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TOP TRAVEL TIPS FOR ASIA IN 2017

November 2016

Celebrating ten years of tour operating experience in Asia, luxury travel company &Beyond shares their top insider tips for hotel openings, unusual activities that give you a glimpse of local culture and authentic shopping experiences.

With travel to Sri Lanka continually increasing in popularity over the past few years, the luxury tour operator is now looking for even more experiences off the beaten path, such as the northern city of Jaffna. Gradually opening up to tourism, the previously unexplored north of the country offers a distinct architecture, cuisine and way of life for travellers to discover.

Another largely undiscovered destination in the south-east of Sri Lanka, Gal Oya National Park offers an array of new and exciting adventures. Apart from exploring the park by game drive vehicle, on foot or by bicycle, guests at Gal Oya Lodge can also set off on a walk of discovery with the Veddha people. One of Sri Lanka's last remaining indigenous people, guests can get a glimpse into the ancient way of life of these hunter-gatherers on a jungle walk hosted by the tribal chief, who provides a first-hand knowledge of his tribe's use of medicinal plants, ancient hunting grounds and cave-dwelling way of life.

Years of local experience allow &Beyond to direct travellers to out-of-the-way gems even in popular tourism destinations such as Colombo of this is Barefoot, a small local boutique that houses what we consider to be Colombo's best bookshop, an eclectic art gallery with regular exhibitions of some of Sri Lanka's leading artists and a courtyard café with a delicious menu. Owned by artist Barbara Sansoni, who once worked with renowned Sri Lankan architect Geoffrey Bawa, Barefoot is best known for its fabrics and handmade products, made using natural yarns dyed and woven by hand using traditional techniques that date back 40 years.

&Beyond is also keeping an eye out for new experiences and products in India, such as the upcoming opening of the Alila Fort Bishangarh. The only warrior fort in India to have been lovingly restored and transformed into a luxury resort, this magnificent structure boasts authentic reminders of its history, such as the two-metre thick ancient battlements and turrets. Suited near the city of Jaipur and its many attractions, the fort offers a range of activities aimed at travellers in search of culture, wellness and outdoor activities, as well as those looking to improve their culinary skills.

While houseboats are common in the southern state of Kerala, the private luxury MV Rudra Singha is now also available on the Brahmaputra River in



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Assam. Ideal for either a couple or a small family, the boat offers private cruises all the way upstream to the foothills of the Himalaya. Built in a traditional local style, trips on the Rudra Singha can be tailored from one-day cruises to four or five day itineraries.

For those who wish to explore deeper in the foothills of the Himalaya, the luxurious Oberoi Sukhvilas Resort and Spa is due to open in late 2016 or early 2017. Set in over 8 000 acres of protected, natural forest, the resort provides a full range of Ayurveda treatments, as well as hydrotherapy and massage.

Yet another new attraction that echoes the grandeur of India's past is the Royal Opera House in Mumbai. Built in the early 1900s and closed in the last decade of the 20th century, the grand old relic has now reopened, restored to its former beauty.

Focused less on culture and more on wildlife and natural beauty, &Beyond is introducing a set departure expedition in the Himalayan landscapes of Ladakh. Designed especially for die-hard adventurers, this 12-night adventure set off through northern India in search of rare and elusive wildlife such as snow leopard, ibex, Tibetan antelope, blue sheep and others. Travelling through the foothills of the Himalaya, other highlights of the tour include a fascinating glimpse into the culture of this magical region.

To explore these or other adventures in Asia, contact your preferred travel provider or log on to www.andBeyond.com.

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ABOUT &BEYOND

&Beyond is one of the world's leading luxury experiential travel companies, designing personalised high-end tours in 15 countries in Africa, five in Asia and four in South America. The company also owns and operates 31 extraordinary safari lodges and camps, as well as set-departure expeditions, throughout Africa, which positively impact more than 9 million acres of wildlife land. Established in 1991, &Beyond takes exceptional care of its guests in order to make a difference; its commitment to sustainable responsible travel, conservation and community empowerment has been globally recognised with multiple awards over the years. The company offers warm local hospitality and sublime natural luxury that combine with interpretive natural experiences led by highly-skilled guides and rangers

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