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## **Disabled travel in South Africa**

# Disabled travel in South Africa

*This article is a **travel topic**.*

## Get around

### By plane

Guide dogs are allowed to travel on local South African flights

- South African Airways - In the cabin with their owner. Dog should not take up a seat and be harnessed. Free of charge.
- Comair - In the cabin with their owner. Dog should not take up a seat and be harnessed. Free of charge.

O.R. Tambo International airport have braille on elevator buttons only in the international terminal; domestic terminal and parkade elevators do not. There are no audio announcement when stopping at any floor. The moving walkway in the domestic terminal have audio announcement on reaching the end of the walkway, but not before entering it.

### By car

Some of the larger car rental companies can supply vehicles with paraplegic hand controls

- Avis, ☎ +27 (0)11 923-3660,. From Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria. Booking must be made at least 72 hours in advance. No extra cost. edit
- Budget, ☎ +27 (0)11 398-0123 (reservations@budget.co.za, fax: +27 (0)11 398-0124),. Requires prior arrangement via reservations. From Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town. No extra cost. edit
- Imperial, ☎ +27 (0)11 574-1000 (info@imperial.ih.co.za),. R150 per day in addition to the car rental. edit

### By wheelchair

Both powered and non-powered wheelchairs can be rented

- MobilityOne, 279 Trichardt Street, Parkdene, Boksburg, ☎ +27 (0)11 892-0638 (+27 (0)82 558-4640, info@mobility1.co.za, fax: +27 (0)11 892-5702),. edit
- Mr Wheelchair, Marine Parade, Durban, ☎ +27 (0)31 368-7406 (+27 (0)82 440-4141, info@mrwheelchair.co.za, fax: +27 (0)86 689-8973),. edit

## Buy

Most shopping centres have wide marked disabled parking close to the entrances.

Money templates and coin selectors can be purchased from the South African National Council for the Blind.

## Banknotes

South African banknotes are progressively larger in larger denominations.

New banknotes have raised diamond shapes in the middle of the bottom half of each note for tactile identification. A R10 note has one, a R20 note has two, a R50 rand note has three, a R100 note has four and a R200 note has 5. They also have large geometric shapes on the front for easy identification by people with partial sight. The R10 note has a diamond, the R20 a square, the R50 a circle, the R100 a hexagon and the R200 a honeycomb hexagon.

*Be aware that a lot of older notes without these features are still in circulation*

## See

## Events

- Outeniqua Wheelchair Challenge, George Tourist Resort, ☎ +27 (0)82 421-9359 (+27 (0)44 873-4118, info@georgeocc.co.za),. Held annually in February in George, this event boasts a full marathon, half marathon, 10km and fun race. Come see the wheels roll or better still grab an entry form for next year's event. edit

## Do

Since many of South Africa's attractions are provided by nature, easy access can be a problem. There are however a number of places that provide specifically for the disabled traveller:

## Cape Town

- Table Mountain, Tafelberg Road, Cape Town, ☎ +27 (0)21 424-8181,. The lower station provides disabled parking close to the lifts and have toilets for wheelchair users. The cable car can be boarded easily by wheelchair and guide dogs are welcome aboard. On top of the mountain there is about 2km of walkways that can easily be explored in a wheelchair (*ask for a wheelchair map when buying your cable car tickets*) and all but two of the viewpoints are accessible. The restaurant is wheelchair friendly and wheelchair toilet facilities are provided. The weather at the top of the mountain can be dramatically different from that at the lower cable station, when it is 32C in Cape Town it may only be 16C on top of the mountain. Take a jacket and something to cover your legs if you are in a wheelchair. edit

## Durban

- Durban beaches, ☎ +27 (0)82 464-3842 (Ocean Braai) and +27 (0)84 823-9470 (uShaka). QuadPara provides *beach wheelchairs* with wide wheels that can easily be pushed over sand and even into the water. The wheelchairs can be found at the Ocean Braai restaurant on the North Beach and uShaka Surf & Adventures on the South Beach in Durban. No usage charge. edit

## Pretoria

- Voortrekker Monument, Eeufees Road, Groenkloof (On Proclamation Hill, big cubic building, to the south west of the city, you can't miss it), ☎ +27 (0)12 326-6770,. There is ramp access to the entrance (*use the pathways through the gardens*) and the monument is fitted with two lifts. One to access the Museum on the lower level and another to access the outside viewpoints at the top. Access to the top of the dome requires the climbing of stairs. R32 per person (plus R15 per car). edit

