

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK SELF DRIVE: YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE

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Self-Drive



KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK SELF-DRIVE

This article is packed full of information that will help you to self-drive Kruger National Park. It will help with planning and will ensure you have all the knowledge you will need to embark on your Kruger safari.

We drove from south to north on our self-drive through Kruger National Park, spending 8 weeks covering as much of its 3000 kilometres of roads as we could.

Deciding where to go and planning your Kruger itinerary will depend on your time frames, interests and the season. This Kruger guide will help you choose the best options for your own self-drive safari in Kruger National Park.



KRUGER SELF-DRIVE SAFARI: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

This ultimate guide to self-driving through Kruger National Park is broken down into separate headings. To make navigation easier, you can also click on any of these boxes and jump straight to that section.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON YOUR KRUGER SELF-DRIVE

One thing you can be assured of on your Kruger self-drive is an incredible insight into the workings of nature and its unpredictability. What you expect to see may not eventuate, and what you aren't expecting, may suddenly appear out of the blue.

Expect to be surprised, frustrated and enthralled, but above all ...

... expect to fall in love with this piece of African paradise

Throughout our time driving through Kruger, we experienced some rare sightings and many moments that were so special that we just wanted time to stand still. We also had times when the gods assigned to handing out luck decided to take the day off.

You cannot drive Kruger with an 'expectation'. If you do, you may be disappointed. You must embark on your Kruger self-drive with a sense of curiosity, and interest, all sprinkled with a good dose of patience. A prime example of Kruger's unpredictability is the amazing incident that occurred on a dusty Kruger track one early afternoon. After a fruitless morning drive, we were heading back to camp in our [4x4 Bush Camper](#), when I spotted a weird looking shape ambling across the road ahead. That weird shape just so happened to be one of Kruger's most rare and endangered animals.

Not only is it extremely rare to spot this vulnerable little creature in Kruger, but it is also nocturnal, so to spot this little gem in the middle of the day was even more of a surprise. With 'unpredictability' working at its best, we were looking at no less than a beautifully armoured pangolin.



So, you really never know what is around that next corner, under the next bush or about to cross the path right in front of you. You may drive for hours with only the African bush staring back at you. Though I'm pleased to say, you would be woefully unlucky not to see anything. You should, at the very least, find impala gracing the fringes of most Kruger roads.

Nature offers itself up, but with no guarantees.

So where is the best to place to be in Kruger?

... the best place to be in Kruger is simply being at the right place at the right time ... and that's not something you can plan for.

There are approximately 3500 kilometres of road to explore in Kruger National Park, so you won't run out of tracks to explore whilst you hunt for those special sightings.

KRUGER SELF DRIVE MAP

[HTTPS://WWW.GOOGLE.COM.AU/MAPS/D/U/0/EDIT?MID=1U3FKFBT971UY4YRBV4IGL4MD-MURPDI-&USP=SHARING](https://www.google.com.au/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1U3FKFBT971UY4YRBV4IGL4MD-MURPDI-&usp=sharing)

HOW TO USE THIS KRUGER SELF DRIVE MAP

To use this Kruger map, expand it using the square symbol on the top right-hand side and then you will find the key on the left-hand side.

- The 12 main rest camps (campsites) are marked in blue, other than the ones that we stayed in, which are marked in orange.
- The most popular routes and destinations are marked up and are colour coded for south, central and north Kruger. These places are also discussed further on in this article, under '[Where to go on your Kruger Self Drive](#)'.

ABOUT KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Back in 1898, the presiding President of what was the Transvaal Republic at the time, Paul Kruger, recognised the need to preserve the declining wildlife from over-hunting and poaching and proclaimed the Sabie Game Reserve. In 1926, the area was re-named, Kruger National Park. and was opened to the general public in 1927.



The monument of Paul Kruger at the Paul Kruger Gate entrance into Kruger National Park

In 1993, fences between the adjacent private nature reserves, including Klaserie Nature Reserve where we had the most [incredible bush life experience](#), were removed. This meant that the wildlife could migrate freely between a larger area.

