Diwali, or the Festival of Lights with all its religious, historical and social connotations, which began as an ancient harvest festival in India, has evolved to become one of the biggest and brightest celebrations in the country’s festival calendar.

A big part of the brightness aspect of the festival comes from the millions of glowing lights that decorate homes, buildings and streets during the celebration period, not to mention the dazzling colorful fireworks that light up the night skies. Though the small earthen oil lamps called diya that traditionally illuminated homes during Diwali have been replaced or bolstered in some places by colorful candles, lanterns, neon lamps and stringed LED lights, bright glittering lights are an integral part of Diwali celebrations everywhere. Light is one of the most fundamental and universal of forces, symbolizing revival and life-bestowing energy. In many cultures and religions around the world, light is often the representation of divinity and godliness; it is seen as purifying, enlightening, protecting and illuminating, driving away the darkness of evil, ignorance, fear and despair.

Light is one of the most fundamental and universal of forces, symbolizing revival and life-bestowing energy. In many cultures and religions around the world, light is often the representation of divinity and godliness; it is seen as purifying, enlightening, protecting and illuminating, driving away the darkness of evil, ignorance, fear and despair.

Sun, the primordial form of light, and its more temporal form, fire, have been revered for centuries by various civilizations in different parts of the world. Fire, in particular, has been feared for its devastating capabilities, as well as adored for its warmth and light potentialities. Ancient cultures learned to fear the natural forest fires and volcanic eruptions that disrupted and destroyed their homes and livelihood.

Continued on Page 10
Diwali or Deepawali gets its name from the words ‘deepa’, which means lamp, and ‘avali’, which signifies a row, or the ‘row of lamps’ that are traditionally placed inside and outside homes. The lighting of lamps on Diwali, which falls on the darkest new moon night, traditionally served as a symbolic gesture of driving away the darkness and beseeching religious blessings for an auspicious year ahead. Though various religious communities in India, including the Sikhs, Jains, Newar Buddhists and Hindus, celebrate Diwali to mark diverse events, the overarching theme of the festival is the triumph of good over evil. The Sikh community marks Diwali as Bandi Chhor Divas to celebrate the release from imprisonment of Guru Hargobind Ji, the revered Sixth Guru of the Sikhs. The Jain community, celebrate this auspicious occasion as the spiritual awakening of Lord Mahavira.

Even among Hindus, Diwali signifies different meanings to people in different parts of the country. In Northern India, Diwali is celebrated as the return of King Ram to Ayodhya after defeating the demon-king Ravana, which is also why it is a popular practice to burn effigies of Ravana in the north. In the western parts of India, it is Lord Vishnu’s decision to send the demon King Bali to rule the nether world that is cause for celebration of Diwali. In the east, devotees offer prayers to the goddess Kali on the day. And, down south, the day celebrates the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon Narakasura.

This has resulted in Diwali being celebrated in different parts of the country with a variety of customs and traditions, along with the meanings associated with them. But no matter how it is celebrated, the unifying motif and the sense of fervor and enthusiasm behind Diwali, is the triumph of good over evil, of knowledge over ignorance, of hope over despair and the overcoming of darkness with the light that symbolizes the path to wisdom, peace and prosperity for Indians everywhere.

Continued on Page 10

One great attribute of Indians is their strong attachment to the rich culture and history of their country. Regardless of where they find themselves in the world, when the time comes to celebrate the multiplicity of religious, cultural or historic events, both big and small, that dot India’s festival calendar, Indians are in a league of their own. Indians from all walks of life come together at these traditional festivals, appreciating and celebrating with a vibrancy and gusto that has to be seen to be believed. Diwali, or the festival of light, which this year falls on October 19, is one such significant festival that brings Indians together in a joyous spirit of sharing, friendship and oneness.

Happy Diwali!
Diwali, the Indian festival of lights, is one of the most celebrated festivals in the country as well as among Indians living abroad. This popular festival is celebrated vibrantly with lighting of small oil lamps, decorating homes and streets, bursting firecrackers and preparing feasts. Amidst all the pomp and splendor it is often easy to forget the potential harm caused to us and the environment by carrying out celebrations in an improper and irresponsible manner.

