

# Kosi Bay

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## A Magical interlude

The warm seas and abundant marine life of Kosi Bay, near the Mozambican border, are enticing and magical. A wise traveler checks the tide chart before setting off to a coastal destination in order to make the most of their stay. Kosi Bay is an exciting destination.

The Kosi Lake system has four lakes, but not all are accessible to visitors. Third Lake is where one finds the Kosi Bay Camp, a rustic, tranquil getaway for campers, caravaners and fishermen. There are 16 electrified lakeside campsites and three simply-furnished self-catering 'lodges' – a 2-bed, 5-bed and 6-bed set deep in the coastal forest, which visitors love and return to time after time.

A 4x4 vehicle is recommended as the sand becomes deep in parts, especially in the reserve itself. Tiny and Ben, your Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife hosts at Kosi Bay, confirm that there are two campsites and an ablution block suitable for disabled visitors.

February is one of the prime fishing times at Kosi and all skippers operating crafts within this area are required to be in possession of a valid skipper's license. Nearby KwaManguze is the closest centre for fuel, fishing supplies and groceries.

During the Turtle season (November to March), beach walks are strictly controlled. Most commonly seen is the Loggerhead Turtle. Day visits to nearby Bhanga Nek or Black Rock (permit required) may bring sightings of swift terns (*berga sterii*), xanthid crabs (*eriphi smithii*), white-fronted plovers (*charadrius marginatus*) or sanderlings (*calidris alba*).

Recreational spear fishing is permissible only in the offshore restricted zone from the beacon at Bhanga Nek north and pole 13. Visitors are warned that only pelagic fish may be hunted. It is illegal to spearfish elsewhere at Kosi.

The camping area stretches along

the shoreline and this is where one swims, fishes, launches a boat or lazily listens to the fish eagle calling.

A wide, sturdy boardwalk extends out over the crystal-clear Lake Nhlangi (the third lake in the Kosi system), with two benches at the furthestmost point, ideal for sipping sundowners or just reflecting on the day's highlights.

### Down to Kosi Mouth

Every Kosi holiday should include a day at the legendary Kosi Mouth. Book a Day Visitor Permit for the following day, and note that only 10 permits are issued per day and are on a first-come-first served basis.

The Mouth is an easy distance of 25km from the Kosi Bay Camp. Follow the sandy road through the access control boom, as it winds down to the estuary past the lake, stopping en route to admire a panoramic view of the Kosi lake system. In the unspoilt calm of the lake below, traditional subsistence farmers harvest their day's catch, thankful for the abundance of a full trap, or disheartened by a meager catch. They return day after day, ever hopeful of a meal for their family.

Continue down to the Mouth. Paradise stretches before you. Translucent estuarine water shimmering over silvery sands stretches out to the sea beyond. Close to the Mouth, at low tide, a huge tidal pool becomes an aquarium for stranded sea-fish, surging towards the surface in anticipation of the turning tide. Snorkelers floating motionless above them, are awed by their streamlined beauty.

If you choose to explore the estuary, wade or snorkel through the crystal clear warm water, wearing strops or crocs on your feet. The area is home to the stonefish (*Synanceja verrucosa*) which is thought to be the most venomous fish in the world. Named for its uncanny ability to camouflage itself, it could easily be mistaken for a rock with algae growing on it.

As the day closes, a palmnut vulture (*gypohierax angolensis*) may settle close-



by on an exotic raffia palm, perfect nesting sites, which also serve as their primary food source. The exotic raffia palm has colonized along this coast and the biggest groves are found at Kosi.

The tide rules in this part of paradise, so be aware. With equipment and litter packed away, cast a last glance over this pristine ecosystem and feel proud that it is being conserved for future generations. Head back to camp well before 18h00, when the gates close for the night.

#### Kosi Bay

**Where:** Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife's Kosi Bay Camp is 420km from Durban and 118km from Josini;

**Information:** For information about permits and boating regulations, contact Kosi Bay office on 035 5920236

**How to get there:** Co-ordinates 32°49'32.99"E 29°23'13.54"S

**Turtle Tours (Nov to March)**  
[www.kznwildlife.com](http://www.kznwildlife.com)