Kruger National Park is now one of the largest game reserves in Africa. You'll find this wildlife paradise in the northeast of South Africa extending 360km from north to south and 65km east to west.

GETTING TO KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

There are ten entry gates into Kruger National Park and the best one for you depends where you are arriving from and where you intend to begin your Kruger self-drive itinerary.

The most southern gate is Malelane Gate which is about 4.5 to 5 hours drive (about 400km) from Johannesburg on the N4 via Nelspruit.

The other gates throughout Kruger are: Crocodile Bridge, Goriyondo, Numbi, Orpen, Pafuri, Paul Kruger, Phabeni, Phalaborwa and Punda Maria.



What are we all looking at?

KRUGER NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE FEES

On arrival at a Kruger gate, you will be asked to show confirmation of your booking and asked to register [using this form](#).

The Gate fees can be paid online when you book or are free if you have a [wildcard](#).

The cost of entry to Kruger National Park varies depending on your nationality and residency:

- South African citizens: **R100** per adult/ per day
- Non-South Africans: **R424** per adult/ per day (approx USD 27, AUD 35, GBP 20)

To stay overnight in Kruger National Park, you must have booked your accommodation ahead of time.

Oftentimes you need to book well in advance in order to get the campsite that you want.

Note that if you are an international tourist and are going to be on your Kruger Park self-drive for 13 days or more it works out cheaper to buy the [Wildcard](#).



African wild dogs on the road in Kruger National Park

KRUGER GATE TIMES

Kruger's entrance/closing gate times vary slightly depending on the time of year. Generally, from April to September, the gates are open from 6 am to 6 pm and from October to March 5.30 am to 6.30 pm.

The entrance gates and camp gate times can also vary slightly – with camp gates opening an hour earlier than the entrance gates in summer.

For up to date Gate open times [click here](#).

KRUGER REST CAMP GATE TIMES

If you are staying in one of Kruger's rest camps make sure you leave enough time to get back to camp before the gates close otherwise you may incur a fee.

We asked whether there was any leeway on returning late and ... off the record ...you will usually be ok if you are just a few minutes late. You may also be able to avoid a fine if you have a good reason for not being at the gate on time. An example could be that an elephant was blocking the road ... I expect many people use this excuse so photo or video evidence may help your case.



WHERE TO GO IN KRUGER NATIONAL PARK

Kruger National Park is a large area which can roughly be divided into three sections, north, central and south Kruger. Here are overviews of each area, detailing the rest camps in those areas, the type of game viewing you can expect, and popular self-drive routes. The rest camps themselves have been rated with more details further on in this post.

SOUTH KRUGER

MAIN REST CAMPS IN SOUTHERN KRUGER:

- Crocodile Bridge,
- Berg-en-dal,
- [Skukuza](#),
- [Lower Sabie](#),
- Pretoriuskop,

GAME VIEWING IN SOUTH KRUGER

Southern Kruger is the most popular area for visitors to self-drive, due to the more prolific wildlife in the area. Big cats are seen more regularly here, as well as white rhinos. Due to the popularity of South Kruger, be prepared to share sightings with many others.

Known for: Rhino, lion, cheetah, leopard, wild dogs,

What we saw: Lions, leopards, wild dogs, rhino, giraffe, zebra, steenbok, impala, Nyala, baboons, vervet monkeys, elephants, buffalo, kudu, waterbuck, hippos in and out of the river, and pangolin.



POPULAR KRUGER SELF-DRIVE ROUTES IN SOUTHERN KRUGER

See our Kruger [Self-drive map](#) for locations

- **Biyamiti Weir Viewpoint** – hippos, crocodile, birdlife and giraffe
- **H4-2 Crocodile Bridge to Lower Sabie** – this road is known for spotting rhino and cheetah
- The **H4-1 north of Lower Sabie Rest Camp** – drive along the picturesque Sabie river and take a detour along the N'watimhiri Causeway
- **Sunset Dam** (near Lower Sabie Rest Camp) – the perfect place to chill and watch the various animals come to drink whilst the resident hippos and crocodiles watch on. Here you'll see plenty of water birds and you may even spot the herons hitching a ride on the hippo's backs.
- **Lubyelubye River Crossing** – There are a few pull-ins to the left as you drive south towards Lower Sabie, just before the crossing which give awesome views of the river. This spot is also a good place to spot leopard and lion.



