Niagara Falls lit up in red to welcome Chinese New Year

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Against a wintry backdrop, a dazzling display of red lit up Niagara Falls to welcome the coming Chinese Lunar New Year of the Dog.  
"In celebration of the Chinese New Year, and in recognition of 2018 being designated the Canada-China Year of Tourism, we are glad to illuminate Niagara Falls in a shade of red this evening," Janice Thomson, chair of Niagara Falls Illumination Board &Niagara Parks Commission said at a launching ceremony on Thursday in Niagara Falls.  
The special illumination is in addition to the regular illumination, which takes place nightly from 6:30 pm to midnight.  
He Wei, Chinese Consul General in Toronto who joined the ceremony, said that Niagara Falls in red is an "unprecedented way" to celebrate Chinese New Year on the day of Xiaonian that began the countdown to the Spring Festival, which falls on Feb 16.  
"We are delighted that Niagara Falls participates in our `Happy Chinese New Year' program unfolding in Ontario,'' said He. "Niagara Falls is one of Canada's landmark tourist resources. I sincerely hope the region will continue to play an active role in the Canada-China Year of Tourism 2018, promoting tourism and business cooperation between our two countries for win-win results."  
Jim Diodati, the mayor of the City of Niagara Falls who has been to China several times, said on site that Niagara Falls was lit up in red for all international visitors but especially for Chinese guests here.  
"We light up one of the greatest natural wonders of the world in color today, it's significant for the Year of Canada-China Tourism as well as the Chinese New Year," he said.  
The mayor said the falls have seen increased visits by Chinese each year since 2009 when Canada was granted approved destination status by China. China is the third-largest international market for visitors to Canada, behind the US and the UK. Tourism Minister Bardish Chagger said the goal is to double the number of Chinese visiting Canada by 2022.  
"We welcome all of Chinese friends. I believe there will be more Chinese visitors than usual this year. I have put Niagara Falls on the list where they will come to in 2018. We are waiting for you when you get here," he said.  
Canadian National (CN) Tower, the third-tallest tower in the world, also was lit up in red -- which to Chinese means happy, lucky and prosperous -- to celebrate the Chinese lunar New Year in Toronto. It was the fourth year that has been done since it was started in 2015.

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