## Sleep

- FrancolinHof Guest House, 44 10th Avenue, Voëlklip, Hermanus, ☎ +27 (0)28 314-0571 (info@francolinhof.co.za, fax: +27 (0)28 314-0587),. Located in the Western Cape town of Hermanus this four star guest house is the first to receive a Gold rating for Accessibility. Ask for the Weaverbird Room From R410 per person, discounted in winter. edit
- Karin Coetzee,. Occupational Therapist gives information and pictures of wheelchair accessible accommodation in South Africa edit

## Grading

In August 2007 the Tourism Grading Council of South Africa introduced a *Universal Accessibility Scheme* with four levels each in Mobility, Hearing and Visual categories. Though not many establishments have yet been rated according to this scheme, there are a number that will be during 2008.

## Tour operators

These tour operators specialize in providing tours specifically designed for the disabled.

- Rolling SA,. Tours for wheelchair bound individuals. edit
- Endeavour Safaris, 23 Lark crescent, Tableview, Cape Town, ☎ +27 (0)21 556-6114 (+27 (0)73 206-7733, info@endeavour-safaris.com),. Specializing in accessible travel for people with restricted mobility, visual and hearing impairments, oxygen-users and kidney dialysis dependent individuals. edit
- Epic Enabled, 14 Clovelly Road, Cape Town, South Africa, ☎ +27 (0)21 782-9575 (info@epic-enabled.com),. Accessible wheelchair & family friendly camping safari holidays for disabled travellers to the Kruger Park, Garden Route & day tours in Johannesburg & Cape Town in South Africa. Everybody is welcome edit
- Access Africa, 47 Kimbolton Close, London, UK, ☎ +27 (0)39 973-0533 (RSA) (+44 (0)20 8851-3065 (UK), info@accessafrica.co.uk),. Based in the United Kingdom and provided South African tours for wheelchair users. edit

## Associations

- South African National Council for the Blind, 514 White Street, Bailey's Muckleneuk, Pretoria, ☎ +27 (0)12 452-3811 (admin@sancb.org.za, fax: +27 (0)12 346-4699),. edit
- South African Guide Dogs Association, 126 Wroxham Road, Rietfontein, Sandton, ☎ +27 (0)11 705-3512 (info@guidedog.org.za, fax: +27 (0)11 465-3858),. edit
- Deaf Federation of South Africa, 20 Napier Road, Richmond, ☎ +27 (0)11 482-1610 (deafsa@icon.co.za, fax: +27 (0)11 726-5873),. edit
- QuadPara Association of South Africa, 25 Hamilton Crescent, Gillitts, Durban, ☎ +27 (0)31 767-0348 (ari@qasa.co.za, fax: (0)31 767-0584),. edit
- The National Counsel for People with Physical Disabilities in South Africa, 4 Lancaster Rd, Westdene, Johannesburg, ☎ +27 (0)11 726-8040 (nationaloffice@ncppdsa.org.za, fax: +27 (0)11 726-5705),.

edit

## Respect

Keep the following in mind when travelling with or meeting a fellow traveller that happens to be disabled

- There is no need to talk loudly or slowly to a blind person, they can hear you well enough.
- Do not pat or otherwise distract a guide dog without first asking the owner's permission.
- Though ignorance, laziness and arrogance probably can be classified as disabilities, they are self inflicted and does not qualify one to occupy a disabled parking space. These parking spaces are reserved to make it easier for someone in a wheelchair to enter and exit a vehicle.
- People all have varied interests and once practicalities have been taken care off a person's disability is seldom the most important thing in their life. Someone in a wheelchair may prefer to spend the day at a bird sanctuary rather than attend a wheelchair race, a blind person might prefer discussing the local culture and history of a town rather then the absence of braille on the museum exhibits.
- Most people rarely give a second thought to toilets because they are always there and easy to use, but for a disabled person using a standard toilet can be very difficult or even impossible. Check on toilet facilities before planning an outing.
- Be practical. Do not expect a blind person to enjoy an afternoon of birdwatching or someone in a wheelchair to go down the Sterkfontein Caves.

Text content was last edited at 11:32, on 12 May 2009 by Babbelas. Based on work by Nick Roux and Anonymous user(s) of Wikitravel. A list of contributors is available at the original article on Wikitravel.  
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