Sunset Dam attracts a collection of wildlife – with impala stepping carefully over crocs in the hope they aren't hungry.



Hippo snoozing at Biyamiti Weir

CENTRAL KRUGER

MAIN REST CAMPS IN CENTRAL KRUGER

- Orpen
- [Satara](#)
- Olifants (no camping)
- [Letaba](#)

GAME VIEWING IN CENTRAL KRUGER

Central Kruger has more open savannah where you can find zebra, wildebeest and spot the odd ostrich.

Near the rivers, you are likely to find troops of baboons and vervet monkeys, hippos and crocs.

Known For: lion, cheetah, leopard,

What we saw: Lions, giraffe, zebra, steenbok, impala, baboons, vervet monkeys, elephants, kudu, waterbuck, blue wildebeest, honey badger, hyena and lots of Swainson spurfowl by the roads.



We saw many Swainson spurfowl on the edges of the roads – these two were puffed up and sheltering under a bush in the rain



Impala are another common sight by the edge of the Kruger roads

POPULAR SELF-DRIVE ITINERARY ROUTES IN CENTRAL KRUGER

- **The S100** has a mixture of riverine landscape and open savannah and is apparently known for great sightings (However, we saw plenty of grazers here but, even though we drove it about 5 times, we never saw any predators)
- **The Sweni Bird and Game Hide**– a lovely dam with hippos, crocs and plenty of waterbirds.
- **H1 -3 Tshokwane Picnic site to Satara** – There is lots of open savannah on route, so it's relatively easier to spot game. The picnic area at Tshokwane overlooks the river. Here we watched elephants digging holes in the sand to get to the water underneath. This is a nice spot to grab a hot pie – you can try kudu and buffalo versions if that takes your fancy.
- **Most Southern naturally occurring Baobab Tree** – You'll find this near the Kumana Dam

NORTH KRUGER

MAIN REST CAMPS IN NORTHERN KRUGER

- Mopani
- [Shingwedzi](#)
- [Punda Maria](#)

GAME VIEWING IN NORTH KRUGER

The game viewing in the north of Kruger is not as prolific as in the south and therefore less busy. This means that any viewings you have are likely to be far less crowded. The area attracts a wide variety of birds and is known as one of the premier birding areas of the world.

Known for: Elephants (including big tuskers), a plethora of birds

What we saw: Elephants, leopard, baboon, vervet monkeys, impala, waterbuck, kudu, hippos, Grysbok, nyala, zebra and giraffe.

POPULAR SELF-DRIVE ROUTES IN NORTHERN KRUGER

- Bird watcher's paradise in the whole area
- Pass through the Fever-Tree Forest on the way to Crooks Corner
- Huge ancient Baobab Trees are in this area – with the most ancient being north of the Luvuvhu River
- Pafuri Picnic site
- Babalala Picnic Site
- Mphongolo Loop (*our favourite route of all*)
- Shingwedzi Loop (S52)
- Red Rocks Lookout



Fever tree forest

Crooks Corner – the border where South Africa, Mozambique and Zimbabwe meet. Known as Crooks Corner because gun runners and poachers dodged authorities by jumping between borders.



Big tuskers roam the north of Kruger



Two young kudu, the male has the horns

PLANNING YOUR KRUGER ITINERARY

Depending on how much time you have in the park and what type of schedule you like to plan, (busy or more relaxed), will determine what your daily itinerary may look like.

Some people like to spend the whole day driving – stopping in a picnic site for lunch and returning just before the rest camp gate closes, (normally at 6.00 pm in Sept/Oct).

