









Satara Camp, Kruger National Park


Access for Guests with Mobility Challenges





<p>Satara Rest Camp is the 2nd largest camp in Kruger National Park and unlike most other camps is not located on a river or other water body. It is in the central part of the park and is best accessed from outside the park through the Orpen Gate some 46 km to the west. The camp is set in Knob Thorn/Marula Savannah and the area is rich in good numbers of large herbivores like wildebeest, zebra, giraffe and buffalo which in turn attract good numbers of predators. This makes Satara one of the most popular camps in the park. From an accessibility point of view the camp is entirely flat, this makes getting around the camps in a wheelchair easy via the network of roads.</p>	
	<p>The camp has 152 bungalows, 6 of which are designated for use by guests with mobility impairment. All the bungalows are arranged in circles, which creates a welcome atmosphere. There are also 10 guest cottages and 3 guest houses and almost 90 camp-sites – there are two accessible ablutions in the campsite. The camp is equipped with a restaurant, a take-away service, a shop, petrol pumps, car wash, swimming pool, day visitor area and an outdoor film viewing area.</p>
<p>On arrival visitors with reserved accommodation need to check in at reception, where there are 3 designated wheelchair parking bays and an access ramp. Wheelchair users will also want to park here when going to the camp's shop and restaurant. The reception office has a small step, but the shop and restaurant are ramped.</p>	
	<p>The public ablutions in the reception complex have no steps, but there is no cubicle with adaptations for guests in wheelchairs. When parking at reception or passing by there, visitors should scan the trees for roosting African Scops-Owls. The camp is renowned for offering great views of these diminutive birds and at night the camp is alive with their distinctive churrs.</p>
<p>Satara's Accessible Accommodation</p>	
<p>C-Circle Accessible Bungalows</p> <p>Satara's accessible bungalows can be divided into 3 pairs. 2 in A-Circle, 2 in B-Circle and 2 in C-Circle. Those in C-Circle were the original ones that were adapted. They are number C67 and AF. AF stands for Albert Froneman, the inspiration for the conversion of this unit. Both these units have a similar layout and have 2 single beds, an air-conditioner, fridge, sink, hotplate, basin, roll-in shower and toilet with grab rails</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">One of the C-Circle Accessible Bungalows</p>










	<p>The parking space provided for the C-Circle units is standard width and a vehicle with a wheelchair driver or passenger will need to park to one side to provide enough space for the wheelchair to avoid the curb.</p>
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<p>Inside the unit the 2 single beds are of a good height for transfer. There is plenty of space alongside the one bed and they are easily shifted if an alternative positioning is required. The shelf at the head of the bed is very useful and the reading light switches are easily reached from the bed.</p>	
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 <p>Air-conditioner and wardrobe</p>	<p>Although the air-conditioner is mounted high up on the wall, there is a switch at a lowered height for people in wheelchairs to be able to turn it on and off (it will be needed in summer). The wardrobe is also very open and accessible as is the unit's basin, which is separate from the rest of the ablutions. This basin and its mirror (right) are open and accessible and there is good clearance beneath the basin.</p>	 <p>Basin and mirror</p>
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	<p>The unit's toilet has an adjacent grab rail on the perpendicular wall, but not one at the rear of the toilet. There is also no water source within reach of a person sitting on the toilet with the basin being located in the bedroom part of the unit and the shower around the corner.</p>
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	<p>The units' roll-in showers are of the 3-wall variety. This means that the shower is on the opposite wall to the fold-down seat and consequently is not as easy to reach or get under the flow as those mounted on a perpendicular wall. The supporting grab rail is also on this opposite wall, and a second rail on the side wall would be a good addition. The fold down seat is of the sturdy solid metal kind and people with spinal injuries and resultant muscle loss will need to use a towel or waterproof travel cushion to protect their buttocks. The sliding rail the sliding detachable shower is mounted on is of a good range to cater for wheelchair users and standing people alike.</p>	
		