The pollution caused by excessive bursting of firecrackers, both in terms of noise and that to the air around us, is on its own quite a cause for concern. The waste generated from a week of celebrations, especially when it comprises of plastic and chemicals, also has a significant negative impact on the environment.

However, there are various ways we can limit, if not entirely eliminate, the damage done by the celebrations without dampening the festivities.

Diwali is an age-old celebration of lights, one that traditionally involved the lighting of earthen or clay lamps both inside and outside homes. By continuing to choose such environmentally friendly material for the lamps, households could avoid or limit electric lighting, while continuing to maintain the essence of the festival. These lamps are easy to purchase, inexpensive, recyclable and are often painted in beautiful and vivid colors, adding to the traditional aesthetic of the festival.

Also, rather than decorating homes with artificially made color powders, opt for more organic and chemical-free versions of the same. Many families choose to use colorful alternatives like ground rice powder, pulses and lentils, with no compromise on the beauty whatsoever. Similarly, using real petals and flowers over fake plastic ones is an alternative that promises the same vibrant shades with the bonus that it also provides fresh, earthy scents. When decorating the house, try something new this year and explore the internet, with its vast suggestions on DIY decorations using recycled material; this is an enjoyable activity that could engage family and friends and also benefit the environment.

In addition, by encouraging collective celebration over individual celebration, Diwali can be cost effective as well as more favorable to the environment. This could encourage the use of fewer firecrackers, which could limit the pollution caused and also encourage sharing, bringing communities closer together in celebration. After all, more people could ultimately imply more fun!

Limiting celebrations is another way to be gentler to the environment. Suggest fixed hours during which communities could gather to celebrate, which would limit the use of fireworks without taking the fun out of the process. Festivities need not be compromised as families could continue to mingle and celebrate through music, dance and games.

As a result of the growing concern for the environment, eco-friendly firecrackers have also begun arriving in the market; made from recycled material and complying with the standards of the Central Pollution Control Board these new firecrackers produce only limited noise when lit and promises a better alternative to the otherwise loud and harmful firecrackers used.

When choosing to adopt safer and cleaner ways to celebrate this festive season, there are no limits to creative solutions available to those participating in the festivities without compromising on celebrations. By spreading the idea of environmentally friendly ways of celebrating festivals, it sets a benchmark for families everywhere, now and in the future, to celebrate the real essence of the festival, which is the triumph of good over evil.
Diwali in India

It is often said that India, a country that prides itself on its unity in diversity, is at its best come festival season. This stands true especially during Diwali, a festival that holds different meanings to different regions and religions, but is celebrated with a unified spirit and enthusiasm that marks the triumph of good over evil, and the overcoming of darkness with light. In spite of the broadly accepted theme that underlies one of India’s favorite festivals, different parts of the country celebrate the festival with their own individual unique flair. To be involved in the festivities is to truly understand and enjoy what the ‘Festival of Light’ means to the people that make up this wonderfully diverse nation. Whether it is to experience an Indian Diwali for the first time, or to celebrate the traditional festival with a new approach, here are a few suggestions of cities in India that shine their brightest during the festive season.

NEW DELHI

Shopping is a very popular activity during Diwali season and families spare little to no expense when splurging for themselves and loved ones on the occasion. Diwali is considered to be a very auspicious time of the year for major purchases, and shopping is encouraged with the idea of getting rid of the old and welcoming novelty and change. The markets in New Delhi are a promising destination for shoppers, with pop-up ‘mela’ or fairs taking over the streets, filled with food, ornaments, clothes and other festive merchandise. Artists take advantage of the crowds of locals and visitors who fill the streets, and perform adaptations of traditional religious stories such as Ram Lila on temporary stages or as street plays. Visitors and locals also enjoy the breathtaking fireworks display that light up the night skies during the festival, making New Delhi a city worth visiting at Diwali time.