However, if you find the idea of driving all day too tiresome, then we suggest setting out early in the morning, (gates open in the rest camps at 6 am in September and 5.30 am in October), stopping for morning tea at a nice pullover, and returning for a late lunch. You then have an afternoon of rejuvenation before repeating the process the next day.

It is good to use a detailed map to plan your daily itinerary so you can include viewpoints, waterholes and picnic sites. You can buy a map at every rest camp or and you can download the invaluable [Kruger Explorer App](#).



Kruger's version of a zebra crossing 😊

DRIVING TIPS FOR YOUR SELF-DRIVE SAFARI

- **Follow the Speed Limits**

The speed limits in Kruger National Park range between 50 km/hour on tarred roads and 30/40 km /hour on gravel and dirt roads. However, to maximise your game viewing while driving in Kruger National Park, the slower you drive, the better. We drove an average of 20 – 25km/hr most of the time.

- **Leave braking Room**

Leave enough braking room between you and the driver in front – they may just slam on their brakes if they suddenly spot something or an animal runs out onto the road.

- **'H' and 'S' roads**

The roads in Kruger National Park are numbered and preceded by an S or an H. The H numbered roads are tarred roads and the S numbered roads are gravel roads.



- **Don't Assume there isn't anything to be seen if the car in front doesn't stop.**

Don't assume that just because there is a car in front of you that they would have spotted something if it was there. Still, look around – they could easily have missed something or they may just not be interested in stopping to look at whatever may be there.

- **Beware of the sighting hoarders**

Sometimes being at a sighting can feel like being in the January sales; everyone wants a piece of the action. Courtesy can often be lost in the foray of cars vying for the best vantage point.

- **Watch out for those chasing a sighting**

Don't be surprised if you come across some drivers speeding along like a maniac – they are probably using the Kruger [sightings app](#) and rushing to get to a reported sighting, along with all the others using the same app.

- **It's ok to drive on the wrong side of the road**

Don't be afraid to drive on the wrong side of the road if you are travelling along a river – it's the 'done thing' in Kruger so that you can get a better view. Just drive slowly and make sure to keep your eye on the road for oncoming traffic and move over to the correct side until they have passed.

- **What a procession of cars may mean**

You might come across a procession of cars moving along the road with drivers straining their necks trying to follow a lion or leopard through the bush. The thrill of the chase is quite exciting ... and the animals seem unperturbed and are obviously habituated to the mechanical hums hot on their tails.

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We were lucky to be driving the opposite direction to the crowds

- **Turn off your engine**

It is a good habit to turn off your engine if you are going to be stopped for a little while – it makes for a much more relaxed and pleasant experience for everyone when the car engines are off.

- **Pay attention to Elephants**

The wildlife in Kruger is habituated to vehicles on the roads, along with engine noises. Even so, many will startle and run away – especially if you are moving too fast. However, you need to be particularly careful driving near elephants. Female elephants can be very aggressive if they feel that their calves are in danger and can feel uneasy with you being in close proximity. Male elephants, the bulls, can also be aggressive if they are in Musth. You may notice them dripping urine and/or notice a dark fluid between the ears and eyes. Keep your distance and if you sense

that they are bothered by you, drive on slowly. If they are blocking the road – wait for them to move on and never block their passage.



These 'gentle giants', can get agitated

- **Ask others what they are looking at**

If you see someone stopped at the side of the road – ask what they are looking at – it'll save time searching through your own binoculars when they might just be admiring the view!

- **Expect other drivers to tell you what they see in the other direction**

You'll likely find that some drivers coming in the opposite direction will slow down and tell you what is up ahead. If it is a leopard in a tree or sleeping lions then they may still be there when you arrive. However, sometimes this can lead to frustration and disappointment because you get your hopes up and by the time you arrive, the animals have disappeared into the bush. This happened to us several times. Once we were promised a pride of 22 lions just a kilometre down the road and another time a leopard with two cubs. Excitedly we drove on, hopes now raised at what would certainly be momentous experiences. On both occasions, we saw zip.

