



AN INTRODUCTION TO CHINESE SOCIAL CHANNELS

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Developed in conjunction with OMD China



CONTENT

- Reaching consumers in China's mobile & social first landscape
- Introduction on RED - a one-stop shop to reaching consumers
- An organic content approach to RED
- A paid approach to RED
- Appendix: Key social platforms in China

Reaching consumers in China's mobile & social first landscape

Looking at China's outbound travel market, the pandemic has significantly reshaped its travel behaviours in several key aspects:

- **Younger travelers:** Those aged under 45 have become the primary force in FIT(Free Independent Traveler) outbound travel.
- **Experience-driven journeys:** Travelers now prioritize in-depth, immersive experiences over simply visiting famous attractions.
- **Socialized planning:** More travelers rely on inspirational content from social media than traditional online travel agencies for trip planning.

As a result, **social channels** have become more vital than ever for driving international travel intentions among these younger traveler audiences. However, Chinese social media platforms are numerous and varied, with little correlation to Western platforms.

This guide provides a general introduction on the potential of Chinese social media for UK tourism businesses who are already **China ready** (e.g. have basic knowledge of the China outbound market, provide Chinese payment options and Mandarin support etc.), but seeking to explore and grow further direct engagement with Chinese consumers.

To help focus your efforts, this guide focuses on the platform **RED**, where consumers most actively seek travel inspiration and information, providing directions to approach and engage consumers through all customer journey touchpoints from building awareness to driving bookings.

An appendix is included with details on other major Chinese social platforms and further links to RED guidance for those interested.

A spotlight on RED

RED is an authentic user-driven platform integrated with commerce functions, making it one of the most popular social platforms among Chinese consumers. It appeals to a diverse audience, including travel-savvy millennials with a strong interest in outbound travel.

For UK tourism businesses, RED offers an efficient and effective way to reach a highly engaged audience actively seeking travel and lifestyle content and recommendations, converting them into potential visitors to Britain.

Authentic sharing community

RED has increasingly established itself as a trusted social platform, built around authentic user sharing that connects ordinary people.

- **90%** of its content is **user-generated**.
- A community of over **80 million sharers**.
- About **70%** of daily active users **search** on RED, highlighting its role in travel inspiration and decision-making.

Travel-savvy millennials

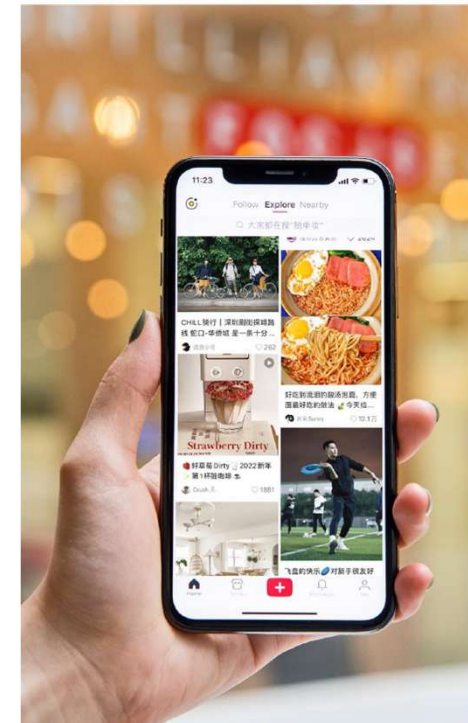
RED has become a key platform for young, high-value consumers with a strong interest in outbound travel.

- **#Young**: 50% born after 1995, 35% born after 2000.
- **#Top tier cities**: 50% from Tier 1-2 cities.
- **#Female oriented**: About 70% are female who are usually travel decision makers with strong purchasing power.
- **# Highly travel-engaged audience**: 67 million+ users interested in travel and 19 million+ specifically in outbound travel.

Rapidly growing travel content

A wide variety of content is shared on RED, with **outdoor and travel** topics seeing significant growth in popularity, making it a key platform for tourism-related inspiration and engagement.

- Over **13 million** new travel contents are posted every month.
- Post volume grew **76% YoY**, while views increased **71% YoY**.