AGRA

A mere train ride away from New Delhi is Agra, another popular destination during Diwali, as the backdrop of lights and color add to the beauty of historic sites like the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and more. Those visiting Agra should also try visiting the Mahadev Temple to witness the traditional rituals of Diwali performed there.

AMRITSAR

The Golden Temple in Amritsar, Punjab, the holiest shrine, is decked up in a grand glowing display during Diwali. The Sikh community celebrates Diwali as ‘Bandi Chhor Divas’ or the ‘Day of Liberation’ in commemoration of the release of their sixth holy Guru, Hargobind Sahib, in 1611 from unjust imprisonment by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. It is also significant to note that the foundation stone of the Golden Temple was laid on Diwali Day in 1588, and has since been an important religious place of worship for the Sikh community, who gather on this occasion to drape the temple with shimmering lights. As mesmerizing as the temple looks, the reflection of the diyas on the water by the temple makes the whole experience transcending and one to consider witnessing during Diwali.

KOLKATA

Unlike most other parts of the country that worship Goddess Lakshmi during the festival of Diwali, West Bengal pays respect to Goddess Kali on this day. Attending a traditional Puja in one of the many Kali Temples in Kolkata, like Kalighat, Belur Math and Dakshineswar, instills a deep sense of devotion among attendees and is a truly authentic and pious experience. Magnificently decorated idols of the vibrant Goddess Kali are also put on display across the city for people to visit.
Varanasi, or Banares, in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, is a favored tourist spot all throughout the year, owing to the deep spirituality associated with the city, which lies on the banks of the River Ganga. Varanasi bustles with people during the festive season; all gathered to chant hymns and light up the banks of the Ganga. For the best experience, visitors should choose to stay at one of the many riverside hotels, where they can have a great view of the fabulous display of fireworks over the river. Other highlights include lining the ghats, which are the series of steps leading to the body of water, with illuminated candles and then participating in the special Ganga Aarti (prayer) while people light diyas and set them out to float down the river, a spectacular display only Varanasi is known for. Dev Deepawali, celebrated two weeks after Diwali, on the full moon night of the Hindu month of Kartik, is an even bigger occasion for the local population, who mark the event by carrying artistic creation of Hindu deities in a procession through the streets and by lining the ghats with more than a million clay lamps.

Goa celebrates Diwali by focusing on the destruction of the Demon Naraka by Lord Krishna. Popular competitions are held in every village and city to see who can make the biggest, scariest effigy of the demon, which are then set on fire at the crack of dawn on Naraka Chaturdashi, the day before the main day of Diwali. Bursting firecrackers on the beach well into the late hours of the night, along with the uninterrupted atmosphere of dance and music makes Goa a beloved destination among tourists and locals alike.

JAIPUR
Rich in culture and tradition and also considered a shopper’s paradise, Jaipur, the famed Pink City in Rajasthan, is a popular destination during Diwali, as the colorful city invites you in with a glorious display of light and splendor. Decorations are not limited to houses and buildings, but extend to the vast markets the city is known for. Every year, Diwali encourages a friendly competition among vendors who put up their best displays in keeping with the spirit of the season. Johari Bazaar, one of the many markets, is referred to as ‘The Strip’ during this time of the year as it is believed to resemble the extravagant lights of the Las Vegas Strip in the USA. Jaipur is also known for the sweets and savory delicacies that are relished during the season of Diwali. Popular treats like Mawa Kachori, Gond ke Laddoo, Sohan Papadi and Besan Barfi fill the markets, making it an ideal destination for foodies as well.

CHENNAI
The capital city of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu celebrates Diwali on Narka Chaturdashi, which falls on the day before the festival is observed by the North Indian states. The local inhabitants of the city are strict followers of the traditions and rituals individualistic to their culture and religion, and do so by rising early in the day and participating in spiritual activities and preparation of South Indian feasts and sweets, which are then shared among family and friends. Chennai is known for their traditional silks and is home to many popular textile houses, which are undoubtedly filled during the festive season by the young and old keen on shining their brightest during Diwali. The large number of temples in this city makes it a popular destination for those willing to start their days with religious proceedings which are then followed by delicious feasts and concluded with the bursting of firecrackers and joyful festivities.
Festival of Sweets

One of the most anticipated customs during Diwali is the sharing and receiving of ‘mithai’ (sweets). Although readily available in Indian sweet shops, there is an undeniable thrill in preparing these delicacies at home, especially as it brings all the family members together and results in a fun filled activity with a sweet payoff. Here are a few simple recipes that can lend you a helping hand in the kitchen this Diwali.