- **Stay in your vehicle**

Unless you are in a rest camp or in a designated area you need to stay in your vehicle.

- **Drive with windows down**

You will note that on the Kruger National Park Entry booklet that it says to keep windows closed at all times – however, this would restrict your safari experience and we recommend keeping your windows open. Obviously, close them if you feel uncomfortable at any time or sense any danger. With your windows open, it is much easier to spot movement and colour variations in the bush (an animal silhouette). You are also more likely to hear the wildlife and hear cues that can alert you to nearby animals. For example, impala 'bark' when they see a predator, as do baboons. We spotted two leopards on our Kruger drives by stopping when we heard impalas barking.

- **Be ready to use reverse gear ... a lot**

As you drive along, you will suddenly spot a movement or see a shape that you think might be an animal. So, you will need to reverse and check it out. I lost count of how many times I told Lars to

stop and go back. Many times we reversed, for me only to confirm it was a log or a rock. Get used to seeing many tree stumps that look like they have ears ;). However, other times, that slight movement or shape that caught our eye was indeed an eagle-eyed sighting. Our best 'reverse' was when I saw a dappled shadow in a tree and it turned out to be a leopard taking a nap.

- **Be aware of gate closing times**

Leave enough time to get back to the camp, or out of the park, by the gate closing times.

- **Fuel available at 12 Rest Camps**

There are gas stations at each of the 12 main Rest Camps in Kruger National Park

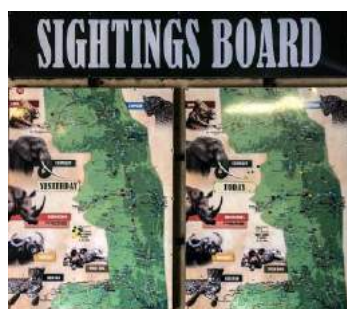
- **Emergency Breakdowns**

There is a toll-free number to use for any vehicle breakdowns or emergency repairs – 0800 030 666



GAME VIEWING ON YOUR KRUGER SELF-DRIVE

At each camp, there are sightings boards which give you an idea as to what animals have been spotted in the area. These can help you plan your day's driving route. Ideally, we'd recommend staying at least three days (if not more) in each rest camp so you can explore all the roads and tracks in the area.



Kruger has a variety of landscapes which offers the opportunity for varying game views. In the dry season, the availability of water determines the movement and congregations of animals, so pay close attention to waterholes, dams and rivers.

Most articles we have read while researching for our own Kruger self-drive stated that the best game viewing was in the early morning and before dusk. However, during our 8 weeks in Kruger the early mornings were only slightly more productive and the late afternoon sightings were quite sparse.

Remember that the unpredictability of wildlife is your wild card and you just never know what is around that next bend in the road.

ESSENTIALS FOR YOUR KRUGER SELF-DRIVE

- **Binoculars.**

Binoculars are an absolutely essential item for your Kruger safari. There will be times when the wildlife is too far from the road for you to see clearly and, even when you are relatively close to an animal, you can get great close-ups and see detail you'd miss otherwise.

Our [Avalon binoculars](#) were invaluable and we used them constantly.

- **Air conditioning/ heating**

Obviously, the temperature in the park will vary depending on when you do your Kruger self-drive. But we recommend doing your self-drive safari in a vehicle that has both air conditioning and heating.

Even in the winter months, days can be quite warm. We were in Kruger Park in September and October and on some days, the temperatures reached 39 degrees celsius. So having air conditioning in your vehicle makes your Kruger safari much more comfortable. Especially given that a large part of your time is spent driving in your vehicle.

Some days it was too hot to sit in camp so we were out driving in our air-conditioned camper just to cool down.

In contrast, the mornings and also some afternoons can be quite chilly. Particularly if you are driving with the window down and taking photos. Therefore, it's a bonus to be able to crank up the heating.

