

SNEAK PEEK



★ CNT EXCLUSIVE ★

AYANA FORT KOCHI

The Kochi-Muziris Biennale opens this month, and to coincide with the contemporary art fair, there's a new design-led boutique hotel to check in to. **Aatish Nath** has the details

Located just off Bazaar Road, opposite Pepper House and steps away from Aspinwall House, two of the Biennale's venues, is Ayana Fort Kochi. The new 16-room boutique hotel is housed in a 200-year-old building that served as a court house during the Portuguese reign. Ayana, which means 'resting place' in Sanskrit, features Athangudi tilework and Art Deco elements that seamlessly bridge the gap between classic and modern. The monochrome flooring provides an elegant contrast to the pops of colour that are found across the property, adding vibrancy to traditional architectural elements like the sloping wooden roof of the lobby.

Each room features modern amenities like LCD televisions, Bluetooth speakers and complimentary wi-fi, while bathrooms are stocked with Kama Ayurveda products.

It's worth it to wake up early and spend the morning at a rooftop yoga class. Follow that up with a dip in the pool before heading off to the city's various art galleries and antique stores. The hotel also offers immersive experiences in which guests can learn about local practices such as the acrobatic martial art form of Kalaripayattu and the operation of the famed Chinese fishing nets.

There are three in-house restaurants to choose from. There's The Old Court, where you should order the meen mulakittathu

and avial, made with the freshest catch and organic ingredients. Vegetarians should try the thoran—a traditional Malayali dish of vegetables and spices garnished with grated coconut. The open-air terrace restaurant, Le Souk, serves kebabs, falafel and other Mediterranean fare. But if you're in a hurry to hit the Biennale and only have time to grab a snack on your way out of the hotel, make a pit stop at The Tea Lounge and pick up some baked goods. 📍

AYANA FORT KOCHI

Calvathy Road, Fort Kochi, Kochi, Kerala
(www.ayanahospitality.com); doubles from ₹10,000