**Ingredients**
- 2 cups gram flour
- ⅛ cup ghee
- ¾ cup powdered sugar
- Few almonds and pistachios—blanched, silvered, to garnish

**Preparation**
In a kadhai, melt the ghee and add the gram flour. Stir fry over low heat, until pasty and brown. This usually takes about 30 minutes. Shut off the heat and leave the mixture to cool completely. Add the sugar and cardamom and mix well by rubbing it with your open palm against the base of the bowl. Rub till blended thoroughly. Shape into tight, hard balls, pressing hard at every stage. At the final stage, keep it pressed a little longer so that the surface becomes smooth. Garnish and serve.

**COCONUT BARFI**

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups of grated coconut
- 4 cups of sugar syrup
- 2 tbsp Khoya (evaporated milk powder)
- 1 tbsp almonds, blanched and shredded
- 1 tbsp pistachio, blanched and shredded
- 1 tsp ghee

**Preparation**
For the sugar syrup: Add sugar and water in the same proportions in a pan. Start heating the mixture over low to medium flame and keep stirring continuously to avoid caramelizing. When all the sugar dissolves and it becomes nice and thick, turn off the flame.
For the coconut barfi: In a thick-bottomed kadai (wok), mix the coconut, khoya and the sugar syrup on low heat until it thickens and acquires a halwa-like consistency. Add the pistachio and almonds. Brush on the ghee in a tray and spread the coconut batter on it. Smoothen out the edges of the batter and cut into barfi shapes when it cools down. Serve.

**BAJAR KA HALWA**

**Ingredients**
- 1 kg carrots
- 1½ liters milk
- 8 green cardamoms
- 5-7 tbsp ghee
- 5-7 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp raisins
- 2 tbsp sugar syrup
- 2 tbsp shredded almonds
- 2 tbsp chopped dates.

**Preparation**
Clean and grate the carrots. Simmer in milk with the cardamom until liquid evaporates. Heat ghee in a heavy pan and add the carrot mixture. Cook over gentle flame for 10-15 minutes. Stir in sugar and continue cooking until the halwa turns a deep reddish color. Stir in dried fruit and serve.

**GULAB JAMUN**

**Ingredients**
- 100g firmly packed khoya (evaporated milk powder)
- 1 tbsp refined flour/sooji
- 1 tbsp baking soda
- 2 cups sugar, 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp milk-mixed with a little water
- 4 green cardamoms—slightly crushed
- Ghee

**Preparation**
For the jamuns: Mash the khoya. Mix in the flour and baking soda and knead into firm dough. The dough should be firm and moist. Shape the dough into marble-sized balls (Jamuns) that are smooth and creaseless (Can be round/oblong). Heat ghee in the kadhai, and then add as many jamuns as will fit, without sticking to one another. Fry till jamuns are golden brown and repeat the process until all jamuns are fried.
For the syrup: Mix sugar and water, and place over low heat, stirring till the sugar dissolves, then bring the mixture to boil. Add the milk and water mixture and continue boiling over high flame, without stirring. Cook till syrup thickens, then cool the syrup for at least 30 minutes. Run it through a strainer and then boil the syrup again with the cardamom. Add the fried jamuns to it and switch off the heat. Allow to cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.
KARANJI (OR GOAN NEVRI)

**Ingredients**
- 500g Maida
- 100g Ghee
- 200ml water
- 1kg sugar
- 1 pinch saffron
- 200g sweet mawa (or Khoya)
- 15g chopped pistachio

**Preparation**
Rub one-fourth cup ghee into the flour and knead into stiff dough with water. Leave to rest for at least 30 min. For the filling, mix together the coconut, sugar, poppy seeds, cardamom and almonds. Make balls of the dough and roll out into small circles. Place some filling over one half of the circle and fold in the other half, pressing the edges to seal. The seal can be designed by pinching and twisting along the edges. Heat oil in a kadai (wok) once hot enough, add as many karanjis as fit in comfortably. Turn them over and lower the heat to medium. Fry till golden brown on all sides. Lift out and leave to drain on absorbent paper. Serve hot.