- **Camera**

Whether you are a seasoned photographer or just want to capture your experiences, you will likely be shooting plenty of wildlife. Remember to have spare batteries and memory cards to hand for your cameras and to have charging capability for your iPhone or Android.

If you'd like to know more about our wildlife photography this post may interest you:

⇒ [African Wildlife Photography ... Our Story so Far.](#)

- **Kruger Explorer App**

Having maps that show the various viewpoints, waterholes, dams and rivers really helps you to plan your Kruger itinerary. An app which was invaluable to us was the [Kruger Explorer](#). We used the app for its detailed maps, suggested routes and itineraries and its fabulous details about all of the wildlife you may encounter as you drive through Kruger.

The Kruger Explorer app also works offline, which is useful because much of Kruger does not have a wifi signal outside of the rest camps.



- **Kruger Map and Guide**

This *Kruger Park Map and Guide – a Photographer's Guide on Travelling the Kruger Park* is available in all of the rest camp shops and is worthwhile buying if you like having a physical map, route guides and animal and bird checklist. It is packed with useful information and well worth the cost.



- **Patience**

Enjoy the scenery and the little things as well as searching for those elusive sightings.

- **Flask, water, snacks**

You are not allowed to get out of the car – except in designated viewpoints and picnic spots. Therefore, to make your drive more enjoyable, pack a flask of tea or bring along a few litres of water and a bag of snacks to keep you hydrated and well-fed on your game driving missions.

WHERE TO STAY ON YOUR KRUGER SELF-DRIVE ITINERARY

Kruger National Park is run by SANS Parks and has **twelve main rest camps, all of which have a shop, restaurant and petrol station.** Some also have swimming pools, and some have decks overlooking their adjacent rivers.

Most of the rest camps offer a variety of accommodation, ranging from tent and caravan parking, basic huts (using communal bathrooms and kitchens), bungalows, safari tents and guest houses.

There are also six bushveld camps (no self camping) and four satellite camps which are more expensive than the main rest camps.

Obviously, the cheapest accommodation in Kruger is the rest camp's campsites, and as we have our 4×4 bush camper with a tent on top, we stayed in six of Kruger's rest camps on our self-drive itinerary.

We've rated the six rest camps we stayed in below and the game viewing opportunities we experienced in the area of each.

We've also included the price of one night for a powered campsite in October so you can compare prices. For current tariffs and all other accommodation prices, go to Sans Parks Kruger National park site [here](#).



All the main campsites have a shop where you can buy basics and most have a wide variety of gifts too



A common sight in the rest camps are these iridescent blue starlings looking for crumbs

LOWER SABIE REST CAMP (SOUTHERN KRUGER)

- Lower Sabie Camp Site Rating **80%**
- Lower Sabie Game Viewing Rating **90%**

◆ **Cost per night for two on a powered site: R 410**

- The individual sites in Lower Sabie were well defined, and each was a good size.
- Many sites had bushes and trees between them.
- The reception, shop and Mugg and Bean Café were all within easy reach and well maintained.
- The Mugg and Bean Café had plenty of seating and the deck overlooked the Sabie river so you could have a coffee and watch the baby hippos playing in the river.
- The game drives around the camp were very productive and the landscape was very scenic with plenty of river views.



SKUKUZA REST CAMP (SOUTHERN KRUGER)

- Skukuza Camp Site Rating 70%
- Skukuza Game Viewing Rating 70%

◆ Cost per night for two on a powered site: R410

- Skukuza is the largest of Kruger's rest camps and has several restaurant and café options.
- There is also the 'Station' – a complex which opened in May 2020 that particularly caters for families. It has a deli, restaurant, bar, a 360° cinema, coffee and ice-cream café and a kid's zone.
- There is a doctor on site.
- We had a few visitors in camp – a grumpy warthog and lots of vervet monkeys. Remember to pack all goods away, especially any food when not attended, or the monkeys will take them.



