



CASE STUDY: HINGE (ADIOS TO BORING DATES)

Introduction

Modern dating apps have redefined how people meet, but once the swipe becomes a match, users are often left wondering, “*What now?*”

While Hinge positions itself as the app that’s “*Designed to be deleted,*” it currently stops short of helping users plan meaningful, low-pressure, and interest-based dates. In a landscape full of connections that fizzle before the first meeting, Hinge has an opportunity to step up — not just as a matchmaker, but as a **date-planning partner**.

This case study explores how Hinge can reduce planning anxiety, avoid awkward indecision, and make it easier for matches to meet in the real world with confidence.

Objective

Explore existing solutions for date planning to uncover user needs, identify product gaps, and propose an integrated experience that helps Hinge users plan exciting, mutual-interest-based dates.

Let's first conduct our Secondary Research

Objective: Explore existing solutions for date planning, focusing on identifying gaps and opportunities.

1. App Store/Play Store Search:

- Apps like **DateNight**, **OpenTable**, **Eventbrite**, and **Google Maps' Explore feature** provide date ideas, restaurants, or events, but they don't integrate directly with dating apps.
- Hinge's competitors (Tinder, Bumble) don't seem to offer robust built-in date planning tools either.

2. Reddit Threads & Forums:

- Common threads in dating subreddits (e.g., r/dating_advice, r/relationships) show many users struggle with:
 - Decision fatigue.
 - Feeling pressure to suggest unique ideas.
 - Planning based on mutual interests.
- Users often ask for help choosing fun, casual, or budget-friendly date ideas.

3. Existing Features in Hinge:

- Hinge already promotes connections beyond dating. Building a feature for seamless date planning aligns with their mission of creating meaningful connections.

Key Insight: There's a gap in the market for a **frictionless in-app date-planning tool** tailored to mutual interests, preferences, and location.

Market Overview: Date Planning Services

Several companies offer specialized date planning services in select cities, including *Surprise Planner*, *Just 4 You*, *All About Love*, and *SurprisePlanners.net*. While these services offer curated date experiences, their high costs and focus on intimate experiences make them less suitable for first dates. Additionally, their availability is limited to major urban centers.

Event booking platforms like *BookMyShow*, *Paytm Insider*, and *Mera Events* offer local entertainment options, though their offerings are primarily concentrated in tier 1 and tier 2 cities.

Key Insights:

- The Indian market lacks comprehensive date planning services.
 - Existing services are expensive and limited to major metropolitan areas.
 - This evidence supports our hypothesis that date planning remains challenging for Hinge users.
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Competitor Analysis

India's dating app market is thriving, with both user spending and engagement showing significant growth. In 2023, apps like Bumble and Tinder experienced remarkable user growth, extending their reach beyond metropolitan areas into tier 2 cities.

Primary User Research

I conducted a user survey where I asked certain questions which denoted the real problems that users face while in a dating app, especially hinge.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdptMD-2ML25aKDSB0KvL7Gw9xZ0kXUokS2LBUGu0_75ueTQA/viewform?usp=header

Survey Response Analysis

1. Demographics of Respondents

- **Age:**
 - 3 out of 4 respondents (75%) are in the **18-24** age group.
 - 1 respondent (25%) is in the **25-34** age group.
- **Gender:**
 - 1 respondent identifies as **Female**.
 - 3 respondents identify as **Male**.

2. Hinge Usage & Dating Frequency

- **How often do users engage with Hinge?**
 - 2 respondents (50%) use Hinge **frequently**.
 - 1 respondent (25%) uses it **occasionally**.
 - 1 respondent (25%) uses it **rarely**.
- **How often do users go on dates after matching?**
 - 2 respondents (50%) go on dates **monthly**.
 - 1 respondent (25%) **never** goes on dates.
 - 1 response was unclear ("Option 3").

Insight:

Despite frequent app usage, there is a gap between matching and actual date conversion. Users might struggle to transition from chatting to meeting in person due to decision fatigue or lack of engaging date ideas.

3. How Users Currently Decide on Date Activities

- **Decision-Making Behavior:**
 - 1 respondent **asks an AI** for suggestions.