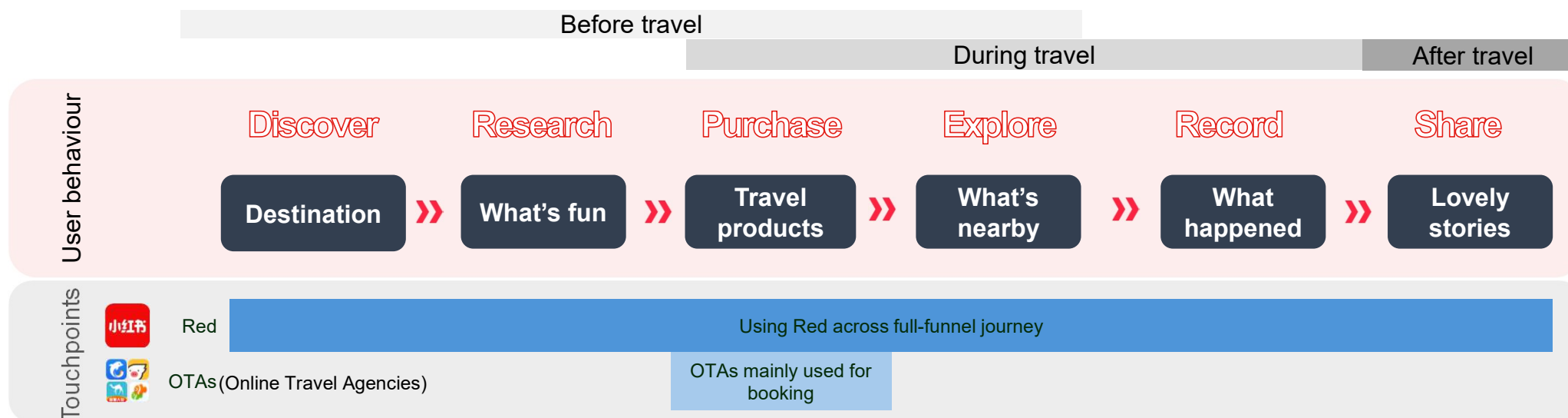
Data source: Red data center 2024 May, Red OTA report 2024 Jun

Why RED? - Engaging travellers from inspiration to booking

RED offers the UK tourism businesses a one-stop platform opportunity to reach highly valuable Chinese travellers at any point of the customer journey, whether you are seeking to create awareness of your experience/destination or to generate conversion leads and bookings.

How UK tourism businesses can leverage RED: focus on key promotion objectives and create relevant and engaging content in local language; consider paid promotion to maximize your reach; work with influencers to embed your key messaging; partner with local travel trade to drive bookings; encourage user-generated content and sharing to amplify your content offering.

How consumers use RED across the customer journey



For more information on RED: [Xiaohongshu – About](#)



Operating an official account on RED

How often and when to post:

What to avoid:

How to make more impact:

New accounts in early start phase (0-3 months)

3-4 posts/week
Prioritizing content quality over quantity

Established accounts(> 10K fans)

4-5 posts/week
Testing diverse content themes and formats

Leverage peak traffic period on RED

Working days: 12-2 pm; 7-10 pm
Weekend: 10-12 pm; 8-11 pm
(China Standard Time)

Avoid sensitive wording to prevent content from being restricted
*All content will be censored by RED before shown to the public.



Controversial
Content



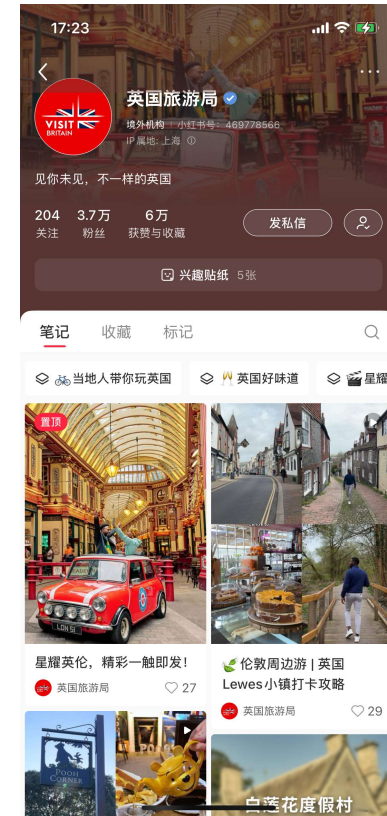
Political
Topics

Boost high-performing posts for greater reach and impact(budget required but flexible).

*This must be undertaken by an authenticated account via a social media or media buying agency.

Offer in-kind support for influencer visits to help generate organic content and recommendations, providing authentic third-party credibility and endorsement.

Tag VisitBritain (@英国旅游局) in your post for potential amplification/engagement.



Creating engaging content for your audience

On RED, the platform's algorithm prioritizes highly engaging content, boosting its reach. Here are key tips to enhance engagement with your followers.