Hyena with impala in the background on a cut in track off the Skukuza – Lower Sabie Road

SATARA REST CAMP (CENTRAL KRUGER)

- Satara Camp Site Rating 50%
- Satara Game Viewing Rating 50%

Cost per night for two: R360

- Satara is known as the big cat area. We stayed there for five nights and unfortunately the weather wasn't the best – it rained most of the time which doesn't lend itself to excellent game viewing.
- The campsites are a bit higgledy-piggledy and not easily definable.
- The shower and toilet ablutions were basic.
- Satara is the second largest campsite in KNP



LETABA REST CAMP (CENTRAL KRUGER)

- Letaba Camp Site Rating 80%
- Letaba Game Viewing Rating 70%

Cost per night for two on a powered site: R390

- The elephant museum is definitely worth a visit to give you a deeper understanding of these magnificent beasts.
- Watch out for the baboons here – they were stealthily stealing anything they could lay their hands on.
- The sites were well set out here and quite a few were by the fence where the hyena prowled at night.
- A nice shady campsite with resident bushbuck.



Elephant Museum in Letaba Rest Camp

SHINGWEDZI REST CAMP (NORTHERN KRUGER)

- Shingwedzi Rest Camp Site Rating 65%
- Shingwedzi Game Viewing Rating 90%

◆ Cost per night for two on a powered site: R390

- Toilet facilities were easy to get to and well maintained.
- There was hardly any shade in the campsite and was open plan.
- Shingwedzi was our favourite area for game viewing and scenery.



PUNDA MARIA REST CAMP (NORTHERN KRUGER)

- Punda Maria Camp Site Rating **70%**
- Punda Maria Game Viewing Rating **60%**

◆ Cost per night for two on a powered site: R410

- The scenery around Punda Maria is beautiful – especially around the S99 loop close to the camp. Though sightings of big cats are less, the lush beauty and more remote setting is appealing.
- The big drawcard for the camp is that there is a waterhole right beside the camp where the elephants frequent regularly. A perfect spot to sit for a sundowner.
- The campsites were not clearly defined and in places difficult to discern which were actual sites. Many campers needed an extra-long power cord to reach the electricity points.



Sun setting on the Punda Maria waterhole

BOOKING YOUR KRUGER CAMPSITE

You can directly book your stay with SANParks in Kruger rest camps here:

[Book online directly with SANSPark](#)

WHEN TO PLAN YOUR KRUGER SELF DRIVE

What are the best times to visit Kruger?

The best times to plan your self-drive itinerary through Kruger National Park is in **September or October**. The dry winter months of June, July and August have caused the bush to die back, making it is much easier to see the wildlife.

In addition, by the end of the winter, water is sparse, so the animals tend to congregate around water sources such as waterholes, dams and rivers.

The weather in September and October can be a little temperamental, but the temperature is generally warm, around the mid-20s. However, there can be cold spells with rain or extra-warm days heating up to the early 30s or even higher. Temperatures reached the high 30's when we were there in October.

These months tend to be the busiest months in Kruger, so you will also need to book your campsite or accommodation well in advance. We booked in early March for September and October campsites and some camps were already completely booked out.

The summer months are less busy visitor wise, and the bush will be green and blooming. There will be more birdlife, but the game will be more difficult to spot. Insects, bugs, snakes and scorpions will also be more abundant so you will need to take extra care.

This free app, by the African Snakebite Institute, profiles all of the snakes, scorpions or spiders you may come across and provides details of first-aid information, nearest hospitals and emergency numbers. [Click here](#) for details of the app.



You never know what may be hiding in the grassland of Kruger

HEALTH TIPS FOR A KRUGER SELF-DRIVE

Malaria Risk

Kruger is a low-risk malaria area so you will want to consider using prophylaxis – especially if you are travelling in summer. I took Doxycycline for the whole time we were in the area – mosquitos gravitate towards me and love to feast, so I wasn't prepared to take any chances.

Insect Repellent

Use insect repellent and cover up with light clothing before dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

We used a combination of [Tabard mosquito repellent](#) and [Skin so Soft Bug formula](#). Both worked well.