- 1 respondent **suggests places they've been to before.**
- 2 respondents **rely on the other person to decide.**

 **Insight:**

Half of the respondents (50%) depend on their date to plan, showing a lack of initiative or difficulty in decision-making. This aligns with the need for a **collaborative date-planning feature** to ease the burden.

4. Stress Levels in Date Planning

- **On a scale of 1 to 10, how stressful is planning a date?**
 - **Two respondents (50%) rated it highly stressful (7-8/10).**
 - **One respondent (25%) rated it stress-free (1/10).**
 - **One response was unclear.**

 **Insight:**

Most users find planning dates **stressful**, reinforcing the need for a **streamlined, effortless date-planning feature** in Hinge.

5. Biggest Challenges in Planning a Date

- **Top user challenges:**
 - **Finding unique ideas (50%)**
 - **Finding a place (25%)**
 - **Deciding based on mutual preferences (25%)**

 **Insight:**

Users want **fresh, unique date ideas** but lack easy access to them. They also struggle with **choosing mutually interesting activities**, validating the need for a **smart, preference-based recommendation system.**

6. Indecision in Date Planning

- **How often do users face indecisive conversations about date plans?**

- 2 respondents (50%) said "Often".
- 1 respondent (25%) said "Always".
- 1 respondent (25%) said "Rarely".

 **Insight:**

75% of users frequently experience indecisiveness, suggesting that Hinge should introduce a **voting-based or AI-assisted decision-making tool**.

7. Interest in a Hinge Date Planning Feature

- **Would you find a built-in date-planning feature useful?**
 - 2 respondents (50%) said "Yes, definitely".
 - 2 respondents (50%) said "Maybe".

 **Insight:**

100% of respondents showed some level of interest in this feature, meaning it has **strong potential for adoption** if designed well.

8. Preferred Types of Date Ideas

- **Users want suggestions for:**
 - **Romantic dates** (Candlelight dinners) – 2 responses
 - **Fun & adventurous activities** – 1 response
 - **Casual outings (cafes, brunch, picnics, etc.)** – 1 response

 **Insight:**

There is demand for a variety of experiences, meaning Hinge's date-planning tool should **offer multiple themes like casual, adventurous, and romantic date options**.

9. Filters Users Want for Date Planning

- **Top filters requested:**
 - **Indoor/Outdoor preference** – 3 responses
 - **Budget filter** – 1 response

 **Insight:**

Users prioritize **venue type and affordability**, so adding **budget & location filters** would enhance usability.

10. Additional Features to Improve Date Planning

- **What extra features would help users?**
 - **Icebreaker questions** – 2 responses
 - **Budget estimates** – 1 response
 - **Travel directions** – 1 response

 **Insight:**

Users want **conversation starters** integrated with date planning, showing that **facilitating smooth conversations before/during the date is just as important as picking a location**.

11. Interest in Collaborative Date Planning (Voting or Swiping on Ideas)

- **Would users like a collaborative decision-making tool?**
 - **1 respondent (25%) said Yes.**
 - **2 respondents (50%) said Maybe.**
 - **1 respondent (25%) said No.**

 **Insight:**

Most users (75%) are at least **open to the idea of voting or swiping on date plans**, suggesting that a **collaborative decision-making system** could be beneficial if executed properly.

USER INTERVIEWS

I personally interacted with few of my friends who frequently use Hinge, describing why they use Hinge over any other competitor apps, their pain points, their expectations and their goals.

User Persona: Meet Sumpi



SUMPI

"LITTLE FLOWER" 🌸

Age: 28

Gender: Female

Location: Bengaluru, India (Tier 1 City)

Occupation: Marketing Manager at a Tech Startup

Income: ₹1,00,000/month

A Little About Me 📖

Hey there! I'm Sumpi, a fun-loving soul who calls vibrant Bengaluru home. When I'm not crushing it at my startup job, you'll find me on exciting adventures—from sipping lattes at hidden cafes to dancing at the latest music gigs! My weekends are a colorful mix of brunches with friends, peaceful yoga sessions, and spontaneous getaways. While I love meeting new people, I'll admit—planning the perfect date can sometimes make my head spin!

