

Lower Sabie Camp, Kruger National Park

Access for Guests with Mobility challenges

Lower Sabie is one of the most popular of all Kruger Camps, with its attractive setting and excellent game viewing. It is located on the southern bank of the Sabie River not far from the Lebombo Mountains and the border with Mozambique. It is best accessed via the Crocodile Bridge Gate 34 km to the south or via the western gates close to Skukuza and travelling along the Sabie River road. There are many quality driving routes in the vicinity of the camp, but it is often as rewarding to sit by the river and watch the parade of wildlife go by.



Accessible facilities - General: The camp has **wheelchair parking**, and quite a steep pathway leading down to the reception/shop and restaurant block. At reception there is a **wheelchair on standby** for transporting frail guests who do not have a chair of their own. There is an **accessible public toilet** in this complex and wheelchair users can go everywhere except the lookout tower which is up a ladder. There is however an excellent **boardwalk along the river** from the restaurant to the safari tents. Elsewhere in the camp there is a swimming pool and an outdoor film venue, and although neither of these facilities have any specific adaptations, they are fairly accessible. For wheelchair users wanting to go on the camp's game viewing vehicles for guided day and night drives they will have to be prepared to be lifted on and off the vehicles.



Accessible Accommodation: The camp has 118 accommodation units and 33 campsites. 5 bungalows, 3 safari tents and 1 guest house have ramps and adapted ablutions to cater for guests in wheelchairs, making Lower Sabie the rest camp with the 2nd largest number of accessible units after Skukuza. There are also 2 unisex wheelchair ablutions in the camping section, one in the south block, the other in the north. All wheelchair units have a roll-in shower except one of the bungalows which has a bath with grab rails.

Accessible Camping (Southern Block): The southern camping ablution block has a ramp into the kitchen and into the unisex wheelchair ablution. This latter ramp is not ideal as a person has to open the door and this is difficult from a wheelchair when one is on a slope. Inside the bathroom the toilet and basin are well laid out and the shower is fine too. For many years this roll-in shower had a curb that prevented the very guests it was supposed to be able to enter from entering the shower, but this is now resolved with a shallow hump.



Accessible Camping (Northern Block): The northern camping ablution block also services the huts that have communal ablutions. There is a ramp into the facility and inside is a toilet with grab rails and an adequate roll-in shower.



<p>Accessible Safari Tents: There are 3 such tents and they are all with a river view making them very popular. The parking for these units is very cramped as only standard width is allocated for 8 tents, but from the parking good wide brick pathways provide ease of access.</p>			
	<p>The tents beds are lower than those in the bungalows, so require a bit more effort during transfer, but otherwise are comfortable. The tent itself has a ceiling fan, but in summer this just moves warm air around. If readers have a problem with excessive heat, then the air-conditioned bungalows are a better bet. The tents are also prone to raids by baboons, so great care must be taken to protect food and belongings. The tents are self catering and have a fridge, hotplate, sink and kettle, plus a braai facility.</p>		
	<p>The safari tents' ablutions are a mixed bag for guests in wheelchairs. The toilet is excellent, although there is no rear grab rail, but the basin is within easy reach of the toilet, which is always ideal. The basin also has push taps.</p>		
<p>The roll-in shower however has many shortcomings. 1) The fold-down seat is too small for a person to sit on safely, but the whole shower is cramped, so a larger seat would severely limit leg room. 2) The shower head, while detachable is not on a sliding height adjustable pole and hangs on a hook. With the small seat and having to hand hold the shower this makes balance very difficult. 3) The taps are lever taps which protrude a great deal and again because of the balance issue a person is likely to poke their eyes on these. 4) the access to the shower has a raised hump to prevent water outflow, but this means one cannot park one's wheelchair properly to transfer. All in all, what should be fantastic units are somewhat let down by bad design!</p>			
			
	<p>Accessible Bungalow – with a bath: this unit is in the centre of the camp. The parking space is wide enough and the access into the building is good. The kitchen is enclosed, but separate from the bedroom chamber. There is a cement ramp down to an outdoor braai facility, but the heavy summer rains have created a step at the end of this for people wanting to go onto the lawns. The tents are self catering and have a fridge, hotplate, sink and kettle, plus the braai facility. Some of the kitchen utensils are in cupboards too high for a wheelchair.</p>		
<p>The bedroom chamber has 3 single beds (2 pushed together) and these are comfortable and of a good height for transfer. In the ablutions, the toilet's adjacent grab rail is fitted back-to-front, while there is no basin within reach of the toilet. The basin vanity does have good clearance underneath through, while the bath has a grab rail to assist transfer.</p>			
			

Accessible Bungalows with Roll-in Showers: There are 4 accessible bungalows with roll-in showers – 15 & 16 (BD3UZ), 77 (BD2UZ) & 104 (BD2Z). Three of these units are on the perimeter with a view of the river, while bungalow 104 is in the centre of the camp.

