



The North Shore, with dots marking belays, on the NW face of The Big Island. Kor's Echo Canyon route follows the wide right-facing corner visible at the left edge of the formation, and Wild Bill's Wall is around the corner on the NE face. *Vera Schulte-Pelkum/Alpinecreative.com*

*Black Canyon of the Gunnison, Big Island, North Shore.* In June, Jared Ogden and I completed the North Shore (5.11+), a new route on the northwest face of the Big Island. The Big Island is a huge flat-topped formation off Cross Fissures Overlook. The climb follows an invisible line on excellent rock with sustained difficulty, similar in character to Eldorado Canyon. Be looking for a pile of white rocks amid the black, marking the start of the North Shore. The route begins in thin cracks up improbable-looking rock, with good but challenging protection. Ten pitches to the summit, a 60m rappel into a notch, and two easy pitches to Cross Fissures Overlook finish the adventure. Take triple sets of thin cams. Ours was probably the third ascent of the Big Island, after Layton Kor's mysterious Echo Canyon route and Wild Bill's Wall. The unpopular nature of the Big Island is no surprise; finding this quality line around the dirty slabs, bushy corners, and discontinuous cracks took several seasons. A topo can be found at the North Rim Visitor Center.

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