



ESWATINI TRAVEL INFORMATION

January 2023

www.biggameparks.org

A very useful resource is Eswatini's official travel site www.thekingdomofeswatini.com

PLEASE BEWARE OF GOOGLE – it directs guests to the wrong places! Do not search the park name – it takes you into the middle of the bush. Please type in the “(Park) Reception”

GETTING TO ESWATINI

Eswatini has 12 land borders and one international airport. Currently (January 2023) only one airline flies into Eswatini from OR Tambo (Johannesburg, South Africa), while the choice of land border depends on itinerary routing. Of the 12 land borders, 2 are shared with Mozambique and the others with South Africa's Mphumalanga and Kwazulu Natal provinces.

Eswatini is an easy self-drive destination. Public transport is very limited, so having a vehicle while visiting the Kingdom provides great flexibility. Mlilwane is within the most popular tourism node, with numerous craft centers, shopping centers and interest points within a 30km radius.

International guests should fly into OR Tambo Airport Johannesburg, South Africa, which is less than 400Km from Eswatini. From there, either fly or drive into Eswatini, or catch a daily shuttle. The shuttle is highly recommended, being much more affordable and travel time relatively comparable to the flight.

When Eswatini Air is operational, guests can fly from Cape Town International to KM3, then hire a car or catch a shuttle/taxi to the park of preference. Vehicle independence is recommended.

Travel Requirements

A valid passport with at least two empty pages is required for travel into Eswatini. Visa requirements can be checked on <http://www.thekingdomofeswatini.com/visa-guide/>

Eswatini is an easy self-drive destination. The currency is Emalangeni, which is 1:1 with the South African Rand and Rand is accepted currency in Eswatini (notes only). International roaming on mobiles is required.

BY AIR

Currently there is only one flight connection* into Eswatini and that is from OR Tambo, Johannesburg. The flights are limited to one operator, Eswatini Airlink, offering 1 flight/day, 7 days a week and the costs are high. The alternative (recommended) is to book a road shuttle from OR Tambo to Eswatini, which has a stop just 10km from Mlilwane, or to hire a vehicle and self-drive.

**Flying from Johannesburg does not necessarily save time. The flight is 45 minutes, and with the 2 hr wait for boarding, sorting transport and the travel to the Ezulwini corridor, and then not having the independence of a vehicle can be limiting.*

Eswatini Air, our **new National airline**, has recently been granted its operating license (Jan, 2023) and promises new flight routes to South Africa (Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town) and Harare, Zimbabwe during 2023/24.

Eswatini's national King Mswati III (KM3) Airport (code **SHO**) is located at Sikhupe, eastern Eswatini (not the capital, Mbabane), some 85km from Mbabane. A new highway (completed 2021) links the airport to Manzini and Mbabane, making travel easy and relatively fast although traveling through Manzini can be slow depending on time of day.

A transfer to your destination from KM3 will be required unless a car is hired. It is best to book ahead since taxis are not readily available at the airport. There are no specific transfer companies at this stage. Big Game Parks can assist in advice or booking on behalf of guests.

Travel from KM3 to our parks (approximate):

To Hlane	40km	40 min	Route: D42; MR3 east
To Mlilwane	75km	1hr10	Route: D42; MR3 west; D38, MR103 South
To Mkhaya	65km	1hr10	Route: D42; MR3 east; MR7; MR16; MR8 west
To KaMsholo	95km	1h20	Route: D42; MR3 east; MR7; MR16; MR8 east

Car Hire Companies at KM3:

Avis Car Rental
Europcar

BY ROAD

The road access to Eswatini depends on the itinerary routing. Guests can either self-drive or catch a reliable shuttle service from OR Tambo JHB, Sandton JHB or Maputo Mozambique. Charter transfers can be booked for group travel from most SA cities in Gauteng, Mphumalanga and KZN. See below for Transfer companies.

A road toll fee of E100 per vehicle (<3500kg) (E300/commercial vehicle, >3500kg) is charged at all land borders. Different borders have different operating times – please check before travel!