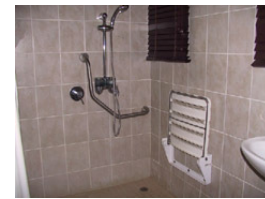
Bungalows 15 and 16 are identical inversions of each other and are next to each other with a shared central wall. The units have plenty of space outside for parking and an easy ramp up to the unit's veranda



The **veranda** looks out over the river and has a braai and a table (with sufficient clearance). Inside the unit there are 2 beds pushed together in the **main bedroom** chamber and a 3rd in the **kitchen**, which has had clearance space left underneath the sink and hotplates, but then a curb has been left at the bottom meaning the intended clearance is wasted.



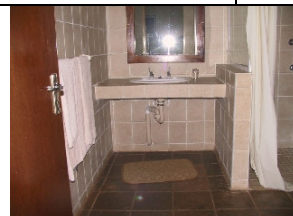
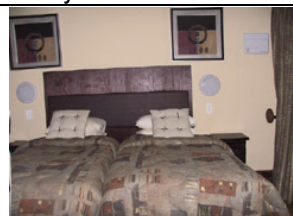
These 2 bungalows have very **accessible ablutions**. The toilet has the necessary support rails and importantly the basin is within reach of the toilet. The roll-in shower has a good sized fold-down seat and all the rails and poles for the detachable shower set are in the correct places.





Bungalow 77 can only be booked directly through the camp as it is held on camp reserve. The layout is similar to 15 & 16 except there are only 2 beds in the bedroom chamber, - there is also a river view from the veranda, but in the ablutions the basin is not within reach of the toilet. The side rail for the toilet is back-to-front. The shower layout is good though although the fold-down seat is set a little high for some people.



Bungalow 104 used to be part of a larger family guest house called Moffett, but was spilt in 2008 into 2 smaller 2-bed bungalows. It is ramped with parking about 20m away shared with the other half of the former guest house. The bedroom has comfortable beds at a good height for transfer. The ablutions are generally good, with one basin next to the toilet and a second larger one with good clearance. In the roll-in shower the grab rail is sadly on the same wall as the fold-down seat instead of on the side wall.



	<p>Keartland Guest House – This guest house is not an allocated wheelchair unit like the Z bungalows and tents, but there is ramped access and one of the 2 bathrooms is adapted for wheelchair guests. The toilet's grab-rails are well positioned & the basin is within reach, but a chair cannot fit alongside the toilet and a front on transfer will be necessary. The roll-in shower has no grab rails and the fold-down seat is on the same wall as the detachable shower, which is not mounted on a height adjustable sliding pole. Hopefully these</p>	
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Accessible facilities close to Lower Sabie:

1. Nkuhlu Tea Room and Picnic Site (below and middle) is about 20km upstream from the camp and is an ideal place to have a meal or tea break. There is a long and somewhat steep ramp down to the riverside viewing place, and there are other ramps to the toilet and shop. Some of the picnic areas are down steps though. The toilet has grab rails and the basin is next to the toilet.
2. Nthandanyathi Hide (below right) – is ramped and there is clearance below the viewing slot and gaps in the benches to accommodate wheelchairs – a great spot to watch hippo and other animals and birds at close range.
3. Tshokwane Picnic – about 70km to the north along a very productive game viewing route. There are ramps into the shops and cafeteria and wheelchair toilets in the southern ablution block but not the northern one.
4. Mlondozi Picnic Site does not have wheelchair accessible ablutions, but the viewing point and place where cooking is done are ramped and accessible. This site is on a hill and provides stunning views of the surrounding landscape and the dam of the same name below.
5. Skukuza Nursery and Boardwalk and Lake Panic Hide are only 40 odd km from camp and fantastic for wheelchair guests (see Skukuza Profile)

