



TOPICS

SAFARI IN THE GREATER KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Game Viewing or Safari is one of the most popular activities for guests visiting South Africa. Our aim is to give you the basic information to make the most of this experience.

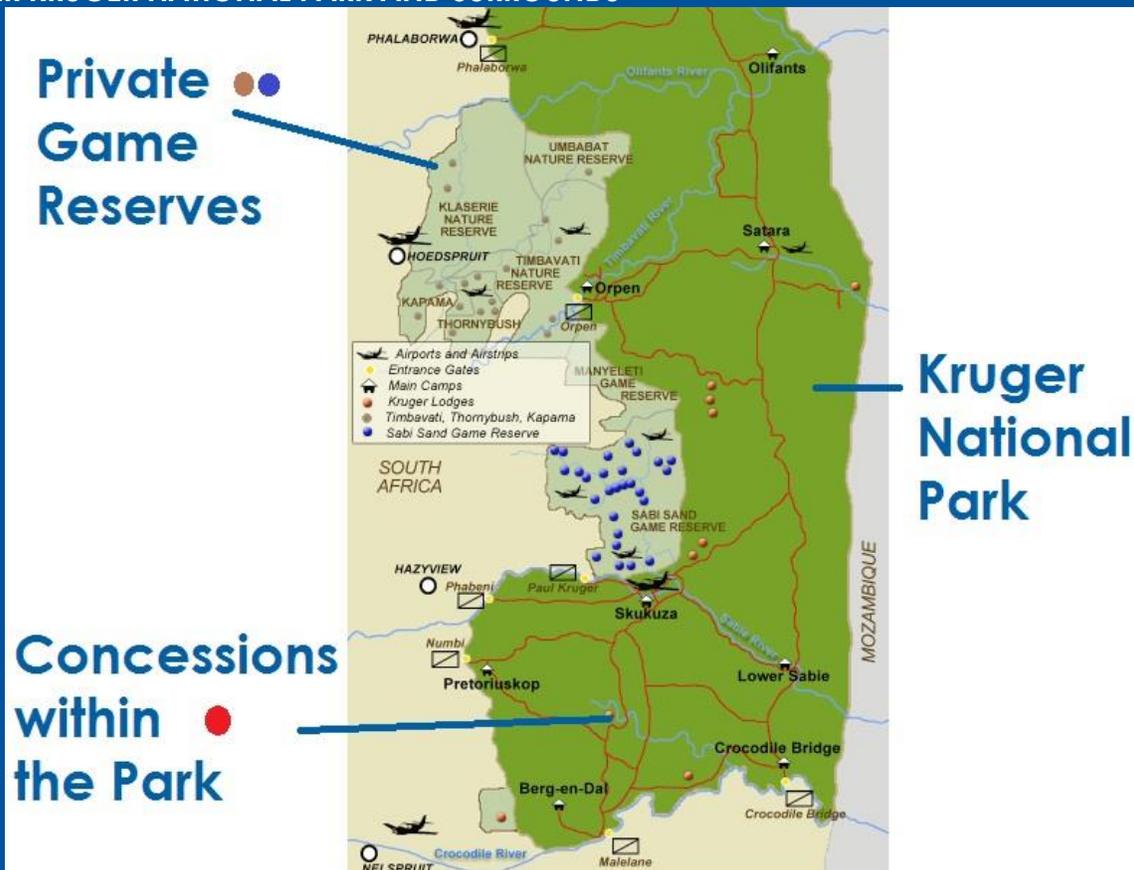
DEFINITION

A Safari or Game Drive is an activity whereby guests have the opportunity to view wildlife in their natural habitat. It is important to remember that the animals are wild and guests are never allowed to touch or get out of their vehicles unless accompanied by a registered game ranger.

BEST TIME TO TRAVEL

The best time to go on a South African Safari is in the winter months (May to August). This is the time of the year when the bush is at its thinnest, so game viewing is easier, and the temperatures are mild (maximum 20 to 23°C). There's also very little winter rainfall in the north. The rest of the year is also great, but higher temperatures and thicker bush will be applicable.

GREATER KRUGER NATIONAL PARK AND SURROUNDS



The Greater Kruger National Park region is undoubtedly the best area for a truly South African Safari. Although there are other regions where game viewing is also possible, we will be focusing on this region.

The region consists of:

- The Kruger National Park
- Private concessions within the Kruger National park
- Private Game Reserves on the Western side of the Kruger National Park

The Kruger National Park is the largest game reserve in South Africa covering nearly 2 million hectares (20,000 square kilometres) of land that stretch for 352 kilometres from north to south along the Mozambique border. The Kruger National Park lies across the provinces of Mpumalanga and Limpopo in the north of South Africa, just south of Zimbabwe and west of Mozambique. It now forms part of the **Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park** - a peace park that links Kruger National Park with game parks in Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and fences are already coming down to allow game to freely roam. Kruger National Park accommodation is traditionally within rest camps which are all run by the South African National Parks Board. The rest camps are basic accommodation in tents or chalets/bungalows and ablution and kitchen facilities are mostly shared.

