try to use natural colors. Since it is in the wilderness this means no power drills. All the bolts you will find have been hand drilled, with most being done on lead from stances or hooks.

Approach: From E.G. open area, park in the east most lot and follow the natural trail north-east. You cross into the wilderness area at the base of the Domingo Baca canyon. Head up trail until you see these formations on the north (left side of the canyon). A good starting point is to hike up to the base of the "Out of Darkness Slabs". Approach time is 30-40 minutes (car to slab).

The area is divided into several distinct slabs – route descriptions are given below.

Enjoy!



Out of Darkness Slab

A: February Wind, (5.5-5.5)

B: January Sun, (5.7_ Joins out of darkness from the left – original line before bolts)

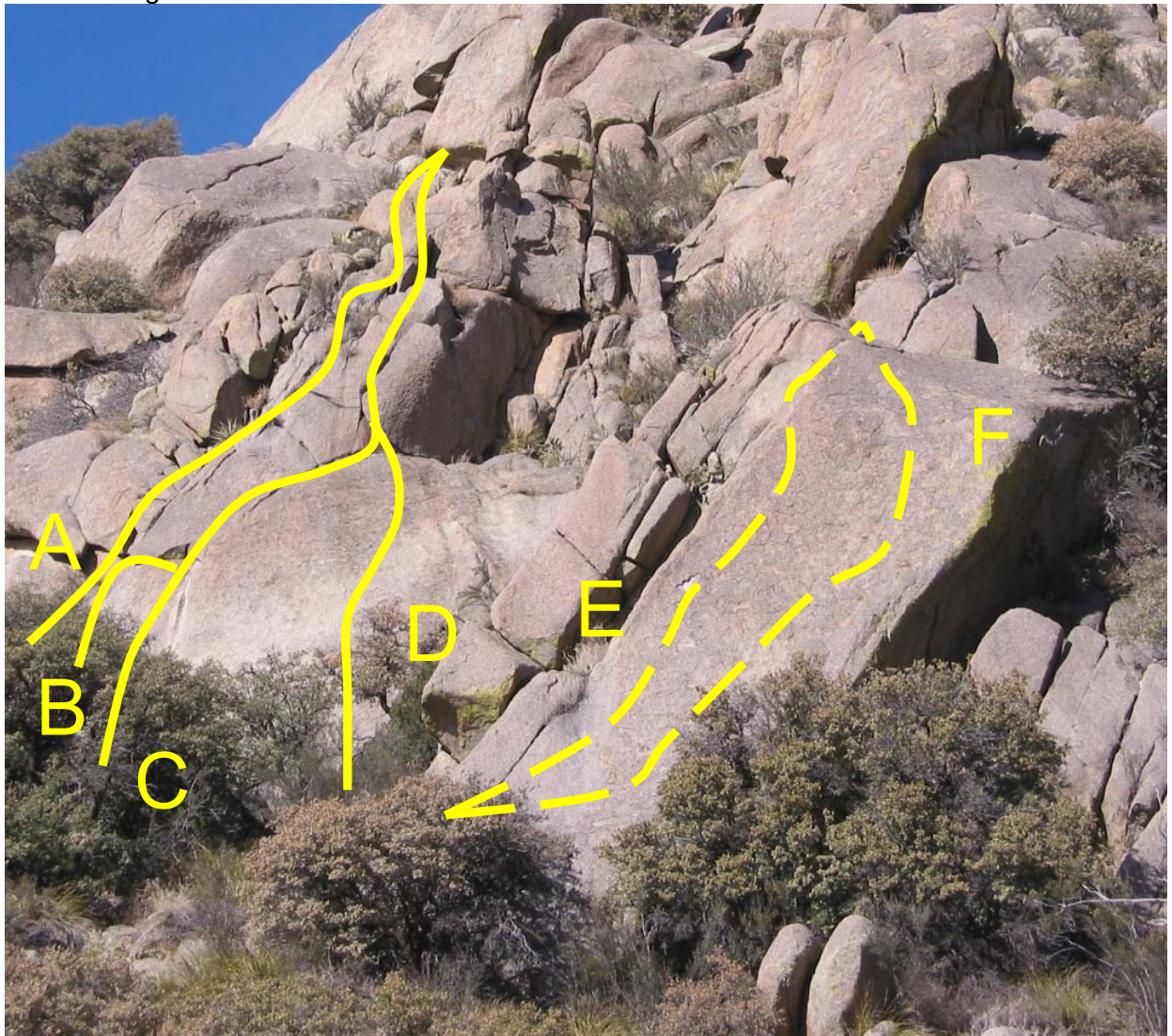
C: Out of Darkness (5.8, ***) 2 bolts to natural gear, 0.75 cam helpful in a small slot about 20 feet above 2nd bolt, gear to 4". Starts in the shade of the oak trees at the base of this slab and climbs directly up to first bolt just above tree line.

