

Mopani Rest Camp, Kruger National Park

Access for Guests with Mobility challenges

Mopani Rest Camp is on a hill overlooking Pioneer Dam in the northern section of the park. It is the newest of all Kruger's main camps and consequently its general facilities are very accessible. It is best accessed through the Phalaborwa Gate +-70km to the southwest and is set in mopane veld after which the camp is named. The area is particularly good for elephant, but all the big 5 can be seen and it is particularly good area for zebra and the rare and athletic antelope – the tsessebe. The Tropic of Capricorn Loop, the nShawu Pans network and the Shongololo Loops are some of the rewarding drives in the area.



The camp reception block has ramps, boardwalks, a unisex accessible toilet and ample open plan parking



The main complex which houses the shop, restaurant (above), ladies bar, lapa and dam lookout platform (below centre) is linked by a series of wide boardwalks. The descent to the ladies bar deck (right) is a steep gradient which may require some wheelchair users to be pushed. The view of the dam from the many vantage points is a special attraction and makes this camp a standout one.





Getting around Mopani in a wheelchair is easy if one sticks to the bricked road network. There is a camp nature-trail that has some adaptations for the visually impaired, but unfortunately the terrain is not suitable for wheelchairs. A large baobab (left) is one of the features of the camp and can be viewed from the road at a range of about 10m.

Access to the camp's swimming pool is easily achieved – the descent down to the pool side is ramped the whole way and perhaps a little steep for some. Unfortunately there is no pool assistive device to aid transfer between pool and wheelchair.



The camp's picnic site for day visitors is fully accessible. There is no accessible toilet at the site, but the one at reception is a short distance away and the ground in between is all bricked and suitable for movement.

Mopani has a world class **conference facility** that is pretty much fully accessible to conference goers with mobility challenges. Ramps, accessible ablutions and tables with clearance underneath are all in evidence in the choice of several sizes of meeting halls and breakaway rooms.



Accessible Accommodation at Mopani: There are only two units (17 & 66) in the camp that have accessible adaptations – two bungalows with roll-in-showers, with 2 single beds and one bunk bed ideal for children. Both these units have a suitable accessible interior and veranda with kitchenette, but unit 66 has quite a steep pathway from the parking area, while unit 17 has a completely flat access pathway. Many of the other units in camp have an accessible interior and with some adaptations to the ablutions several more units could be converted to be universally accessible to all guests including the mobility challenged.



The roll-in-shower of the accessible bungalows are of a 3 walled design (left), but when the shower is set at a height suitable to the user the shower is easily within reach of a seated person. The grab rails are positioned in suitable locations. The toilets (bottom left) are very well provided with the basin within reach of the toilets and the grab rails in the correct position. Outside on the units' verandas (below centre) there is no clearance provided beneath the sink or hotplates and a wheelchair user must position themselves in a sideways position to use these facilities which is not ideal. The dining table does however have the required clearance. Unit 17 is shown below right.



Camping: Unlike most main camps Mopani has no campsite within the camp. However the Tsendze Rustic Campsite is only a few km south of camp. This rustic camp has no power point and no generators are allowed and there are no accessible adaptations at the catering and ablution facilities. The area is flat and mobility around the campsite is easily achieved in a wheelchair. The other camping option in the area is to overnight at Shipandani Hide (see below)

Accessible Activities and facilities close to Mopani:










While many people elect to self drive, like all camps in Kruger, guests can go on park-run guided game drives – the only way to do a night drive and see nocturnal game, but at present their vehicles have no accessible enhancements and mobility impaired guests may need lifted to and from the vehicle until this gets addressed.

Hides: There are 2 hides within a short distance of Mopani Camp and both are very accessible.

The first, **Shipandani Hide** (right and below left), is a reservable sleepover hide at night but open to all during the day. The hide and the nearby drift are on the Tsendze Stream – a tributary of Pioneer Dam and are superb for water birds and crocodiles. The hide's access is ramped all the way, the gradient is gentle and there are gaps by the viewing slot to accommodate wheelchair viewers. The spring gate mechanism (below left) to prevent animals entering hides makes all the hides a challenge to open unaided by wheelchair users. Unlike most hides Shipandani as a sleepover hide is equipped with a toilet, which is ramped, but it is a basic long-drop enviro loo.



		
		<p>Pioneer Dam hide also has a gentle boardwalk access (left) and the interior has gaps for viewers in wheelchairs (far left). The success of this hide depends on the water level of the dam.</p>
<p>The Tropic of Capricorn passes a short distance to the north of Mopani and there is a monument to it on the main tar road. It can easily be viewed from the safety of one's vehicle.</p>		
<p>Picnic sites: Outside of the rest camps in close proximity to Mopani is the Mooiplaas Picnic Site which is only 7km south of the camp. The ablutions at the site are not wheelchair friendly, but mobility around the rest of the site is good. There are cemented platform areas where people cook their meals (gas frying pans called skottels are available for hire for a nominal fee and the attendant will then wash the pan after use) and at the viewing platform over the Tsendze River meaning a wheelchair user can easily move around at both facilities. The parking area is on bare earth and the ground is generally firm although some places are sandier than others. Another Picnic Site close to Mopani is Makhadzi (see photographs/ write-up under Letaba Access Profile) View the Letaba, Olifants and Shingwedzi Access Profiles as the three nearest camps to Mopani for other accessible attractions within an easy drive from camp.</p>		