I've been on Hinge for a year now, trying to balance my packed calendar with my search for meaningful connections. Sometimes my busy life (and my tendency to overthink!) makes it tricky to plan those magical dating moments.

Things That Make Me Smile

- **Food:** Always up for foodie adventures! Korean and Italian cuisines make my heart sing 🍜
- **Fitness:** You'll catch me at sunrise yoga or going for refreshing morning runs 🏃
- **Culture:** Art galleries, comedy shows, and live music are my happy places 🎨
- **Hobbies:** Diving into thrilling novels, capturing Insta-worthy moments 📷
- **Travel:** Weekend wanderer seeking scenic escapes and hill station vibes 🌄

What Gets Me Excited 🌟

- **Real Connections:** Looking for those special moments where conversation flows naturally
- **Fresh Adventures:** Ready to try something different and make memories!
- **Smart Planning:** Love when things come together without too much fuss
- **Easy Breezy:** Anything that makes date planning feel like fun, not work

My Dating Challenges 🤔

- **The Decision Dilemma:** Sometimes I get stuck choosing fun date spots, especially when my match is super easy-going!
- **Same Old, Same Old:** Coffee dates are nice, but I dream of more exciting adventures together!
- **Time Squeeze:** My busy job means less time for planning amazing dates
- **Finding Common Ground:** It can be tricky when our date preferences don't quite match
- **Getting There:** Trying to find places that work for both our schedules and wallets

My Dating Dreams ✨

- **Creative Date Ideas:** Help me discover fun activities that match my vibe!
- **Team Planning:** Let's figure out our perfect date together
- **Life Balance:** Making time for amazing dates despite my busy schedule
- **Genuine Bonds:** Creating special memories through shared experiences
- **City Explorer:** Finding those magical hidden spots in Bengaluru

User Persona: Meet Kushagra



KUSHAGRA!

- **Age:** 25
- **Location:** Bhopal, India 🇮🇳
- **Job:** Junior Graphic Designer at a local marketing agency
- **Monthly Income:** ₹20,000

A Little About Me

I'm a creative guy who loves exploring new things, even if I'm working with a tight budget! My weekdays are all about designing and freelancing to make a little extra cash. Weekends? That's my time to chill – whether it's grabbing some delicious street food, binge on indie movies, or hanging out with my friends.

I've been on Hinge for six months now. Honestly, it's been great meeting people outside my usual circle. But when it comes to planning dates? That's where things get a little tricky.

My Interests

- **Foodie at Heart:** You'll catch me hunting for the best chaats and momos in Bhopal. 🍛
- **Photography:** I love snapping pics of sunsets, street markets, and nature. 📷
- **Movies:** Indie films and classic Bollywood are my jam. 🎬
- **Music:** I vibe to acoustic tunes and attend small gigs whenever I can. 🎸
- **Gaming:** Whether it's mobile games or casual multiplayer sessions, I'm in. 🎮

What Stresses Me Out (Pain Points)

- **Budget Problems:** Let's be real, planning fun dates on a ₹20k/month budget isn't easy.
- **City Blues:** Bhopal's great, but there aren't that many trendy or unique places for dates.
- **Logistics:** Sometimes matches live on the other side of the city, and figuring out a convenient spot can be a pain.
- **Overthinking:** I'm always second-guessing my date ideas – are they fun enough? Affordable? Do they really match their vibe?

What Keeps Me Going (Motivations)


- **Creativity Is Key:** I love making even simple dates feel special – whether that's surprising my date with a handmade card or picking a cool local spot.
- **Connection Matters:** I'm here to meet people who genuinely vibe with me and appreciate the small, thoughtful stuff.
- **Local Adventures:** Discovering hidden gems in my city? Yes, please! It's all about those simple joys.
- **Convenience is King:** If planning dates didn't feel like solving a puzzle, life would be so much easier.

