

QUOTE

"Elsewhere in the Sacred Valley, Inkaterra
Hacienda Urubamba opened in late"

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6 destinations to watch in 2016

By Tom Barber on Jan 19, 2016 in [Africa](#), [Asia](#), [Cambodia](#), [Middle East](#), [Oman](#), [Peru](#), [Regions](#), [South America](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Tanzania](#) - Read 5342 times

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Tweet It's that time of year where we try to predict the destinations that will hit the heights in the next 12 months. So, after consulting my crystal ball and deciphering those all-enlightening tea leaves (and some scientific stuff too, promise), here are my tips for the Six Best Luxury Travel Destinations in 2016.

Tanzania

This East African classic sees two particularly exciting new openings in 2016. The first is Nomad Ngorongoro (opening June) in the Ngorongoro Crater. This eco-camp site is superb, with exceptional views, and easy access to prime game areas within the crater but also an emphasis on walking safaris and cultural visits. The second opening is Asilia's Highlands Ngorongoro on the slopes of the (extinct!) Olmoti volcano, meaning guests can access the crater for a day's safari but then stay in beautiful bomas far from other camps. Non accommodation excitements include an annular eclipse (where the rim of the sun can be seen around the moon) on the 1st of September, with Katavi National Park and Mahale Mountains National Park (home to habituated chimpanzees) are two of the best places in Africa to see it.



Oman

The jewel of the Middle East, Oman is about to get even better as a destination in 2016 thanks to several new openings in a couple of the most beautiful bits of the country. The success of the Alila Jabal Akhdar in the Hajar Mountains above Nizwa has prompted the group to open a new property – Alila Salalah – in late 2016 in the eponymous southern capital, the gateway to the 'sand sea' of the Empty Quarter (Wilfred Thesiger's favourite haunt) and a fascinating region once made wealthy by the frankincense trade. And if the sincerest form of flattery is imitation, then Alila should be chuffed that the Anantara group are following the formula, opening their own properties in both Salalah and on Jabal Akhdar.

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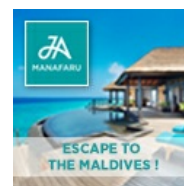
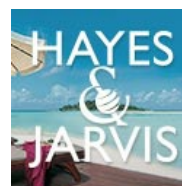
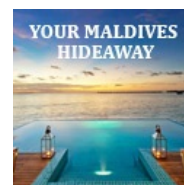
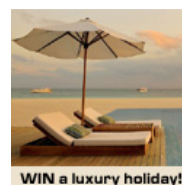
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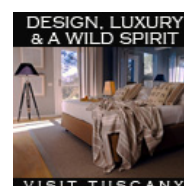
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Cambodia

Cambodia's comeback continues apace and 2016 sees several new openings and activities on offer. The islands off the south coast see the arrival of Alila's Koh Russey resort with its super-luxurious pool villas, and Akaryn Retreat, a private island retreat with the emphasis on wellness. In Siem Reap and surrounded by rice paddies and gardens, Phum Baitang has 20 pool villas designed in minimalist Khmer-style and after a soft opening in 2015 it launches formally in early 2016.



Sri Lanka

It can be hard to keep up with openings in Sri Lanka as the country reinvents itself as a luxury destination, but there's more to come. The most obvious opening is the long-awaited and luxurious Tri, overlooking Lake Koggala near Galle Lake, which opened in November 2015 but will hit its straps properly in 2016. Elsewhere, Ceylon Tea Trails is opening a new private 'Owner's Cottage' with an infinity hot tub overlooking the tea plantations. Also in hill country will be the Teardrop Estates' converted planters' bungalows with 50ft pools and butler service and located in Nuwara Eliya, Madulkele (near Kandy) and Demodara (near Ella). Most exciting of all for wildlife lovers is Wild Coast Lodge from Resplendent Ceylon (owners of Tea Trails and also Cape Weligama), set to open in October 2016 with 28 luxurious tented suites on a beautiful beach in Yala National Park so guests can combine leopard safaris and beach R&R. In a semi-protected jungle nearby, Chena Huts from the Uga Escapes group also opened in December 2015 with private pavilions set back from a beautiful beach where giant turtles lay their eggs.

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Peru

Paddington Bear will be visiting his Aunt Lucy in 2016 thanks to BA's new Gatwick to Lima flights, starting in May. While he's there he might want to check out Mountain Lodges of Peru's new cultural programme, launching in 2016, and based on their recently opened lodges in the town of Lamay and in the rural community of Huacahuasi, and then their third lodge in the village of Patacancha (opening Spring 2016), which will serve as deluxe 'basecamps' completing the trail up to Machu Picchu. Elsewhere in the Sacred Valley, Inkaterra Hacienda Urubamba opened in late 2015, and the excellent Explora group are opening a hotel in the same location as Hacienda Huayoccari.



Iceland

Iceland is the youngest country on Earth, and still growing, rather like the offering in this fab destination. On the south coast will be the Fosshotel Glacier Lagoon, and classically minimalist 4* hotel that will be a good budget option. Heading north, in fact pretty much on the north coast, in April Eleven Experience open their long awaited Deplar Lodge, a base for excellent heli-skiing in April and May, and then fishing one of the country's finest salmon rivers, as well as walking, mountain biking, sea kayaking and – for the brave/foolhardy – surfing.

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