



Knysna is open for business and welcomes visitors to a water-wise destination

Knysna, along with many parts of the Garden Route and Western Cape, is a water-stressed destination, a reality shared by communities across South Africa. The town remains fully open, welcoming and ready for visitors, with a proactive and responsible approach to water management across the tourism sector.

Ms Lungiswa Goya, Manager: Economic Development at the Knysna Municipality, said that the town continues to operate normally, with water-saving measures in place. “Our accommodation providers, restaurants and tourism operators are open, with extensive measures in place to ensure water is used efficiently, responsibly and thoughtfully.”

“Across the destination, tourism businesses have implemented water-saving systems and operational practices, including low-flow fittings, greywater reuse, rainwater harvesting and staff training, ensuring that no drop goes unused or wasted, with visitor comfort remaining a priority.”

Elamy Bouwer from the Greater Knysna Business Chamber (GKBC) said that tourism businesses across Knysna and the surrounding areas remain committed to welcoming visitors. “We are managing water resources responsibly and safeguarding the natural assets that define the destination. Across the sector, sustainable operational practices and alternative water sources are being used to reduce pressure on municipal supply, ensuring guests feel welcomed, comfortable and cared for while acting responsibly in the current climate. At the same time, keeping the local tourism economy active is vital for jobs and livelihoods, particularly during periods of water stress.”

She said the GKBC Tourism Forum and Visit Knysna are engaged through planned discussions to determine further collaborative ways and to shape a unified voice for the industry, while identifying the support required during this challenging period. “Through this approach, operational priorities and how the destination is represented nationally and internationally are being guided and strengthened. We will have various engagements at World Travel Market and Africa’s Travel Indaba to ensure a clear, confident and consistent message to trade partners and travellers alike.”

”Knysna Estuary remains open and safe for recreational activities.”

Goya said Visit Knysna would also like to reassure visitors that the Knysna Estuary remains open and safe for recreational activities. “Despite the recent cancellation of the Chukka Festival, regular independent water quality testing at designated recreational areas, including Bollard Bay and the Knysna Heads, has consistently met required safety standards.”

An exciting events season ahead



Knysna's calendar remains full of energy and excitement, with several much-loved events coming up:

- The Knysna Fringe Festival, from 19-21 March, is a vibrant celebration of theatre, comedy, dance, music and visual arts. celebrating creativity, performance and local talent;
- The Italy in Town Knysna Street Festival edition at Thesen Harbour Town celebrates Italy with Italian food, culture, music and automotive flair on the 21st and 22nd of March,
- The Simola Hillclimb from the 30th of April to 3 May is a highlight on motor enthusiast calendars. The 2026 event will be the sixteenth edition of South Africa's premier motorsport lifestyle event, now recognised as one of the best on the global Hillclimb calendar.
- The iconic Knysna Oyster Festival, a flagship event combining sport, food, culture and community spirit, will take place from 3 to 12 July.

"These events reflect the resilience, creativity and Knysna's hospitality," said Goya. "They also demonstrate how a destination can host world-class experiences while remaining environmentally responsible."

Think before you use – enjoy Knysna water-wise

Visitors are warmly encouraged to enjoy everything Knysna has to offer, while adopting simple water-wise habits during their stay:

- Shower smart: Keep showers short and turn off the water while soaping.
- Tap pause: Turn taps off while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Reuse with purpose: Hang towels to reuse rather than requesting daily changes.
- Report leaks: Inform your host if you notice dripping taps or running toilets.
- Choose water-wise dining - support establishments prioritising sustainable practices.

"Saving water doesn't mean compromising the visitor experience," she added. "It simply means thinking before you use and joining local residents in protecting the natural resources that make Knysna such a special place."

"Our estuary, lakes, forests, beaches, restaurants, events and experiences remain open and ready to be enjoyed. By using water responsibly, visitors help ensure the destination continues to thrive for generations to come."

For updates, event information and water-wise travel tips, follow Visit Knysna on its official platforms.

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