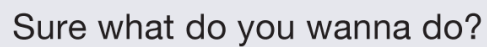


BEFORE HANGING OUT WITH MY FRIENDS, I often ended up in indecisive conversations over ‘where to meet’, ‘where to eat’ or ‘what to do’. Dates usually ended up being conventional and repetitive, and planning them was a headache because coming up with ideas was not the easiest thing to do in our busy lives.



Wanna hang out?



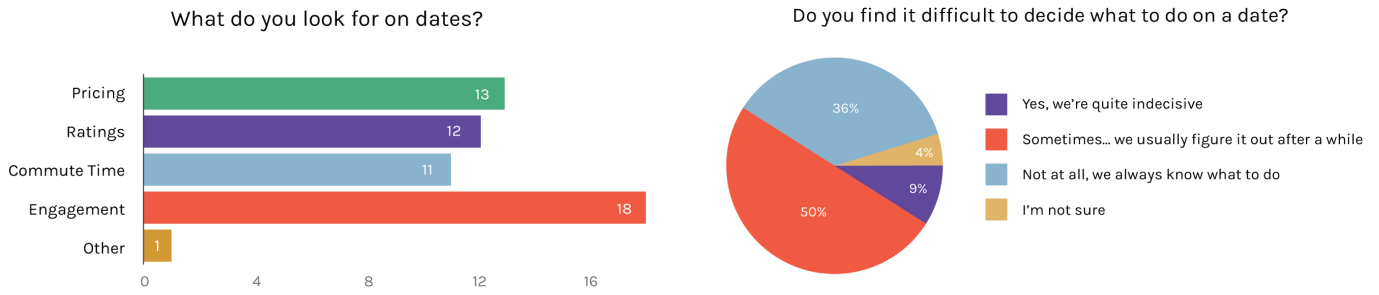
Sure what do you wanna do?

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?

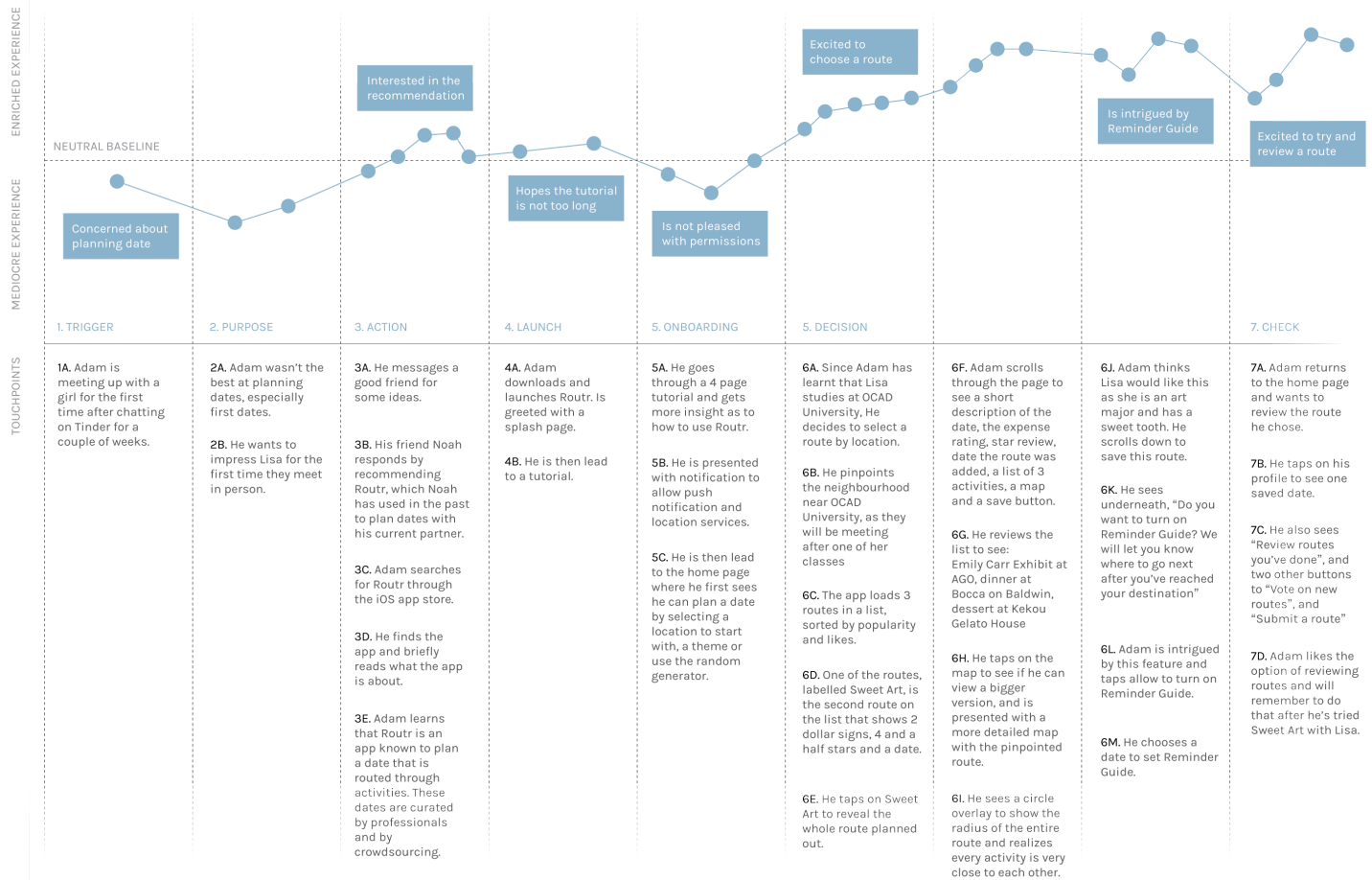


Data was sampled from 22 people

”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

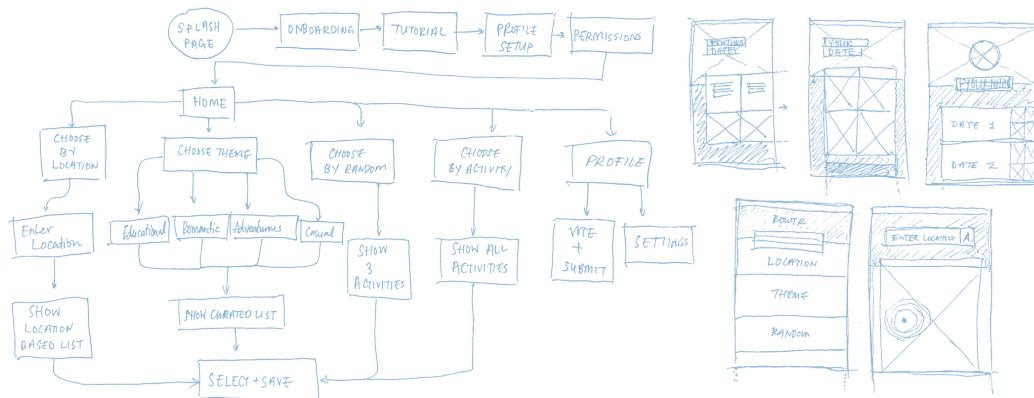
The Making of Routr

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.



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:



Click anywhere to
interact with this
prototype

