The holiday of Diwali is ranging to light up mainstream America. Diwali, a festival of lights celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others in India and other countries, has long been observed in immigrant communities around the US, but now public celebrations of the holiday are starting to pop up in places ranging from Disneyland and Times Square to parks and museums. The Times Square event is the brainchild of Shalini Bhasin, who came to the United States from India 40 years ago, is president of ASI Communications, the marketing firm behind Diwali at Times Square. The event, now in its fourth year, has drawn tens of thousands of people in past years. It’s scheduled for Oct. 5, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m., with dance performances, professional dancers, a Brass band, fireworks and a lighting ceremony.

While Diwali celebrations are held throughout the fall, the holiday’s actual date is Oct. 19. Also called Deepavali, it’s an annual harvest festival held just before the Hindu new year. Celebrations include lighting of oil lamps, lighting of candles, and lighting up livestock, light up doors, light up gardens, light up rooftops, and light up the sky.

The Diwali celebration at California Adventure Park in Anaheim, California, includes performances of traditional Indian dances and a Bollywood dance party for guests. It’s part of a fall festival of holidays, at the theme park reflecting cultural traditions from around the world. The Diwali festival begins Oct. 13 and runs through Jan. 3.

San Antonio, Texas, has one of the nation’s largest city-sponsored Diwali events, drawing more than 15,000 people each year. The 2017 event, scheduled for Nov. 4 at La Villita, a historic arts venue, will feature nine annual Diwali celebrations with Indian dance, entertainment, food, crafts, trucks and the release of lighted candles into the San Antonio River along the city’s River Walk.

In Bulgaria the Bulgarian village of Momchilovtsi, perched high on the slopes of the Rhodope mountains in south-eastern Europe near the border with Greece, is famous as ‘the village of longevity’ because of the high number of centenarians born here. But with just 18,500 Chinese tourists last year, Bulgaria is seriously lagging in the Europe-wide drive to attract Chinese tourists. Direct flights between the two countries are only a dream, experts say. Visits to Momchilovtsi have to take an average flight within Europe, then on to Sofia and a train journey of several hours to the village but visit worth it — AP.

In Bulgaria, people of Momchilovtsi have been used to the sight of Chinese tourists over a century. Bulgarian yoghurt is the local yoghurt, “Pan said. “It is the most top seller in this booming sector, on sale in most supermarkets with the village.

The 1,200 inhabitants of Momchilovtsi already host about 1,000 Chinese tourists annually out of a total of 5,000-6,000 visitors, mayor Biserka Babisova told AFP. “The numbers are increasing every year, thanks to the huge advertising campaign for the yoghurt in China that the city has benefited from,” added.

In 2016, the Chinese version of reality TV show “Summer” was set in Momchilovtsi, with scenes centred around the local village and a bull event only with a Chinese-Bulgarian dictionary.

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