D: Slab Sacrilege (5.9+, ***) 3 bolts to same finish as out of darkness, gear to 4". Make sure your belayer is attentive when clipping the first 3 bolts on this route.

Snake Skin Tower

E: TR – no gear. Can set TR by scrambling up the left side of formation

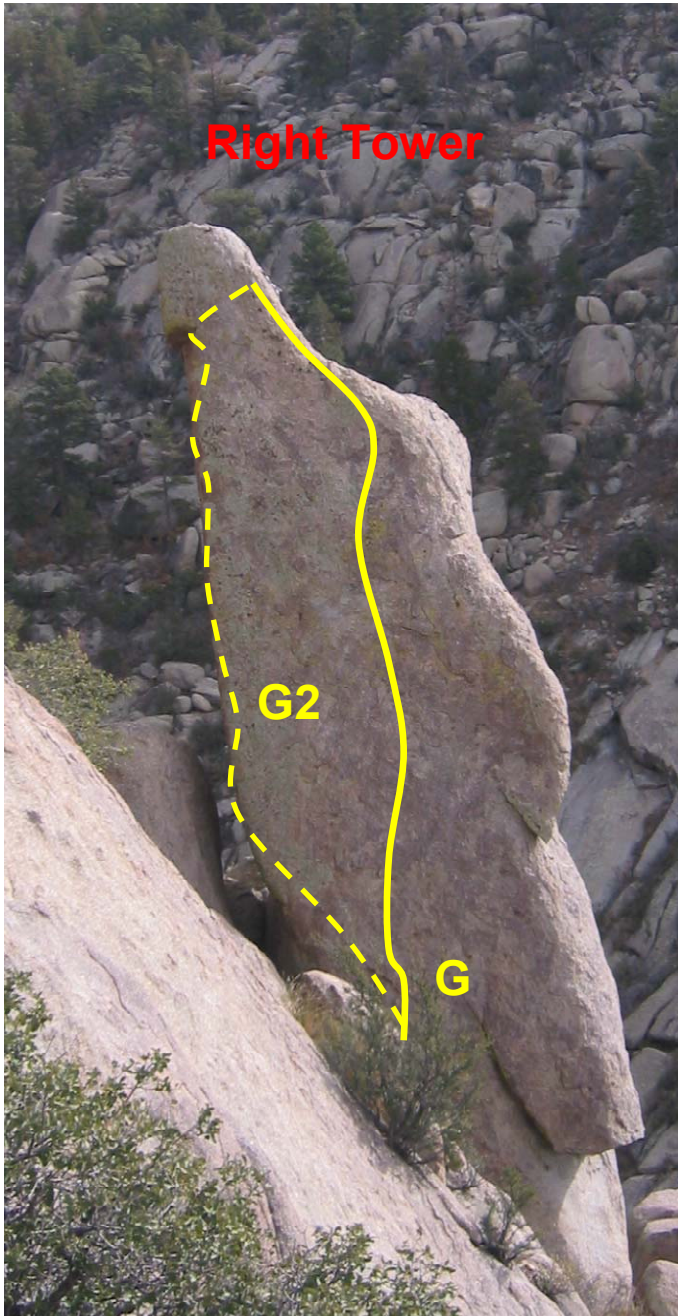
F: TR – no gear



Right Tower

G: Simply Replaced (5.9, ***) Nice but short. Original route line lost to history. An old line based on the O-ring bolts here. I pulled 2 of these old bolts out by hand, but there are 2 remaining on the route for your inspection..... Pro - all bolts.

G2: Green Snake (5.10, TR) TR the nice arête to the left of Simply Replaced... try to stay on the arête and do not drift back into the Simply Replaced face.



Winter Solstice Slab

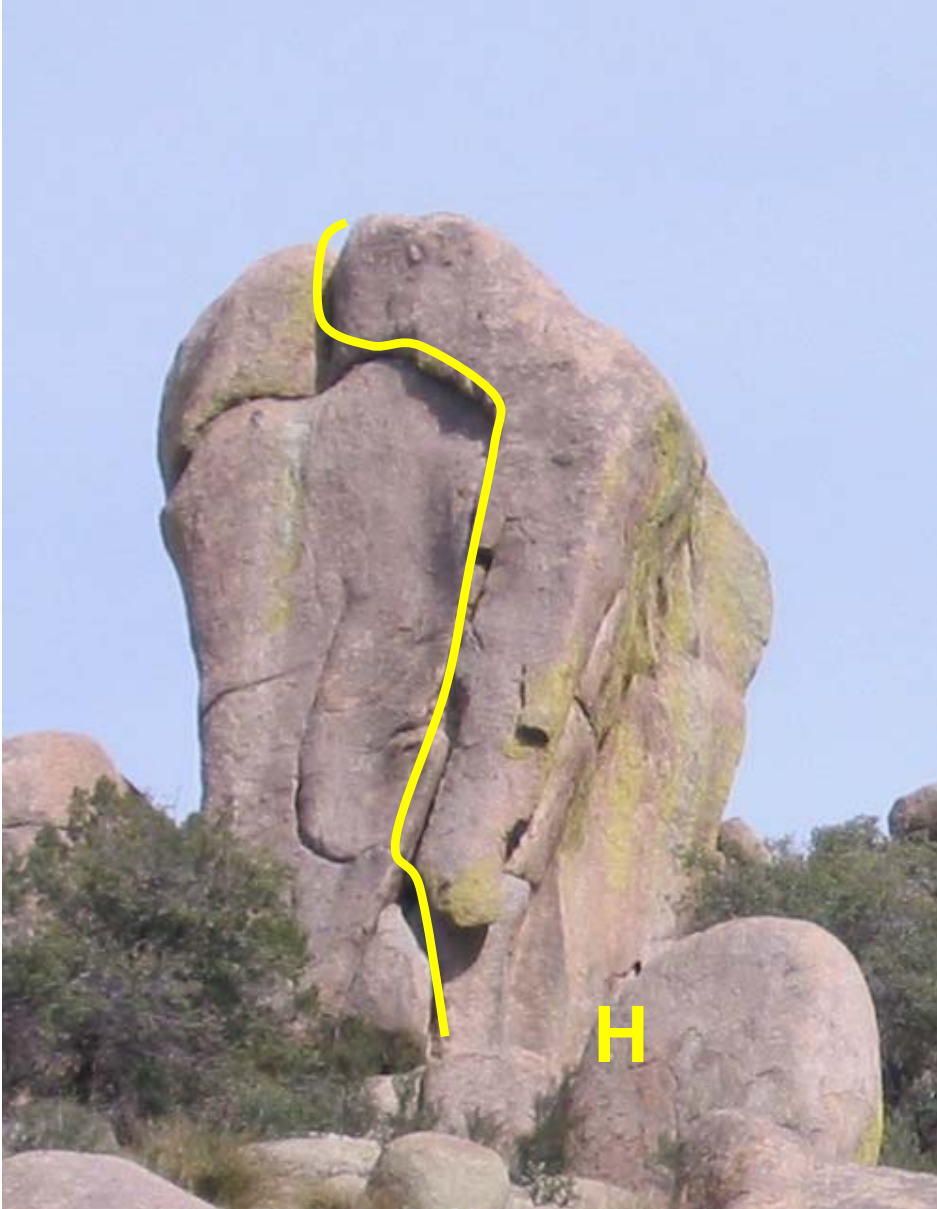
I: The Surprise (5.8) Really runout until you hit winter solstice crack – you will hit the ground if you screw it up. TR it instead.

J: Winter Solstice (5.6, ****) A great climb for this grade, very clean. Only issue is the 30+ feet to the first bolt. It was first led without the bolt, which was added to make this a climb available for the new leader. Gear - full rack to 3.5 “



Left Tower

H: Unconfirmed route grade. Also as of 1/08 the ancient bolts on top have not been replaced – rappel at your own risk.



Upper Dome

L: Last Chance (5.7 **) Work to the 3 cracks splitting this upper face. Too bad it is not 2 pitches long.

K: Overhang Corner (5.8-5.9) work up corner to finish on cracks of upper dome.

M: The Face (5.10) The face to the right of the corner, using small knbs until you reach the small roof. Slightly decomposing, but is cleaning up with time (TR yet at this point, no gear for the first 30 hard feet).