POORNAN POLI

**Ingredients**
- 2 cups maida (or whole wheat flour)
- 1 cup gram dal (channa dal)
- 1 cup jaggery (or sugar)
- Pinch of saffron
- 1/2 tbsp cardamom powder
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 2 tbsp ghee

**Preparation**
Wash and pressure cook the dal in 1 1/2 cups of water. Drain the excess water and keep aside. Heat the ghee in a pan, add dal and jaggery and cook till the mixture thickens, continue to stir. Dissolve the saffron in a little water. Add the cardamom, nutmeg powder and saffron solution to the mixture and mix well. Cook and divide into 12 equal portions and keep aside. For the dough:
- For the dough:
  - 2 cups refined flour
  - 1 cup clarified butter
  - For the filling:
  - 1 cup grated coconut
  - 1 cup sugar
  - 1 tsp powdered green cardamom
  - 1 tbsp finely chopped almonds.

MAWA KACHORI

**Ingredients**
- 500g Maida
- 100g Ghee
- 200ml water
- 1kg sugar
- 1 pinch saffron
- 200g sweet mawa (or Khoya)
- 15g chopped pistachio

**Preparation**
Prepare dough with flour, ghee and water and rest for 30 min. Divide into balls and stuff center with mawa (evaporated milk powder) and flatten to make discs. Fry in ghee till golden brown. Make sugar syrup by heating water and sugar till the sugar dissolves completely. Just before serving, dip the kachoris in sugar syrup and garnish with chopped nuts.

RICE KHEER

**Ingredients**
- 5 cups of full cream milk
- 1/4 cup rice
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 10-12 raisins
- 4 green cardamoms
- 10-12 almonds-blanced, shredded.

**Preparation**
Boil the milk and rice in a deep pan, Simmer over low flame, stirring occasionally till the rice is cooked and the milk becomes thick. Add sugar, raisins and cardamoms. Stir till sugar dissolves. Garnish with almonds and serve hot or cold.

ALMOND MALAI KULFI

**Ingredients**
- 1 cup almonds (blanched and ground)
- 1 1/2 cup condensed milk
- 6 tbsp cream
- 15-20 toasted pistachio, chopped coarsely
- 1 cup milk
- Saffron, a pinch

**Preparation**
In a bowl, blend ground blanched almonds, condensed milk and cream together. Infuse milk with saffron and add the mix to it. Toast some pistachio and chop them coarsely. Add pistachio into it and blend them well together. Set them in a ‘matka’ (clay pot) and cover it with greased paper or foil. Refrigerate and serve cold.
Diwali is a bright and colorful festival that truly reflects the rich tradition and culture of India. Apart from the customs, rituals, food and decor, social and family get-togethers are a major part of the festivities. Given that these gatherings bring together family, friends and relatives, many of whom you are probably meeting after a long time, here are a few suggestions to look your best at these events.

Clothing: Indian attire is another symbol of the vibrancy of the country; the sheer diversity of dresses donned by Indian women and men across the vast land is nothing short of amazing. Here are a few fashion trends, where modern meets tradition, which you could consider draping yourself in this Diwali season to give you that edge over the rest.

This year, the traditional salwar top is being replaced by long, intricately designed overcoats and jackets, which are paired either with cigarette pants, tights or long, grand skirts. It adds a sophistication that can be manipulated with the use of the right colors and hues. For the festivities, bright colors can be paired together (fuchsia pinks, oranges and reds), and the need for excessive jewelry and makeup can be minimized. This look works especially well for shorter women as the length of the overcoat adds the illusion of height, especially if paired with heels. Overcoats come with stunning designs that add a very traditional touch to a seemingly simple ensemble.