Leverage trending topics or current events to create relevant content, such as:

- Seasonal travel
- Nature & cultural experiences
- Food & drinks
- Concert & exhibitions
- Film & TV
- Outdoor adventures
- City walks
- Themed tours etc.

Incorporate trending hashtags

to boost visibility and reach a larger audience.

Use raffles where necessary

to encourage user-generated content and drive engagement with your posts.

Format preferences

Create visual impact

Use eye-catching visuals with vibrant colors and dynamic, Instagram-style shots to capture attention.

Prioritize video content

Short videos(within 1min)
Videos generally drive higher engagement than static images.

Develop localized Content

Use Chinese content/assets and add Chinese subtitles to English videos to better connect with your audience.

Focus on non-branded Assets

Organic content performs best without heavy logos or overt branding.

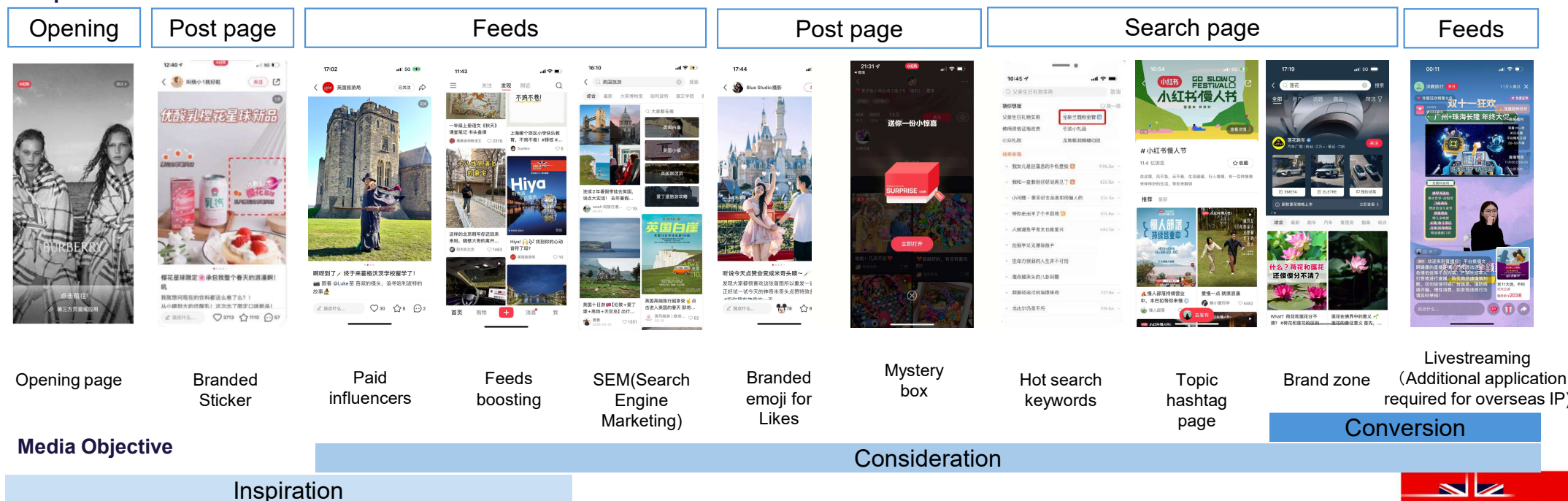


Paid marketing on RED: reach new audiences and drive bookings

- Below is an overview of the range of ad formats available on RED, showing how consumers can be reached and influenced across the entire user journey.
- Based on media objectives (e.g. awareness or bookings), UK tourism businesses can pick and mix from these options to determine when and how to engage consumers on RED. The next slide will outline the most effective formats in more detail.
- A media-buy or social media agency is required to undertake local language paid RED campaigns.

RED Media Ads Format Overview

Types of placements



Integrated paid approach to brand marketing on RED

From the options previously outlined, RED recommends a combination of three key formats to achieve an effective paid media response. Below are the key benefits of each activity to help determine how to approach and scale activity based on budget and objectives.

If budget allows, consider incorporating additional ad formats for wider impact and increased audience engagement as mentioned on the previous slide.

Paid KOLs(Key Opinion Leaders)

Build trust & engagement



KOLs (i.e.influencers) can promote your destination or experience in a way that feels natural and organic to their followers, often through posts, videos, or livestreaming.

Best For:

- Increasing awareness of a destination or experience.
- Boosting engagement with your target audience.
- Building trust through credible, authentic voices.