Tourist staying at hotels outside the National Park can enjoy game viewing in the National Park as day visitors either on self-drive basis in their car or on a guided tour in their air-conditioned vehicle (microbus, minibus or coach) or in guided open 4x4 safari vehicles. Day visitors must strictly adhere to gate closing times and leave the National park by sunset.

Private Game Reserves

Flanking the western boundary of the Kruger National Park is a number of private game reserves. Though none of them fall within the park's boundaries, together they form the heart of South Africa's big game country and some of the most famous private lodges and the best wildlife viewing in the world take place here. The main reason for rich game viewing is the free movement of animals between the private reserves and the Kruger National Park - at least 100 kilometres of fencing has been removed, ridding the area of man-made borders. The private game reserves allow for vehicles to leave roads, and animals on the whole are more used to the presence of man so there's a greater chance of seeing them. Private game reserves include Sabi Sand Private Game Reserve, Timbavati Private Game Reserve, Thornybush Private Game Reserve, Kapama Private Game Reserve and Manyeleti Private Game Reserve.

Only guests that stays overnight at these game lodges are allowed entry into the private game reserve areas. All safaris are conducted in open 4x4 safari vehicles with qualified rangers and trackers. The typical day at a private game reserve lodge starts with arrival just before lunch followed by lunch, afternoon tea and then an open vehicle safari drive that continues into the early evening in order to view the nocturnal animals as well before returning to the lodge for dinner. Mornings start with an early wake up call before sunrise, followed by a dawn safari and then return to lodge for breakfast. Activities at a private lodge include: morning and evening game drives, guided bush walks, stargazing, specialized safaris, i.e. birding.

Private Concession with the Kruger National Park

The private concessions are large tracts of untouched land that have been leased by the government to private operators. The concessions consist of established lodges that offer incredible luxury, superbly guided game drives, and the freedom to move into the greater park area if desired. These private game lodges offer a more intimate and exclusive experience of the vast Kruger Park. The Game lodges in private concessions are operated on a similar basis to the ones in the private game reserves but subject to certain rules and regulations formulated by the National Parks Board. The private concessions are the "newest" safari option with the first private concessions granted about 10 years ago.

ACCESS

The Kruger National Park Region and surrounds are easily accessible by road or air.

Option 1: Fly into the region and then transfer to a lodge

Guests staying on a **self-drive** basis in the Kruger National Park will hire a vehicle at the airport and then drive to the closest gate of entry of the Kruger National Park. It is very important to take note of the gate closing times since guests will not be allowed to enter the Park after a certain time. Travel distance from the gate to the rest camp will also be taken into account (max speed in the Park is 25km/h). Please check with your consultant that travel times are in order. The following table is an indication of the gate times of the Park.

Gate Times	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Entrance Gates Open	05:30	05:30	05:30	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	05:30	05:30	05:30
Camp Gates Open	04:30	05:30	05:30	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	06:00	05:30	04:30	04:30
All Gates Close	18:30	18:30	18:00	18:00	17:30	17:30	17:30	18:00	18:00	18:00	18:30	18:30

Guests staying in one of the **private concessions** or in one of the **Private Game Reserves** will be collected at the airport on arrival and then transferred to the lodge. It is also possible to self drive to your safari lodge from the closest airport.

Many private game lodges have their own airstrips (or share an airstrip with neighboring lodges). There are daily seat-in-charter flights from Johannesburg to these airstrips. Seat-in-coach charter flights from the regional airports (KMIA or Eastgate) are also available. Private charter flights to these airports are also available. Note: Strict luggage restrictions are enforced on these flights.

Airports servicing the region include:

- **Kruger Mpumalanga International Airport** near Nelspruit (Scheduled and Chartered Flights)
- **Skukuza Airport** in the Kruger National Park near the Skukuza rest camp in the south (Chartered Flights)
- **Eastgate Airport** in Hoedspruit (Scheduled and Chartered Flights)
- **Kruger Park Gateway Airport** in Phalaborwa (Scheduled and Chartered Flights)
- **Private Airstrips** in the Private Game Reserves (Chartered flights)

Travelling times by road from the airports to the lodges in the most popular regions are as follow:

	AIRPORT		
	KMIA (MQP)	EASTGATE (HDS)	KRUGER PARK GATEWAY (PHW)
Sabi Sands North	3 hrs	2 hrs	3 hrs
Sabi Sands South	2 hrs – 2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs – 3 hrs	3.5 hrs – 4 hrs
Timbavati & Thornybush	2.5 hrs – 3 hrs	1 hrs	2 hrs
Kapama	2 hrs	30 min – 1 hrs	1 hrs
Manyeleti & Hoedspruit	2.5 hrs	1 hrs	1.45 hrs
Hazyview	1 hrs – 1.5 hrs	1.5 hrs – 2 hrs	2.5 hrs – 3 hrs
Malelane	1 hrs	3 hrs	4 hrs
Kruger National Park	2 hrs – 3.5 hrs	2.5 hrs – 4 hrs	3 hrs – 4 hrs

Option 2: Travel by road from Johannesburg

Guests can also drive from Johannesburg (OR Tambo International Airport) to the Kruger area via the Panorama route. This is a very scenic route and can either be done on a self drive basis or with a guide. The travel time is anything between 6 – 8 hours depending on the exact location of your lodge.