**BEFORE HANGING OUT WITH MY FRIENDS**, I often ended up in indecisive conversations over 'where to meet', 'where to eat' or 'what to do'. Dates usually ended up being conventional and repetitive, and planning them was a headache because coming up with ideas was not the easiest thing to do in our busy lives.



Sure what do you wanna do?

## There Must Be Something Out There

I scoured the internet and App Store thinking there must be something that can help rid this headache. Most of the options I came across were either too narrow in providing activity options (OpenTable and BetterHalf), too focused on communication between couples (Kahnoodle and Couple) or simply weren't available in Alabama (5 Every Day).

## Taking the Dive

To solve this myself, I started brainstorming the elements of a successful hangout. What makes a date successful? What activities are people interested in? How can I pull this off in my city? What are some other needs, interests and issues that can arise when hanging out with someone?



Data was sampled from 22 people

"A date/place/thing that allows you to converse on and off without the awkward silence would be great. You can still get to know someone while doing an activity... No talking sucks but being forced to talk the entire time on a date is also exhausting. Movie and a dinner is too conventional. Something fresh would be awesome." — Quote from a user's survey

## The Making of Routr

From the data I collected, I created an ideal user flow as how I imagined my app to pan out and what my desired user experience would entail. It later developed into an experience map, which captured the user's journey and emotional results with each touchpoint they perform within the app.

ENRICHED EXPERIENCE	NEUTRAL BASELINE		Interested in the recommendation	•		Excited to choose a route		Is intrigued by Reminder Guide	Excited to try and review a route
MEDIOCRE EXPERIENCE	Concerned about planning date	••	•	Hopes the tutorial is not too long	Is not pleased with permissions				
	1. TRIGGER	2. PURPOSE	3. ACTION	4. LAUNCH	5. ONBOARDING	5. DECISION			7. CHECK
TOUCHPOINTS	1A. Adam is meeting up with a girl for the first time after chatting on Tinder for a couple of weeks.	<ul> <li>2A. Adam wasn't the best at planning dates, especially first dates.</li> <li>2B. He wants to impress Lisa for the first time they meet in person.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>3A. He messages a good friend for some ideas.</li> <li>3B. His friend Noah responds by recommending Routr, which Noah has used in the past to plan dates with his current partner.</li> <li>3C. Adam searches for Routr through the iOS app store.</li> <li>3D. He finds the app store.</li> <li>3D. He finds the app is about.</li> <li>3E. Adam learns that Routr is an app known to plan a date that is routed through activities. These dates curated by professionals and by crowdsourcing.</li> </ul>	<ul><li>4A. Adam downloads and launches Routr. Is greeted with a splash page.</li><li>4B. He is then lead to a tutorial.</li></ul>	<ul> <li>SA. He goes through a 4 page tutorial and gets more insight as to how to use Routr.</li> <li>SB. He is presented with notification to allow push notification and location services.</li> <li>SC. He is then lead to the home page where he first sees he can plan a date by selecting a location to start with, a theme or use the random generator.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>6A. Since Adam has learnt that Lisa studies at OCAD University, He decides to select a route by location.</li> <li>6B. He pinpoints the neighbourhood near OCAD University, as they will be meeting after one of her classes</li> <li>6C. The app loads 3 routes in a list, sorted by popularity and likes.</li> <li>6D. One of the routes, labelled Sweet Art, is the second route on the list that shows 2 dollar signs, 4 and a half stars and a date.</li> <li>6E. He taps on Sweet Art to reveal the whole route planned out.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>6F. Adam scrolls through the page to see a short description of the date, the expense rating, star review, date the route was added, a list of 3 activities, a map and a save button.</li> <li>6G. He raviews the list to see: Emily Carr Exhibit at AGO, dinner at Bocca on Baldwin, dessert at Kekou Gelato House</li> <li>6H. He taps on the map to see if he can view a bigger version, and is presented with a more detailed map with the pinpointed route.</li> <li>6I. He sees a circle overlay to show the radius of the entire route and realizes every activity is very</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>6J. Adam thinks Lisa would like this as she is an art major and has a sweet tooth. He scrolls down to save this route.</li> <li>6K. He sees underneath, "Do you want to turn on Reminder Guide? We will let you know where to go next after you've reached your destination"</li> <li>6L. Adam is intrigued by this feature and taps allow to turn on Reminder Guide.</li> <li>6M. He chooses a date to set Reminder Guide.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>7A. Adam returns to the home page and wants to review the route he chose.</li> <li>7B. He taps on his profile to see one saved date.</li> <li>7C. He also sees "Review routes you've done", and two other buttons to "Vote on new routes", and "Submit a route"</li> <li>7D. Adam likes the option of reviewing routes and will remember to do that after he's tried Sweet Art with Lisa.</li> </ul>

MEDIOCRE EXPERIENCE

A user journey captured in an experience map

From here I could decide what actions and features were crucial and beneficial, and designed a sitemap around these conclusions. I wanted to create a seamless experience for my target users by emphasizing on simplicity but keeping a balance between customization of dates versus pre-planned dates, as both were appreciated.



Sketches of a draft site map and early mockups

The app's initial design involved a navigation of four choices on filtering date options: by the user's location, by themes, by random selection or by choosing your own activities.

Explore the early prototype below:



However, after user-testing the app with a handful of people, it was apparent that the purpose of the app was losing its main focus: generating date routes easily. It was suggested that themed dates would be the most engaging and unique option, and should be the main feature. I redesigned the flow with this change in mind to make sure date routes were a lot faster to access.

I started pulling user interface inspiration from popular map apps to study how they guide users through complicated journeys.



*The redesigned user flow including wireframes and hotspots* 

The latest redesign of Routr focuses on delivering dates you can select by themes such as Romantic, Adventurous and Casual. It is photographically visual to help you envision your perfect date before even going on it. My overall goal was to create an app that would help you plan better dates with a simple to use interface.

## Moving Forward

There is still a lot more to explore with Routr. What if activities were introduced through the partnership of businesses and events? What if routes were generated by users and crowdsourcing? Can we use other ways to share and review routes? These are just some of the questions I'd like to expand on as I continue to work on this project. But for now, feel free to check out the current state of the app by clicking 'Explore the App' below.

Explore the latest prototype below:

