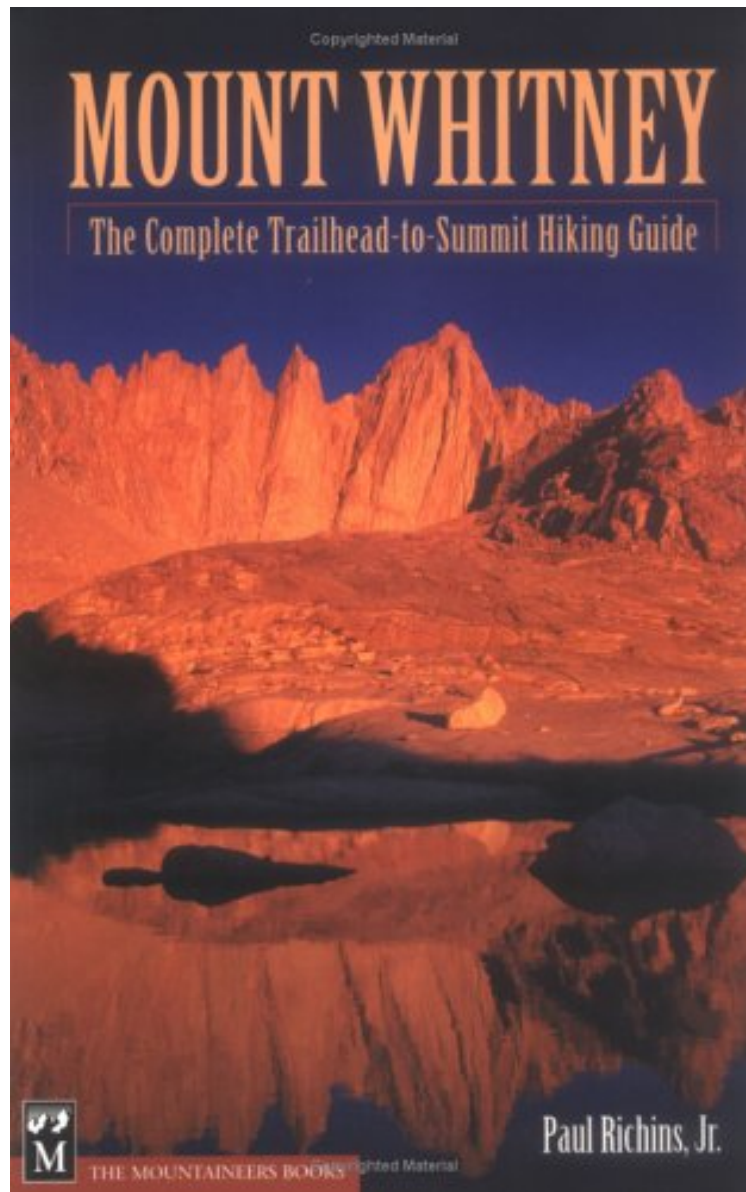


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# Mount Whitney: The Complete Trailhead-To-Summit Hiking Guide

*Paul Richins Jr.*

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**Paul Richins Jr. : Mount Whitney: The Complete Trailhead-To-Summit Hiking Guide** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mount Whitney: The Complete Trailhead-To-Summit Hiking Guide:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Best Whitney guide availableBy J. JanssenThe author, Paul Richins,

Jr., starts off this excellent back country guide with a brief introduction to the region, some cautionary commentary, and some real world common sense recommendations on what, and what not to bring on your trip(s). He then describes useage of the book and proceeds to detail the various routes. He covers the basics of getting to the trailheads, details various legs of the routes with common stops and starts and points out areas of risk where appropriate. Unlike other reviewers, I found his approach to be accurate on the trails I am familiar with, but I would caution anyone attempting these trips to thoroughly map out their trek using the most current topographic maps available. I think the other reviewers that found fault with the book were negligent in recognizing that it is a "guide" book, not a scientific treatise. The trail and cross country conditions one encounters are not static and a certain degree of subjectivity must creep into descriptions that change from season to season. For that reason no one should ever plan a back country trip based solely on a guide book written years distant from one's own journey. Additinally, trail conditions should be verified at the appropriate Ranger Station, ideally speaking directly with field Rangers who have been in the area recently. Finally, current, up to date topographic maps and the ability to read them along with reasonably proficient back country skills are the bare minimums for any of the cross country routes and the multi day trail hikes detailed in the text. With regard to the criticism leveled against the author's description of the "Meysan Lake Route", I don't know what these reviewers were talking about. First of all, if it's a "route" it involves cross-country travel and the author clearly delineates this in the description. Further, he goes on to describe it as a "strenuous" route and labels it class 2. A little bit of common sense gleaned from the telling data of a 8971' elevation gain in 12.1 miles should be sufficient for anyone attempting it. I've made this one and I might be more apt to label it class 3 as it is strenuous, if not downright grueling....it's also magnificent. This book is as good as any guide book out there, is well written and contains a lot of information on this specific area just not available elsewhere. If you're going to hike in the Whitney area, it's a must have....just make sure you have the requisite skills to handle the adversity that comes with the territory. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Whitney High Country guide By 410As Mt Whitney is the highest peak in the continental US it draws a great variety of hikers, ranging from the experienced to the clueless looking for bragging rights. Hence getting a permit for the direct route takes luck in the lottery or a last minute cancellation. Aside from the altitude change, climbing Whitney by the standard route is no big shakes, as there is a class I trail that goes all the way to the summit. No guide book is needed, only maps, fitness, and the usual backcountry common sense and supplies (and those who don't know what those are probably shouldn't be tackling Whitney just yet). What makes this book nice is the variety of approach routes described, from the standard trail route to more challenging off-trail/cross country routes. Essentially the book is a collection of hikes of the Whitney high country that intersect with the summit at some point. This is highly relevant as the 1-3 trip permits are hard to come by, but multi-day treks starting farther away and ending at Whitney are more easily obtained, not to mention the beautiful country encountered along the way. The maps of the book complement topo maps: they are more simplified and easy to read, facilitating planning and consideration of options. Nothing in the book requires climbing gear if one is going once the snow has melted... The mountaineer's route is the most difficult one covered here and a roped climbing oriented crowd probably wants a supertopo guide instead of this. Additional note: This book appears to have gone out of print. While the list price seems fair this is in no way worth collector prices. 28 of 30 people found the following review helpful. Good guide with some cautionary notes By Candace Scott This is the standard book in assisting novice Whitney hikers to the summit. If you have never hiked the main trail to Whitney, or if you want to try the alternate routes, then this is a well-written guide, with insight from an experienced hiker and climber. There is ample information on how to secure a permit for the main trail, when to contact the Ranger Station and additional info on the annual May lottery. However, there are some problems with the author's descriptions of various other trails and this is imperative to point out. For example, the Meysan Lakes chapter claims that anyone can summit Mt. Whitney via the Meysan Lakes trailhead. This is problematic at best, and a falsehood at its worse. There is a trail to Meysan Lakes, but there is \*no trail\* afterwards until you hook up with the main Whitney Trail. The author fails to mention that an any hiker attempting the middle sections of this trail must have developed route-finding skills and this section would be a class 3 hike. This is omitted from the book and consequently, could cause hikers some serious problems. I also quibble with the author's assessment of what is difficult and what is not. I've summited Whitney many times and regard a time of 11 hours (when not trail running) as pretty swift. However, the author says that "standard" or average time in hiking Whitney is 10 hours for a day hike. This is a little elitist and only well-conditioned hikers make it in that time. This also presents novices with faulty information. When they struggle to get done in 16 hours, they might rely on this book's information and regard that time as pathetic. So be careful with this guide and the information contained within. I still recommend it, and the elevation maps for each trail are interesting. I respect the author, who has summited Whitney via the various routes described and who has even done Everest. But check around with others before attempting any trail aside from the main one and best of luck.