Suggested Borders:

Travel From Travel To	JHB/PTA	NESPRUIT / Kruger	KZN (Durban)	KZN (Piet Retief)	MOZAMBIQUE
 HLANE SIXI NATIYALI PARK	Mananga / Matsamo / Oshoek	Mananga / Matsamo	Lavumisa	Mahamba / Sicunuza	Mhlumeni / Nomahasha
 MLILWANE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY	Oshoek / Sandlane / Sicunuza	Matsamo / Oshoek	Lavumisa / Sicunuza	Sicunuza / Mahamba / Sandlane	Mhlumeni / Nomahasha
 MKHAYA GAME RESERVE	Oshoek / Mahamba / Sicunuza	Matsamo / Mananga	Lavumisa	Mahamba / Sicunuza	Mhlumeni / Nomahasha
 KAMSHOLO SUSHELO SAFARI	Mahamba / Nsalitshe / Lavumisa	Matsamo / Mananga	Lavumisa	Mahamba / Nsalitshe / Lavumisa	Mhlumeni / Nomahasha

Border Operating Times (Check before travel! – www.thekingdomofeswatini.com)

	WEST (Mphumalanga, SA)				SOUTH (KZN)	
ESW	Ngwenya	Sicunuza	Sandlane	Mahamba	Nsalitshe	Lavumisa
SA/Moz	Oshoek	Ehlatsini	Nerston		Onverwaght	Golela
Open	24 hrs	08h00	08h00	07h00	08h00	07h00
Close		18h00	18h00	22h00	18h00	22h00

	NORTH (Mphumalanga SA)		MOZAMBIQUE	
ESW	Matsamo	Mananga	Lomahasha	Mhlumeni
SA/Moz	Jeppes Reef	Border Gate	Namaacha	Goba
Open	7h00	07h00	07h00	24 hrs
Close	20h00	18h00	22h00	

OSHOEK BORDER WARNING - Recent challenges (2023) have been experienced with the increased South Africa coal truck movement through Oshoek Border. While this routing is the most direct from Gauteng, we advise guests to get through Oshoek before 15h00 to avoid what appears to be the peak truck period.

SHUTTLES & TRANSFERS

Guests traveling to on the OR Tambo shuttles will need to arrange further transfers to the different parks. The closest drop off points are The Gables Shopping Centre, Ezulwini for Mlilwane (10km) and Manzini for Hlane, Mkhaya and KaMsholo (between 50 – 100km)). We can arrange and assist with quotes transfers on request.

Guests without independent transport are advised to stay in the main camps at the parks, close to restaurant and activities. These are Ndlovu Camp (Hlane) and Rest Camp (Mlilwane). **Transfers between parks are arranged on request at extra cost**, allowing for self-drive guests to make their own way.

PLEASE NOTE – Shuttle schedules were adjusted during Covid, please confirm schedules as they did not adjust their websites!

GETTING TO BIG GAME PARKS RESERVES

Directions are available on our website and can be sent with booking confirmation.



To Hlane Royal National Park (S26° 15' 44.5" E31° 52' 58.0")

Hlane Royal National Park is accessed directly from the MR3, just south of Simunye in north eastern Eswatini.

Suggested Routing coming from:

Johannesburg N4 east, R571, **Managa** Border, MR5, MR24 east, MR3 south.

Option Jeppes Reef Border – N4, R570, MR1, (no number, road to Madlangempisi), MR5, MR24, MR3 south

Durban N2 north, **Lavumisa** Border. MR8, MR16, (MR7 east), MR3 north

Nelspruit N4 east, **Managa** Border, R571, MR5, MR24 east, MR3 south
Option Jeppes Reef Border – N4, R570, MR1, MR5, MR24, MR3 south

Maputo N2, N3 **Mhlumeni** Border MR7, (MR16); MR3 north
Lamahasha has many trucks and is slow.



To Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary / Reilly's Rock / Sondzela Backpackers / Chubeka Trails: MR103, D55, (S26° 28' 47.4" E31° 11' 46.6")

Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary is located in Lobamba, central-western Eswatini, accessed off the old Mbabane-Manzini Road. MR103 just south of Ezulwini. Mlilwane is well sign-posted from the MR3 highway between Mbabane and Manzini.

Chubeka Trails operates on two reserves in Eswatini – Mlilwane Wildlife Sanctuary and KaMsholo Bushveld Safaris. These reserves, located in the central West and the south East respectively, are a 2-hour drive apart. Transfers between the parks are excluded in trail rates unless specified included, to allow for the many guests who self-drive. Quotations and advice may be provided for those requiring transfers.

Suggested Routing coming from:

- Johannesburg N4 east, R33, N17 **Ngwenya** Border, MR3, MR103.
Option Sicunuzu, Sandlane or Jeppes Reef Borders
- Durban N2 north, **Lavumisa** Border. MR8, MR3 west towards Mbabane, MR103
- Nelspruit R40 south, R38 west, R541 south, N17 east **Ngwenya** Border, MR3, MR103
Jeppes Reef N4, R570, MR1, MR3, MR103
Bulembu is a stunning but long drive following the Geo-Trail.
- Maputo N2, N3 **Mhlumeni** Border MR7, (MR16); MR3 west, MR103
Lamahasha has many trucks and is slow.

