

THE CHINESE CONSUMER OPPORTUNITY

# The Invisible Market

Why Chinese consumers represent one of the UK's largest untapped opportunities — and how to reach them.

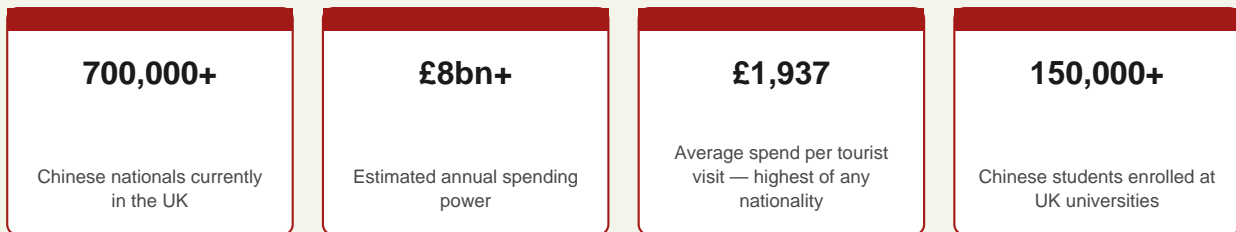
Over **700,000 Chinese nationals** are currently living, studying and travelling across the UK — spending an estimated **£8 billion annually**. Most UK businesses are completely invisible to them. This guide explains why, and what it means for your business.

## THE SCALE OF THE OPPORTUNITY

# A £8 billion audience hiding in plain sight

There are currently over 700,000 Chinese nationals living, studying and travelling across the United Kingdom. This is not a niche demographic. It is a sizeable, high-spending consumer base that is already present in UK cities — shopping, dining, visiting and spending money every single day.

VisitBritain estimates that Chinese tourists alone spend an average of £1,937 per visit to the UK — the highest of any visiting nationality. Combined with the spending of resident students and expats, the total addressable market is estimated at over £8 billion annually.



## WHO MAKES UP THIS AUDIENCE

## Three distinct segments. One connected community.

### Chinese Students

150,000+ enrolled at UK universities. Present year-round. High disposable income. A fresh intake every year ensures this segment never shrinks. Students form long-term brand loyalties during their time in the UK.

### Chinese Tourists

463,000 visits to the UK in 2024 — up 76% on 2023 and forecast to grow further. The highest-spending tourist nationality per visit. They plan extensively before they arrive and spend freely when they do.

### Chinese Expats & Professionals

A growing resident community of professionals, business owners and high-net-worth individuals who live and spend in the UK long-term. This segment drives consistent, recurring spend across property, hospitality and professional services.

**SECTOR BREAKDOWN**

---

# Where Chinese consumer spending flows in the UK

Chinese consumer spending is not limited to a single sector. It flows broadly across the UK economy — making this audience relevant to a wide range of businesses. Understanding where they spend and why is the first step to capturing a share of it.

## **Restaurants & Hospitality**

Food is central to Chinese culture and social life. Chinese consumers in the UK actively seek out quality dining experiences — both Chinese cuisine and authentic local food. Restaurants that show up where this audience discovers them benefit from consistent group bookings and repeat visits.

## **Retail & Luxury Goods**

Chinese tourists and students are among the most active retail spenders in the UK. They seek out British heritage brands, independent boutiques and premium products. Shopping is a key driver of tourist visits and a regular habit for resident students and professionals.

## **Hotels & Accommodation**

Chinese tourists spend significantly on accommodation and actively research where to stay before they arrive. Properties that are visible and trusted within the Chinese consumer ecosystem capture bookings that would otherwise go elsewhere by default.

## **Experiences & Attractions**

Cultural sites, heritage experiences and unique British attractions are a major draw for Chinese visitors. Itineraries are planned extensively in advance — meaning attractions that are not visible during the planning stage are simply not visited, regardless of their quality or proximity.

## **Property & Professional Services**

The UK property market is a significant draw for Chinese HNW investors and families. Estate agents, developers, solicitors and financial advisers who can communicate professionally within the Chinese business ecosystem gain access to a high-value client base that others cannot reach.

## **Education**

UK education is highly valued by Chinese families. Universities, independent schools and language providers that position themselves effectively within Chinese digital channels benefit from direct enquiries from prospective students and their parents.

## THE PLATFORM GAP

# Why most UK businesses are invisible to this audience

The Chinese consumer audience in the UK is not hard to reach because it is small or disengaged. It is hard to reach because it exists on a completely different digital ecosystem to the one most UK businesses operate in.

Western consumers discover businesses through Google, Instagram, TripAdvisor and Facebook. Chinese consumers discover businesses through RedNote (Xiaohongshu) and WeChat — platforms they grew up with, trust completely and use as their primary source of recommendations, reviews and discovery.

This isn't about language barriers or cultural differences. It's about platform behaviour. A Chinese tourist planning a visit to Birmingham will search RedNote for restaurants, hotels and things to do — not Google. A Chinese professional looking for a solicitor in London will ask within their WeChat network — not LinkedIn. If your business doesn't appear in those searches, it simply does not exist to this audience.

## HOW WESTERN CONSUMERS DISCOVER BUSINESSES

- Google Search
- Instagram
- TripAdvisor
- Facebook Ads

## HOW CHINESE CONSUMERS DISCOVER BUSINESSES

- RedNote (Xiaohongshu)
- WeChat networks
- Chinese KOL recommendations
- Community groups & forums

The businesses that are succeeding with Chinese consumers in the UK are not necessarily the best — they are simply the ones that are visible in the right places. That is the gap Influence Exchange exists to close.

## CAPTURING THE OPPORTUNITY

# The channels that connect you to this audience

Reaching the Chinese consumer market in the UK requires presence on the platforms this audience actually uses. There are two primary channels — each suited to a different type of business and a different type of relationship.

## RedNote (Xiaohongshu)

### For consumer-facing businesses

RedNote is the primary discovery platform for Chinese consumers in the UK. With over 300 million active users, it is where Chinese students, tourists and expats search for restaurants, shops, hotels, experiences and brands. A well-managed RedNote presence puts your business in front of this audience at the exact moment they are deciding where to spend. We manage the entire process — from page setup and certified Mandarin RedNote to paid campaigns and KOL partnerships.

## WeChat

### For professional services, property and B2B

WeChat is the professional backbone of the Chinese business world. For property firms, estate agents, solicitors, architects and financial advisers, a verified WeChat business account provides a direct communication channel to Chinese HNW clients, investors and professionals — both those already in the UK and those in mainland China considering a move or investment. It is where high-value relationships are built and maintained within the Chinese business community.

# The opportunity is already in your city.

## Is your business showing up?

The Chinese consumer market in the UK is not a future opportunity — it is happening now. Over 700,000 Chinese nationals are already here, already spending, and already searching for businesses like yours on platforms you are not yet present on.

The businesses that move first will build the brand recognition, platform authority and community trust that will be difficult to replicate later. The window of competitive advantage is open — but it will not stay open indefinitely.

### Ready to reach the Chinese consumer market?

Enquire at [influence-exchange.com](https://influence-exchange.com)

or email [Admin@influence-exchange.com](mailto:Admin@influence-exchange.com)

#### RedNote Marketing

Reach Chinese consumers in the UK through the platform they use to discover businesses.

#### WeChat Marketing

Connect with Chinese professionals, investors and HNW clients through their primary business network.

#### IE Sourcing

Access verified Chinese manufacturers directly through our network of agents across mainland China.