This is the definitive guide to Mount Whitney. Its well-researched route descriptions and planning information make this a must-have resource.

If you're up for the challenge you'll want to get a copy of [this book]. -- Tail Winds

From the Author

Based on many years of backpacking and ski mountaineering experience in the Mount Whitney environs, I have carefully-crafted this guidebook to include thirteen hiking routes to Whitney's lofty summit for outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities. Eight routes follow established trails over their entire course while five others traverse seldom-trodden trail-less terrain linking one trail with another before reaching the highest point in the 48-contiguous states. This coveted peak has much to offer those willing to leave civilization behind and explore the vast wildernesses surrounding this magnificent mountain. The book is an important resource for all outdoor enthusiasts regardless of experience and skill level. The first several chapters focus on safe and enjoyable wilderness travel. The later chapters contain detailed descriptions of single-day and multi-day ascents of the peak. Several of the cross-country routes are difficult: probably more difficult than you might imagine. Those attempting these excursions should have extensive route-finding experience and be in excellent physical condition. Not only have I hiked each route depicted in the guide on foot but I have traversed the region on mountaineering skis several times. Based on these many experiences, I was careful to describe the potential difficulties one might encounter on the cross-country ventures. However, it is easy to get off-route where further complications can occur. A well-conditioned and experienced hiker may be required to tackle these unanticipated difficulties. I hope you benefit from the guidebook, but more importantly, that you have many opportunities to safely climb to the top of Whitney. I would be happy to answer any of your questions. I can be reached at [prichins@jps.net](mailto:prichins@jps.net) or my website the Backcountry Resource Center. Happy Hiking, Paul Richins, Jr.

About the Author

Paul Richins was raised in Weaverville, California, and started hiking in the Trinity Alps at age 12. He has more than 35 years of wilderness experience backpacking, mountain climbing, ski mountaineering, and white-water kayaking. As a longtime member of the American Alpine Club and the Sierra Club, he has participated in a number of major expeditions to Alaska (West Ridge of Mount Hunter and the South Ridge of Saint Elias), Canada (East Ridge of Mount Logan), Argentina (Cerro Aconcagua), and Tibet (Cho Oyu, the sixth-highest peak in the world). Paul Richins and two climbing partners completed the first ascent of the Southwest Ridge of Stortind, an impressive peak in the Lyngen Alps of northern Norway. In addition, he has climbed many other peaks in Norway, Argentina, Canada, Ecuador, and the western United States. He has hiked extensively throughout the Sierra Nevada and has climbed hundreds of peaks in California. He has climbed Mount Whitney by the various routes detailed in this guidebook and has completed a ski ascent and descent of Mount Whitney's Mountaineers Route. Paul Richins is author of the highly successful ski mountaineering guidebook *50 Classic Backcountry Ski and Snowboard Summits in California: Mount Shasta to Mount Whitney*. He also maintains the Backcountry Resource Center, a website of valuable information for the backcountry skier, climber, or hiker wishing to explore the mountains of California, the United States, Canada, and beyond. Professionally, Paul Richins is an economist working as a project manager at the California Energy Commission, overseeing the work of a multidisciplinary team of engineers, planners, and environmental scientists. He lives in El Dorado Hills, California, with his daughter, Sierra Nicole Richins. Paul Richins is interested in your feedback and encourages your comments on the book. His email address is [prichins@jps.net](mailto:prichins@jps.net).