The daily shuttle service leaves OR Tambo via road, dropping guests off at Gables Shopping Centre, Ezulwini about 5hr-5hr30 after pick up. Taxis services are available to transfer guests to Mlilwane and we are happy to facilitate this. Mlilwane will collect trail groups who arrive at the same time free of charge from Gables, Ezulwini. Shuttle services are listed below.



To Mkhaya Game Reserve MR8 - (S26° 41' 2.49" E31° 44' 47.73")

ARRIVAL TIMES AS PREARRANGED, **EITHER** 10H00 OR 16H00

GPS – type in “Mkhaya Reception” and check it is on the MR8 - do not type Mkhaya Game Reserve! This takes you to a random point in the bush on a back road and you get to a fence!

Suggested Routing coming from:

- Johannesburg N4 east, R33, N17 **Ngwenya** Border, MR3, MR8
Option Sicunuzu, Sandlane or Jeppes Reef Borders
- Durban N2 north, **Lavumisa** Border. MR8
- Nelspruit N4 east, R571, **Managa** Border, MR5, MR24 east, MR3 south, MR16, MR8 east
R40, south, R38 west, R541 south, N17 east **Ngwenya** Border, MR3, MR8
OR N4, R570, **Matsamo** Border, MR1, (no number, road to Madlangempisi), MR5, MR3 west, MR8
- Maputo N2, N3 **Mhlumeni** Border MR7, MR16 south; MR8 west
Lamahasha has many trucks and is slow.



To KaMsholo Bushveld Safaris: (S26° 98' 75.54" E31° 94' 17.44")

KaMsholo Bushveld Safaris is in Nsoko, south-eastern Eswatini,. The park entrance is along the MR8 road between Big Bend and Lavumisa Border.

Suggested Routing coming from:

Johannesburg N17 east, N2 south, **Lavumisa** Border, MR8

OR N17 east, N2 south, R543, **Mahamba** Border, MR9, MR11, MR8 north

Option Sicunuza, Sandlane Borders

Durban N2 north, **Lavumisa** Border, MR8

Nelspruit N4 east, R571, **Managa** Border, MR5, MR24 east, MR3 south, MR16, MR8 east

OR R40, south, R38 west, R541 south, N17 east **Ngwenya** Border, MR3, MR8

OR N4, R570, **Matsamo** Border, MR1, (no number, road to Madlangempisi), MR5, MR3 west, MR8

Maputo N2, N3 **Mhlumeni** Border MR7, MR16 south; MR8 west

Lamahasha has many trucks and is slow.

Travel Distances (Approximate):

Hlane – Mlilwane	95km / 1h20	Mlilwane – Mkhaya	75km / 1h10
Hlane – Mkhaya	75km / 1h00	Mlilwane – KaMsholo	127km / 2h00
Hlane – KaMsholo	90km / 1h10	Mkhaya – KaMsholo	45km / 0h40
KM3 – Hlane	40km / 0h35	KM3 – Mkhaya	85km / 1h15
KM3 – Mlilwane	75km / 1h00	KM3 – KaMsholo	95km / 1h20

	JHB	Malelane	NLSP	Maputo	DBN	R/Bay
Hlane	460km / 5h25	120km / 2h15	180km / 2h55	117km / 2h30	485km / 6h00	325km / 4h15
Mlilwane	390km / 4h40	170km / 2h45	210km / 2h45	205km / 3h45	520km / 6h30	355km / 5h00
Mkhaya	450km / 5h30	200km / 3h00	275km / 3h45	181km / 3h20	445km / 5h30	285km / 3h50
KaMsholo	500km / 6h00	275km / 3h45	270km / 4h00	195km / 3h25	400km / 4h45	235km / 3h00

CROSS BORDER SHUTTLE INFO (updated March 2022)

Different shuttles depart at different times, so need to be selected to work with flight bookings. Please allow at least 1-2 hours on arrival and 2 hours before check in (3-4 hrs before departure).

Most shuttles collect/drop off at **OR Tambo - Terminal A Arrivals lower 6 parking lot and at Sandton Gautrain station**, but please confirm the location at time of booking.

Trans Magnific bookings@goswaziland.co.sz / info@goswaziland.co.sz +268 2404 9977 / 7605 9977 / 7905 9977 https://www.goswaziland.co.sz/	Kings Travel sales@kingstravel.acfrica +268-7826 6353 / 2404 7169 https://www.kingstravel.africa/
Exclusive Shuttle exclusiveshuttlesd@gmail.com +268-7822 2261 / 7604 0082	The Flight Connector https://www.theflightconnectorsz.com/
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