Doctor in Kruger

If you are sick or need medical attention there is a doctor based at **Skukuza Rest** Camp. It is easy to make an appointment and the cost is around R650. We were able to get an appointment on the same day.

The 24-hour phone line is (013) 735 5638

KRUGER SELF-DRIVE ITINERARY COSTS SANS PARKS CONSERVATION FEES AND WILDCARD

In all of the SANParks within South Africa, there is a **daily** conservation fee per person:

South African citizens: **R100** per adult/ per day

Non-South Africans: **R424** per adult/ per day (approx USD 27, AUD 35, GBP 20)

This amount soon adds up if you are in Kruger National Park for any length of time.

However, if you buy a [Wild Card](#) this covers all conservation fees. Therefore, depending on your planned itinerary, you may want to purchase this.

South African Residents can buy a wild card for different clusters of National Parks but if you are not South African, you can only buy a card which includes all SansParks.

Wild Card prices:

One adult: **R3,265** (approx USD 210, AUD 272, GBP 155)

Couple: **R5,100** (approx USD 325, AUD 425, GBP 242)

You can use the receipt or your passport/id number as proof of purchase – you don't have to have the actual card.

We didn't have a physical Wild Card for the whole time we were in South Africa and that was fine. If you are a foreign couple travelling in South Africa – and intend to spend 13 days or longer in any of South Africa's National Parks then it is worth buying a Wild Card.

KRUGER SELF DRIVE COSTS TO CONSIDER:

- Kruger National Park entrance fees
- SANS Parks Conservation Fees
- Kruger Campsite fees /or accommodation you choose
- Petrol costs
- Food costs
- Additional tour guide costs (if you want to experience a night drive for example)



...AND THAT'S A WRAP

As always, please feel free to drop us a line or leave a comment. Are you planning a trip? Let us know and if you have any questions we'll try to help.

We are currently writing up another post all about the animals we saw in Kruger and also a trip report/photo story of our self-drive Kruger experience.

If you don't want to miss these posts – [sign up here](#) to get notified of when they are posted ... you also get access to all of our free travel resources as an extra bonus.

We've recently started an Etsy store where we sell some of our wildlife photos as digital downloads to print yourself in the sizes that suit you and have designed a few other products using our images. You can check out our Etsy store here: [Lifejourney4two Photography on Etsy](#).

Alternately you can check out our [photo gallery](#) where you can also order prints and a heap of other photo products 😊

This post may contain affiliate links. This means that we may earn a small commission from purchases you make through our links, at no extra cost to you. Thank you for supporting us. For more info, read our [Disclosure Policy](#).

YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN READING:

- [Conversation with a Leopard and Life in Klaserie Nature Reserve](#)
- [Driving in South Africa](#)
- [Three Fantastic Western Cape Mountain Passes](#)
- [Lesotho Road Trip](#)
- [Rhino and Lion Nature Reserve – Safari in the Suburbs](#)

Travel Resources

BOOK YOUR ACCOMMODATION

We use [Booking.com](#) as we can find a variety of cheap and budget accommodation such as local guesthouses and cheap hotels.

We also use Airbnb – **Get up to €46 credit** for your first Airbnb stay when you use our [Airbnb link](#)

TRAVEL GEAR AND ACCESSORIES

We've been on the road for almost three years now and have added useful items to our [Lifejourney4two page on Amazon](#).

CAR HIRE

We use [Rentalcars.com](#) to find the best car rental deals.

MOTORHOME/VAN RENTALS

if you are looking for a motorhome or van rental – we highly recommend the [Motorhome Republic](#) who can find the best deals worldwide.

FLEXIBLE ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS/ OR FINDING SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER YOUR PETS

We often use house/petsitting as it really makes our travels much more affordable – as accommodation is FREE

Get **25% off** [Trusted House Sitters](#) by using our link here: [Join Trusted House Sitters](#) either as a **house sitter or if you want to find a house sitter.**

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