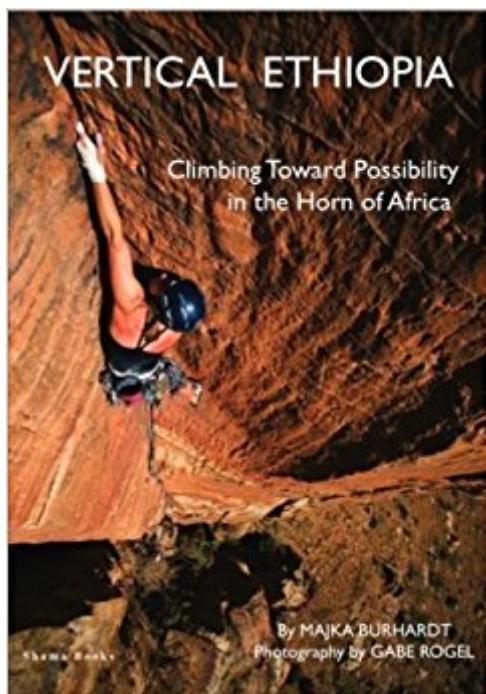


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# Vertical Ethiopia, Climbing Toward Possibility In The Horn Of Africa



## **Synopsis**

What if the very country that claims the Cradle of Humanity is also the next Mecca for adventure: In March of 2007, four women traveled to northern Ethiopia to climb virgin sandstone towers in the Horn of Africa. They explored rock monoliths in a region that is best known for the drought and famine of the 1980's and was the site of one of the bloodiest massacres of the Derg. Vertical Ethiopia is the narrative of their journey. Told through a series of vignettes that reveal what it means to climb, to travel, and to explore, Vertical Ethiopia looks closely at the intersections between adventure and culture, history and opportunity, and sky and sandstone.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

An amazing read. Within the context of a first-of-its-kind travel adventure chronicle, the world of climbing is exposed and made accessible to non-climbers. This book is a wonderfully written story of culture, adventure, history, feeling and sport. It reads like a compelling travel journal and leaves you wanting the author to take another trip so you can live vicariously through her words again on the next journey. --Anna I. Ritter

Majka Burhardt Majka Burhardt is a writer, climber, and guide living in Boulder, Colorado. Her non-fiction work has appeared in various magazines, including Men's Health, Climbing, Women's Adventure, and Patagonia. She has a BA in anthropology from Princeton University and a MFA in creative writing from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers and is currently completing her first novel.

I picked up this book hoping to go on a climbing trip to Ethiopia, I have not gone yet but it sits on my Coffee table and when I look and the Beautiful Photos and read the text I start my dreaming up my next vacation. This book has inspired me to want to explore many of the corners of Africa in search of spectacular climbing, culture, and coffee.

This is a very good book. Vertical Ethiopia will engage, entertain, and, in the end, more than satisfy a diverse audience of readers. It's a fascinating read for climbers. Burhardt and Rogel have produced a well balanced blend of lovely, crisp narrative and excellent climbing photos which draws the reader into the pure adventure of exploratory rock climbing in virgin territory. I climb and as a climber I found the book's treatment of technical climbing topics engrossing. Yet this is far more than the typical climbing story. Burhardt has constructed an extremely well written tale of travel and cultural discovery, superbly documented by Rogel's dramatic photographs of Ethiopia and the Ethiopians. The genuine commitment of the authors to the people of Ethiopia results in a compelling presentation of the land, its history and its potential. Vertical Ethiopia is not the first book to successfully integrate a tale of adventure with a close look at the cultural context for the adventure. It is, however, an extremely worthy addition to the tradition. What impressed me most about the book was the degree to which it motivated me to add Ethiopia to my list of must-see destinations, not primarily for the sake of the climbing, although that would certainly add an interesting dimension to the visit, but rather for the opportunity to experience this country first hand.

As a teacher, I've often struggled to find a way to present places far away to the students right in front of me. For Africa, this is a particular challenge, and yet Majka Burhardt in this volume manages to reach out to her reader beautifully. For people curious about Africa, this book is a deluge of information regarding one of its most notorious countries. Burhardt address so many readers in this volume, that anyone picking it up can find something to their liking. The book speaks intelligently to other climbers while managing to explain to non-climbers just what the sport is. Photographs of the people Burhardt and Rogel encounter are what will keep this book you read from finding its way to bookshelf. This is one to keep out. It is possible to enjoy it by sitting down and reading it; it is possible to steep in its essence by paging through its photos. If you have ever wanted to rocket up sandstone spires, beware. This won't take the edge off that desire. If you read this book, you'll want to book a ticket to Africa to see what Burhardt and her team of fellow climbers saw. Luckily for you, this book can take you tonight. No arrangements necessary. This is a book teachers could use in the classroom, a way for curious Americans to peak across an ocean and a continent, an informal

guidebook to the region. And given all these things that it can do, surprisingly moving too.

I am neither a rock climber nor an adventurer so when a friend sent it to me, I wasn't sure it was my kind of thing... but wow! Its a great read! The pictures alone are well worth the cover price, but it is Burkhardt's writing that is really fun and compelling, and often downright funny. Initially I wasn't aware that the intro was written by someone else and was a bit bored by mundane geography and geology facts, but within the first paragraph of Majka's writing she had me laughing out loud at her childhood impressions of Ethiopia via dinner table commands to finish her food due to African famines and singing all the verses of We are the World out loud with her friends. That was my first impression as well and I didn't know much else about the country today until I read this book. The rock climbing shots are amazing and the photos of the locals are truly beautiful. My favorite part of the story was a hair-raising tale of the climbers ascending some gnarly vertical spire only to get to the top where a bunch of village kids met them after scrambling up the back. I learned a lot about Ethiopia and rock climbing, but mostly I enjoyed Majka's stories and Rogel's photos. I read it in one long sitting and leave it out on my coffee table to thumb through the pictures over and over...!

Spellbinding. The introduction, written by a different author, presented a history of exploration in Ethiopia in relatively dry mountaineering terms -- typical "stiff upper lip" and all that. I was prepared to wade through a pedestrian account of a climber in a remote corner of the world. What I found, however, was the sheer joy and exuberance of a young climber rediscovering a forgotten gem. The climbing, though superbly photographed and described, takes a back seat to well-limned essays about Ethiopia itself, and the author's incredulity at the history, beauty and current state of the country and its people. Highly recommended for travelers and climbers alike.

An amazing read. Within the context of a first-of-its-kind travel adventure chronicle, the world of climbing is exposed and made accessible to non-climbers. This book is a wonderfully written story of culture, adventure, history, feeling and sport. It reads like a compelling travel journal and leaves you wanting the author to take another trip so you can live vicariously through her words again on the next journey.

The incredible photography is what first grabs you - and indeed, it's published as a beautiful coffee-table style book. But once you start reading the text, it's hard to stop. Burkhardt is a gifted storyteller and a poetic wordsmith. She shines an insightful light on a country that is so rich and

complex - and so misunderstood. You will feel as if you are living the adventure with her - which is the sign of any great read.

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