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From experiential vacations to intelligent luxury, Akhil Behl of Ayana Hospitality lists the trends for 2016

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*Akhil Behl, chief executive officer,
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The travel & hospitality sector posted a 1% rise in demand between June and Nov 2015, according to TimesJobs.com data. The domestic [hotel industry](#) is estimated to touch \$1.8 billion by 2016, from \$0.8 billion presently, buoyed by rise in online bookings, according to a report by [ICRA](#).

Akhil Behl, chief executive officer, Ayana Hospitality, shares 5 trends that will shape the hospitality sector in 2016.

Experiential vacations

Today's luxury travellers are looking for experiential getaways rather than being pampered in large resort style five-star hotels. The travellers are keen to understand local customs and indulge in local food. They do not want to be bound by large boundary walls that end up being an obstacle in their discovery of the local region.

Guest are increasingly requesting for opportunities to participate in various community development and conservation initiatives. Today's guest is more conscious about having a responsible vacation which starts with understanding and experiencing the destination they are in.

Local and organic produce

Indulgent local menus using organically-grown fruits and vegetables will see a growth in demand. The new age travelers are also health conscious and will look for low calorie, customised health selections as well. It is imperative that the cuisines reflect the cultural heritage of the region.

Personalisation of experience

The contemporary hotel guests want and expect hotels to deliver a personalised service that caters to their specific needs and wants. Hence services like catering to private picnics and dinners, where a personal chef and butler will attend to every need of the guest, will become the norm.

Intelligent rather than opulent luxury

Guest are looking for intelligence and functionality in their luxury experience. No longer are they looking for a golden faucet and a marble bathtub. Innovative ideas that are efficient/eco-sensitive and that enhance the guest experience are in demand.

Sustainability and design

A growing trend observed is that most hotels now have "green policy" that attracts traveller. Authenticity and natural elements will be a major aspect in design, with the property reflecting its own unique identity, feel and character. An emphasis on organic forms and rustic materials – the development will blend into the surrounding vegetation and landscape. The development is designed to provide complete exclusivity and privacy.