RedNote: what it’s like using the Chinese app TikTokers are flocking to

Instead of wallowing in misery about potentially losing access to their favorite short-form video app, many TikTokers are flocking to RedNote, a Chinese social media platform also called Xiaohongshu. I’ve decided to spend some time on the platform myself, and it looks like so-called “TikTok refugees” are excited about interacting with a community mainly comprised of Chinese-speaking users — and vice versa.

Launched in 2013 as a shopping platform, RedNote has grown into one of China’s most popular social apps featuring photos, videos, and written content. Now it’s seeing another spike in users from another part of the globe, with more than 700,000 users joining RedNote in just two days, according to a report from *Reuters*. The number is still small, at just a fraction of the 150 million Americans TikTok reported were already using the app in early 2023.

As noted by CNN, the name Xiaohongshu translates to “little red book,” which “could be seen as a tongue-in-cheek reference to a red-covered book of quotations from the founding father of Communist China, Mao Zedong.” Many US users seem to be using the Chinese platform out of spite of the US government’s plan to ban TikTok — but in a deeply unserious way.

Amongst all the Chinese-language posts depicting sleek fit checks, mouthwatering food videos, and memes I don’t quite understand yet, is content from TikTok expats. Many joke about their sudden appearance on the app, with one user wondering what Chinese users might think after seeing an influx of US-

based users and another showing their gradual transformation from a gun-wielding, Buc-ee’s merch-wearing American into a Chinese-speaking RedNote user. Others are simply saying “hello” to their new community — some of whom have written captions in what I’d assume is machine-translated Chinese.

Even more interesting though, are all the RedNote users welcoming TikTokers with open arms. Several RedNote users are eager to introduce the app while also sharing some tips and tricks on how to navigate it. One creator says, “now’s the perfect time to dive into Chinese culture” through RedNote with the Chinese New Year coming up, adding that users on the platform are “obsessed with Luigi, Trump, and *Squid Game*.” Some even offer to teach their new community members Chinese.

But many TikTokers are equally curious about RedNote users in China, too. “Chinese friends, post pictures of your meal or snacks for today! Curious to see what you typically eat,” one user writes. Another asks, “I’m American. Do y’all like us? We know y’all not the enemy. Can we all be friends?”

The trend is actually kind of wholesome, and I’m here for it, but I’m not confident it will actually last. If these apps grow in popularity, they could potentially face a ban, too. But the migration to RedNote is likely just a trend — and trends only last as long as it takes for another to replace it.

https://www.theverge.com/2025/1/14/24343834/rednote-xiaohongshu-chinese-app-tiktok-ban