<p>The current fridge on the veranda of the unit is too tall to fit into the provided space and hence it blocks the way of a wheelchair user to get to the sink. There is also a problem in the camp (as with many Kruger camps) with baboons and monkeys raiding the fridges when guests are away from their units. There is sufficient space inside the unit and it would perhaps be an idea for the camp authorities to relocate the present fridge inside the unit to create space on the veranda</p>		
	<p>The access to the braai (barbecue) facility of the C-Circle units is down a step that has been created over the years by rainfall erosion. This is not in keeping with the accessible intention of the unit and the camp management needs to attend to this shortcoming.</p>	
<p>Satara Accommodation – B-Circle Accessible Bungalows</p>		
<p>The two accessible bungalows in B-Circle (46 and 47) have a reservation code of BD2ZB which suggests they only have 2 beds, but they each have 3 single beds in their bedroom chamber. These bungalows have a shallow access ramp from their parking zone which is wide enough to allow a wheelchair to disembark on either side of the vehicle but not on both at the same time.</p>		
	<p>The bedroom chamber is round rondavel style and there are 2 single beds arranged alongside each other with sufficient space for a wheelchair to pass either side. The third bed (shown right) is tucked into an alcove adjacent one of the chamber's windows and only has access from one side.</p>	
<p>The units' en suite ablutions are not the cleverest in terms of following accessible specifications. The toilet is free-standing and has no assistive rails (hinged fold down grab rails are required) and the basin is not within reach of the toilet. The basin itself does follow specs with lever taps, clearance underneath and an accessible mirror.</p>		
	<p>The roll-in shower is the ablutions biggest departure from accessible requirements. The fold down seat is too small a surface area for a person to easily balance on. The adjacent grab rail should be moved closer to the wall with the seat and the detachable hand set is on a hook and not on a height adjustable pole and thus a person must hold it in one hand which further compromises balance. These are things the camp needs to address, but it should not be difficult to do so and vastly improve the unit.</p>	
	<p>The units' exterior catering facilities are also poorly designed in terms of correct accessible standards meaning they are not as easy for guests in wheelchairs to use as they should be. The outdoor veranda is a smooth, firm, ramped, cement surface which is ideal for movement in a wheelchair. There is however a step down to the braai (barbecue) which some wheelchair users may struggle to negotiate</p>	

The fridge, microwave and hotplates are fairly easy to reach in a wheelchair, but the sink has no clearance beneath and is in an acute angled corner making it difficult to access. The crockery and glasses are stored in an inaccessible cupboard (too high to reach) which further compromises independent use. As these units are intended to be universally accessible, clearance should have been created beneath the sink/hotplates and the upper cupboards should be moved to an accessible level on the other side of the units sliding door entrance (and like the fridge made safe inside a primate proof cage).



Satara Accommodation – A-Circle Accessible Bungalows

The 2 accessible bungalows in A-Circle (A1 & A2) were refurbished and created at the end of 2007 – much more recently than those in C-Circle. Consequently they have made some improvements, but there are also some accessibility issues that are very poor.



The parking space is excellent and the access to the braai (barbecue) is also good.



The access ramp onto the unit's veranda is fine too.



But the access to the sink, microwave and crockery cupboard is poor, being on an acute angle corner with no clearance.

- The interior of the A-Circle units has 2 single beds in an open plan bedroom chamber pushed together and with sufficient space on either side of the **beds**. The shelf behind the headboard is useful and the reading lights have switches at accessible locations for a person in the bed.
- In the unit's ablutions the **toilet** has grab rails in the appropriate places, although the perpendicular wall is a little too far from the toilet to provide the ideal assistance it is intended to. Also the **basin** is not within reach of a person sitting on the toilet.
- The **basin** does however have good clearance beneath it, is fitted with lever taps and the mirror is at a good height for wheelchair users and able-bodied people alike.
- The biggest disappointment of the facility is the **roll-in shower**. The fold-down seat is of a good size (unlike circle B's seats) and has a comfortable plastic covering, and while the detachable shower is on the perpendicular wall, it does not have a sliding pole with which it can be set in a fixed position and adjusted to a height suitable to standing and seated persons. All that is provided is a hook and this means that all users of the shower have to hold the shower head while they shower. For all people, but particularly those with spinal injuries who have difficulty balancing, this is a very unsatisfactory situation. Hopefully the camp management will fix these to make it more pleasant for all users.



Unit A bedroom and ablutions

Accessible Camping Facilities in Satara

The Satara Campsite has 2 accessible ablutions in 2 separate ablution blocks. The older more northerly accessible ablution is ironically much better than the newer accessible ablution in the southern block as will be evident from the images and text below.

