

ULTRATRAVEL

OUT OF THIS WORLD



A YEAR OF LIVING DIFFERENTLY

Our guide to the destinations, experiences and innovations that will broaden your horizons in 2018

BEACH BOLTHOLES

Sea and be seen





ANDAMAN ISLANDS The one to watch

By Francesca Syz

They say the Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, are a sort of “India light”. They’ve got all its exoticism – it’s a union territory of India but geographically closer to Myanmar and Thailand, populated by Tamils, Bengalis and the indigenous Jarawa tribe – but none of the hassle. Plus heavenly, empty beaches, one of the richest coral eco-systems in the world and, for now at least, a genuine sense of seclusion. Unlike, say, the Maldives, they’ve also got rivers, dense forests, craggy little mountains and the only active volcano in South Asia. They are, however, a bit tricky to get to – London to Chennai on one flight, Chennai to the Andaman capital of Port Blair on another and then a short ferry to whichever island you’re staying on (about 10 per cent of the 349 islands are inhabited) and, until now, accommodation has been limited to homestays, guesthouses and the odd boutique hotel. In February, the all-villa **Taj Exotica Resort & Spa** on Havelock Island’s blissful Radhanagar Beach will open its first 35 villas, a restaurant and a Jiva Spa. When complete, it will feature The Turtle House “grill” restaurant and fine-dining The Settlers. A fleet of Taj Butlers can arrange underwater photography classes, forest trekking and kayaking in the mangroves. Book now for travel between November and April – the nicest time to visit.

Andaman Islands, 10-night itinerary from £3,300 per person, Ampersand Travel; ampersandtravel.com