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Alan James, July 2003
A detailed guide to climbing this World Classic route in Norway

Stetind South Pillar

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Stetind South Pillar MiniGUIDE
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ROCKFAX MiniGUIDE design by Alan James and Mick Ryan. Published by ROCKFAX Ltd. © ROCKFAX Ltd. 2003
One look at Stetind makes you want to climb it. The shape, the location and the rock make this an irresistible destination for all those who love long routes in the mountains.

Stetind (1391m) is situated at the head of Tysford and was at one time only accessible by boat. Nowadays an incredible section of road construction means you can park right at the base. This intrusion hardly detracts from the remoteness and purity of the peak, but you can imagine what an amazing adventure it must have been to sail up the fjord in the 1960s to make the first ascent of the South Pillar.

Stetind has recently been adopted as Norway’s ‘National Mountain’.

www.stetind.nu

How to Get There

Getting to the Stetind using public transport alone is going to be fairly tough. Thankfully there are two budget airlines that now fly to Norway and have reasonable car hire prices. Ryan Air (www.ryanair.co.uk) fly from Stansted and Glasgow to Oslo where you can either hire a car, or get in internal flight, to Harstad/Narvik. Norwegian.no (www.norwegian.no) fly from Stansted to Oslo and have onward flights to Harstad/Narvik. Alternatively get the ferry from Newcastle to Bergen and get stuck into a couple of days driving.

The approach is relatively straightforward until you are about 70km south of Narvik on the E6. After the two bridge crossings of Efjorden turn left on the 827 signed to Tysford and Kjøpsvik. After the first long tunnel you will emerge under the north face of Stetind, which rises all the way from the sea to Stetind summit at 1391m. After the next tunnel there is a parking area and WC. The path starts here and it is also a good place to camp.
Other Climbing In The Area

The South Pillar has several other routes on it including Gullfisken (named after the legend that there are Goldfish in a pond on the summit of Stetind). The West Ridge looks very good and there are hard routes on the North and West faces. See topos at www.stetind.nu

Back on the main E6 road there are several amazing looking granite domes close the road including Kuglhornet (979 m), Sidolpolltind (879 m) and Eidetind (845 m). Notably, on the North Face of Eidetind there is a classic new route of about 15 pitches called Blodröd September natt (Blood Red September Night), that follows crack systems to the right of a central chimney line. The large slabs that you pass on the road to the south are Verdens sva (The World Slab), which sweep down from Kuglhornet and are popular with mountain bikers.

Rack

Double set of nuts from 1-10
Cams from 0.5 - 3.5 with doubles from 1-2
120cm slings x 2
60cm sling x 2
Quickdraws x 10 (mainly 20cm and longer)
50m ropes (60m are useful if you have them).
Light shoes for descent
Appropriate clothing for the conditions.
Drink and food
Small sack for 2 to carry

When to Go and Timing

The best months to rock climb in Northern Norway are June, July and August. May will probably have too much snow to get on the route. June and July have 24 hour sunlight so getting benighted is not a problem. 12 hours car to car with 5-6 hours actually spent on the route is average but allow more time if you are not ‘mountain fit’ or are new to long routes in an alpine environment.
Approach

Follow the good path from the parking area up the left side of the stream (initially marked with red paint). This leads through birch forest and eventually out into open country. Ascend through boulders following a discontinuous path - fill water bottles up here - to a level area on top of the moraine about a 100m above an iceberg filled lake. There is a big flat ‘gearing up’ boulder at the saddle.

Layout

From the gearing-up point, Presttind is the big loose face to the south east and Stetind is to your north. The South Pillar route can be clearly seen forming the left edge of a huge Amphitheatre. The ordinary route up Stetind (and the descent route) is the south east ridge and can be seen on the skyline. Halls Peak is the subsidiary peak just south of Stetind. The small flat pinnacle just north of the saddle between Halls Peak and Stetind is the Mysosten Block and is the crux of the ordinary route. In descent it requires a short abseil. There are 3 ledge systems running across the Amphitheatre onto the South Pillar. The first ledge is used to access the foot of the route. The 2nd ledge is not recommend for escape. The 3rd ledge can be used to escape onto the south east ridge just below the Mysosten Block.
STETIND SOUTH PILLAR  Descent

DESCENT
Scramble down the south east ridge. Make a 15m abseil from chains at the Mysosten Block then scramble up to the summit of Halls Peak. Large Cairn.

From Halls Peak descend the crest of the ridge easily following cairns and look carefully for the descent path cutting over right onto south facing slopes. The cut-off point is well before the Halls Peak/Presttind Col. This path leads diagonally down and right to regain the gearing up boulder.