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Long, traditional skirts can also be paired with crop tops, the modern woman’s lehenga. Young women and girls all over are growing fonder of this look as it imitates the traditional ghagra, but eliminates the heavy feeling and discomfort associated with it. One can get very creative with this look by pairing the stunning skirts available with subtle crop tops, or vice versa, allowing you to go heavier on make-up or accessories.

Dhotis are beginning to make a comeback in women’s fashion. Saris are being draped with these puffy, frilled pants as the bottom, and long kurtas are being paired with contrast colored dhoti trousers. This is a look that is both trendy and extremely comfortable for those unwilling to let their outfits interfere with the trend.

Half and half saris is also a popular choice and finishing the look with bold accessories. Equally hip alternative is pairing old fashioned celebrations. Unwilling to let their outfits interfere with the trendy and extremely comfortable for those colored dhoti trousers. This is a look that is both versatile, allowing you to go heavier on make-up or accessories.

Saris too are adapting to the change in times, where authentic traditional styles are being paired with modern, designer blouses. An equally hip alternative is pairing old fashioned saris with either matching or contrasting t-shirts and finishing the look with bold accessories. Half and half saris is also a popular choice among women who drape saris of different color palettes or patterns that are both creative and in vogue.

For men, silk and metallic hues have become popular in recent times. Designers encourage men to break out of the norm and add a silk scarf to a traditional or plain kurta set, or opt for kurtas in metallic shades. When paired correctly with dull trousers or pants, this look is a young, dynamic shift from the age old outfit. Jackets, whether ethnic blazers or the ever so popular Nehru style can always take an ordinary shirt or kurta to the next level, and can be adopted by men this Diwali to look their best during festivities.

Make-up: If, as they say, ‘clothes make the man’, then hair style, make-up and accessories add to the style-quotient of a woman making her even more elegant.

As celebrations during this time of the year revolve around a number of engaging social activities, the ideal look to adopt is one that is comfortable and durable, without cramping your style. Here are a few suggestions that are simple, at par with current trends and suitable for this vibrant season.

Hair-style: This year, soft curls and wavy hair have made a popular come back, a look that is always complemented ethnic Indian wear. For women with straight hair, this look can be achieved by braiding your hair and leaving it over nigh to produce loose curls. For those keen on maintaining an up do, you can never go wrong with the classic bun, but add a fun twist by braiding the sides of your hair in a Dutch style, a small detail that results in a fun and elegant hair do.

Make-up:

- **Rainbow eyes:** For more simplistic outfits, adding detail to your make up is a fun way to stand out from the crowd, and this vibrant season calls for rainbow eyes. Maintain a minimalist approach with your lips and face but go bold and colorful on the eyes with eyeliners or shadows of different shades that can contrast each other but compliment your outfit and produce an overall polshed and fashionable appearance.

- **Peach:** If a simple approach is for you, peach is a trendy shade this season. A simple dab across your lips, cheeks and eye lids gives an overall appearance that is subtle yet fresh and playful. If your outfit or jewelry is bold and loud, minimal make up is the way to go so as to not complicate a festive look.

- **The Glossy Lid:** A runway favorite, applying a hint of gloss to your lids is a draw to the eyes, need not be constantly retouched, and adds a sparkle to your over all look. The glossy lid can be achieved with a touch of oil, Vaseline or even a shimmery lip gloss to the lids and works best when paired with a bold lip and a dash of highlighter to the cheekbones, giving you an overall glow without looking excessive, a classic approach to effortless make up.

- **Smoky eye with a pop of color:** The classic smoky eye has now been revamped and trend setters everywhere have assured us that the look we took so long to master is still here to linger. Adding a pop of color, preferably in metallic shades, can maintain the bold smokiness appearance of the smoky eye and still keep up with the festive theme. When adorning brighter colored clothes, a smoky eye can give you an edgy look that is both trendy and whimsical.