Feed Ads

Increase your content exposure



Native ads that appear directly within a user's feed, blending seamlessly with organic content. Ideal for brand visibility and engaging users with visually appealing assets and eye-catching content titles.

Best For: Inspiration and awareness campaigns that require wide reach.

Search Ads

Drive up consideration



These ads appear in search results when users search for travel-related topics, destinations, or experiences on RED.

They are highly targeted, ensuring that your content reaches users actively seeking travel information, increasing chances of conversion.

Best For: Consideration and conversion-focused campaigns.

Paid approach to drive conversion

UK tourism businesses have multiple pathways to drive bookings through RED, though budget is usually required to activate these functions:

- **Partner with a local travel trade platform** to feature and promote products —similar to the Klook example.
- **Use your own booking page or mini-program** by allocating paid media budgets to drive traffic directly for conversions—following the AirBnB model (subject to certification and platform approval).
- Destinations and products that are more **welcoming and tailored** to Chinese travelers(e.g. offering Chinese language and local payment options) are more likely to see higher conversion rates.

Travel Sector Growth on RED

+24% ▲

YoY increase on the number of travel industry accounts on Red (2024 vs. 2023)

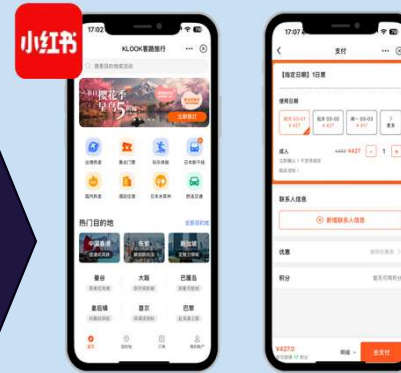
Categories:

- Travel agencies
- Theme parks
- Cruise & Airlines
- Hotels
- Inbound destinations
- Outbound destinations

Example 1: Klook



Product
hyperlink in
posts



In-app mini
program

Booking

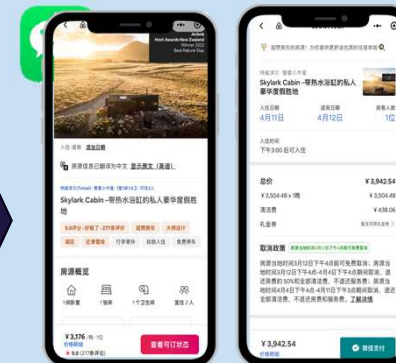


With paid promotion, Klook could embed links in its posts that directed users to its built-in mini-program on RED, enabling a seamless journey from inspiration to conversion—all within the platform.

Example 2: AirBnB



HTML5 Page



Mini-program
on Wechat

Booking






Airbnb used a paid HTML5 page to guide users to its booking mini-program on WeChat, providing a smooth and integrated path to conversion.

Data source: Red life trend report 2025



THREE KEY SOCIAL PLATFORMS: CHINA

WeChat, RED and Douyin are VB's active social channels in China

Media	 WeChat	 RED	 Douyin
Positioning	LARGEST SOCIAL APP	KEY SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT APP	MOST TIME SPENT APP
Western equivalents	WhatsApp + Facebook	Pinterest + Instagram	Tik Tok
Monthly active users	1,083M	225M	852M
User behavior	Messaging and following official brand/video accounts	Browse & search, engage with content from brands, influencers and ordinary users	Flip through videos from brands, influencers and ordinary users
User demographics	Male 50% Female 50% Primary user group: 25-50 yo (52%)	Male 36% Female 64% Primary user group: <35 yo (70%)	Male 50% Female 50% Primary user group: <40 yo (58%)
Daily Usage	High frequency (opening every 20 mins) but low duration (average duration at 2 mins)	About 6 min per visit utilizing fragmented time	Fixed visiting frequency but increased daily time spent to over 2 hours
Channel USP(unique selling proposition)	Proxy for website; E-commerce solutions via livestreaming & mini-programs(light apps within Wechat)	Authentic content & user engagement; Livestreaming & e-commerce solutions	Short-form video led content; Livestreaming & e-commerce solutions
Marketing opportunities	Content marketing and convert through e-commerce in APP	Influencer marketing, paid ads and SEM (search-engine marketing) in APP	Content marketing via viral videos and sell via e-commerce in APP

Note: Unlike Western Meta channels, content cannot be cross-posted on China's social platforms. Each platform has its own unique ecosystem, requiring custom content for authenticity checks and to reach consumers in the optimal format.

Data source: Questmobile 2025 Jan, Travel Daily 2024 Q1, *awake time is calculated as 840mins per day