The **northerly accessible campsite ablution** has some uneven open gravel to negotiate to get to, but as one approaches the facility there is a concrete ramp with protective rails allowing a wheelchair user to get right up to the entrance door



The ablution's toilet is within reach of the basin and the grab rail are in useable positions. The mirror is also positioned conveniently for an occupant in a wheelchair, but the basin only has turn taps and not lever or push taps

The ablution has a roll-in shower of the 3 wall alcove variety instead of the preferred 2 wall perpendicular layout. This means that the shower on the height adjustable pole is a little further away from a person sitting on the seat than idea, but it is not too inconvenient and the rails are well placed to offer a person support and to use to transfer between seat and wheelchair. The seat itself is the old style metal grid used in some of the older accessible accommodation in the park. The seat is strong and wide enough, but users of the facility with reduced muscle in their buttocks are recommended to bring an extra towel or shower cushion to sit on to prevent bruising.



The nearby laundry/scullery is fairly accessible. There is only a small step onto the level and the sinks have good clearance beneath them, so no excuse for wheelchair campers not to wash up. The taps are turn taps though!

The **southerly accessible campsite ablution** has a concrete path taking people towards it and a flat paved section outside the entrance door to make it easy for a person in a wheelchair to open and enter the facility



This ablution is only a couple of years old and has some good features, but also some fairly odd features too. The coat hooks (below left) are too high up the wall for a wheelchair user to use to hang stuff on while they use the facility. The basin (below centre left) is fairly accessible, but only has turn taps and the mirror is a little high for wheelchair users. The hand drier (below centre right) has a shelf below it which will be useful for people with balance difficulty. The toilet (below right) has well appointed grab rails, but there is no water supply within reach of a person using it.





The facility's shower is the biggest area of concern. There are 3 separate grab rails and a detachable shower set on a height adjustable sliding pole. But there is no fold down seat for wheelchair users to transfer onto and instead an unstable plastic chair has been provided. 2 of the rails are on the far side of the shower 2 or 3 metres from the shower making them redundant to use. The shower pole is attached to the wall too low to be properly used and the taps are turn taps which will prevent some people from using them.



Next to the accessible ablutions is the washing up facility. Unlike the northerly facility a shelf prevents a wheelchair user from sliding under the sinks making them less comfortable to use. Once again turn taps have been used which are hard for some people with limited grasping ability to use

Other Accommodation in Satara



Satara Guest Cottage

The guest cottages (6 beds) are ramped and can be easily accessed in a wheelchair, but there are no assisting rails provided in the bath, shower or toilets in the unit. If an individual can cope with such facilities they may want to stay there if their travel party is larger than 2 or 3 people. If a wheelchair user is unable to use the ablutions because of the bath and lack of rails they may still want to stay in these larger units but use the campsite's northerly accessible ablution cubicle which is only a short distance away from D-Circle where the cottages are located.

Many guests to Satara will want to use the **swimming pools** particularly in summer time. There are two in the camp (one for day visitors and one for overnight residents) and the paved pathways to get there are very convenient for wheelchairs. Once at the pools however there are no pool hoists or frames to enable a wheelchair user to transfer into the pool.



Places to visit when staying at Satara

Picnic Sites: There are **accessible toilets** at Timbavati Picnic Site (22km NW), N'wanetsi Picnic Site (24km SE) and Tshokwane Picnic Site (50km S) and all 3 destinations make excellent destinations for a morning of afternoon drive. One can bring a picnic or hire a skottel to cook food. Cool drinks are also on sale at the first 2, but Tshokwane provides cooked meals, prepared picnic hampers and curios. At N'wanetsi there is a concrete path leading to an awesome lookout platform, but the path is very steep so help may be required. NB There are no accessible ablutions at Muzandzeni (32km SW) and Nhlangueni (53km SW) but these are still nice places to visit and are relatively easy to propel oneself in a wheelchair.



Sweni Hide

There are also **accessible game hides** near Satara. A couple of km north of Timbavati picnic site is Ratel Pan Hide, while about 5km from N'wanetsi is Sweni Hide.



Ratel Pan Hide