- **Henna/Mehendi:** Henna or mehendi is the traditional art of decorating one’s hands and feet with intricate designs that form temporary tattoos and are popular among women especially during festive seasons. This Diwali, follow these tips and suggestions for richer, bold, and long lasting works of art that are bound to add a traditional, festive look to your overall appearance.

Before applying henna, wash the part of the body that will be tattooed very well with soap and dry it. Do not carry out exfoliation of the skin on this area before applying henna as it could interfere with how long the henna lasts. If available, apply eucalyptus oil or tiger balm on the skin. Once applied, leave the henna on the skin for as long as possible. The longer it stays on, the longer the henna will last. Prepare a syrup of lemon, sugar and water and spray it on the skin every couple of hours after the application. Do not add too much or the henna will get diluted and smudged. Heat is a friend of henna. From time to time, carefully keep the skin warm over a flame or anything that produces a gentle heat to help produce a darker stain. This keeps the henna moist which helps in continuous staining.

After about 6-8 hours (or overnight if possible), do not wash off the paste with soap and water. Instead, allow the paste to dry completely and brush it off. Avoid direct contact with water for the next 24 hours if possible. Olive oil can be applied to the design to keep it dark for long, also creating a barrier between the tattoo and water.
Fireworks were often used to mark the celebrations that included bonfires and cold and darkness of winter. Fire-themed fire was seen as a source and solace to the arrival of dark winter and the return of warm summer. With so much significance attached to light, it is not surprising that all over the world people of different faiths and beliefs celebrate unique traditional festivals centered on the lighting of lamps, lanterns, candles or fires. The ancient Zoroastrians, which includes present day Parsee and Irani communities in India and elsewhere, worship fire as the visible manifestation of Ahura Mazda, the eternal principle of light and righteousness. In the Jewish faith, Hanukkah or the Festival of Light is held each year in the Hebrew month of Kislev, which falls between late November and late December each year. The highlight of this eight-day festival is the lighting of the traditional nine-branched candelabrum, or menorah, on each day of the commemorations.

In the Christian religious calendar, the four weeks of Advent in the lead up to Christmas are marked by the pious decorating their homes and churches with bright lights, candles and shimmering stars symbolizing purity and the light of god. In many parts of Europe and Latin America, light or fire festivals are held to celebrate various religious, harvest or solstice events. The bonfires on Saint Martin’s Day in November in many European towns and villages, the arrival of dark winter and the return of warm summer. With so much significance attached to light, it is not surprising that all over the world people of different faiths and beliefs celebrate unique traditional festivals centered on the lighting of lamps, lanterns, candles or fires. The ancient Zoroastrians, which includes present day Parsee and Irani communities in India and elsewhere, worship fire as the visible manifestation of Ahura Mazda, the eternal principle of light and righteousness. In the Jewish faith, Hanukkah or the Festival of Light is held each year in the Hebrew month of Kislev, which falls between late November and late December each year. The highlight of this eight-day festival is the lighting of the traditional nine-branched candelabrum, or menorah, on each day of the commemorations.

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WIN HALF KG GOLD EVERY WEEK.
Also Free Gold Coin With Every Purchase.

*1 FREE GOLD COIN
With gold jewellery worth KWD 200

*1 RAFFLE COUPON
With gold jewellery worth KWD 50

*KALYAN JEWELLERS

One lucky customer can win half kg gold every week for six weeks. Don’t miss! Offer open from 5th October to 20th November 2017 only.
**Destination PARTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Price from (KWD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRAGUE</td>
<td>FROM 90*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKU</td>
<td>FROM 105*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMSTERDAM</td>
<td>FROM 115*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>FROM 155*</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>KIEV</td>
<td>FROM 155*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFIA</td>
<td>FROM 160*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Inclusions:** 3 nights’ stay in 4-star hotels, return private airport transfers, two days chauffeur driven car in the evenings (8 hours daily), except in Amsterdam, nightlife pass with entrance to 10 clubs in Amsterdam, 1 day’s entrance to Duplex Club in Prague

*Prices are per person, subject to seasonal surcharges and availability. Inclusions: Airport, visa fee, travel insurance (highly recommended), meals and any services other than stated under inclusions.

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