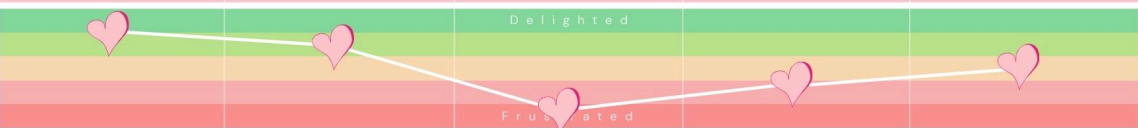
What I Dream About (Goals)

- **Budget-Friendly Fun:** I need creative, affordable date ideas that don't break the bank.
- **Collaboration:** Planning dates together with my match? That'd take so much stress off!
- **Explore My City:** Bhopal's got charm, and I want to uncover its best-kept secrets for fun outings.
- **Make an Impression:** I just want my dates to feel thoughtful, personal, and, well... memorable.

USER JOURNEY MAP

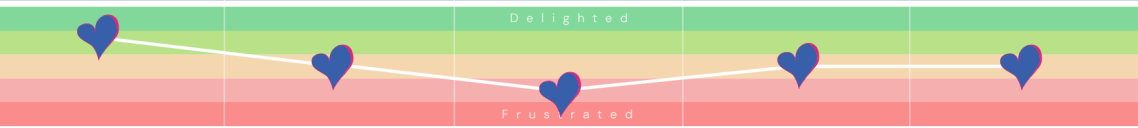
SUMPI



	Awareness	Consideration	Planning	Experience	Reflection
User Actions (Activities)	Wants to go on a date but is unsure where to go	Scrolls through Instagram & Google for date spots, asks friends for ideas	Discusses options with match, struggles to finalize a place	Goes on the date but sometimes feels it's repetitive	Thinks about how the date went, considers improvements
Pain points (frustrations, errors, or bottlenecks)	Struggles with decision fatigue and lack of unique ideas	Takes too much time, ends up defaulting to a café	Indecisive conversations, mismatched preferences	Feels overwhelmed by unoriginal dates	Wants to try something different next time
Touchpoints (Interaction Points)	Hinge app, social media, friends	Google, Instagram, word-of-mouth	Hinge chat, WhatsApp, calls	Restaurant, café, event venue	Hinge post-date chat, personal notes
Emotions (Mood Meter)					
Opportunities	Personalized suggestions based on preferences	AI-powered recommendations, curated date ideas	Collaborative date planning tool	Mood-based date suggestions	Post-date feedback & saved favorite spots

KUSHAGRA



	Awareness	Consideration	Planning	Experience	Reflection
User Actions (Activities)	Wants to plan a date but needs to keep it budget-friendly	Searches for local spots, asks friends for recommendations	Discusses options with match but worries about costs	Goes on the date but wishes it felt more special	Evaluates the date, wants to improve future plans
Pain points (frustrations, errors, or bottlenecks)	Limited affordable options in his city	Many places are too expensive or far	Concerned about seeming cheap, struggles to suggest fun ideas	Repeats similar outings, lacks unique experiences	Unsure how to make the next date more exciting
Touchpoints (Interaction Points)	Hinge app, friends, budget apps	Google, food blogs, word-of-mouth	Hinge chat, WhatsApp, budget calculators	Café, park, street food stall	Hinge post-date chat, notes app
Emotions (Mood Meter)					
Opportunities	Budget-conscious filters for date ideas	Suggestions for hidden gems within his budget	Cost-effective activity bundles	Ready-to-go curated date plans	Saved date itineraries & personalized follow-ups

User Research & Insights on Date Planning for Hinge Users

Problem Statement

Modern dating, particularly in urban areas, is often hindered by **indecision and repetitive date choices**, making the experience predictable and less engaging. Many Hinge users, like Sumpi and Kushagra, struggle with planning unique dates due to **time constraints, budget concerns, and decision fatigue**. Existing date-planning services are either expensive, limited to premium experiences, or lack integration within dating apps. This creates an opportunity for a seamless, in-app date-planning feature tailored to users' preferences, budgets, and locations.

Solution Exploration


Possible Solutions:





1. **AI-Powered Date Suggestions:** Generate personalized date ideas based on user preferences, budget, and location.
2. **Collaborative Date Planning:** Allow matches to co-plan dates by voting on activities or choosing from curated lists.
3. **Mood-Based Date Generator:** Suggest activities based on the desired vibe (e.g., casual, adventurous, romantic).
4. **Hinge Date Marketplace:** Partner with local venues and event organizers to offer exclusive, discounted date experiences.

Selected Solution: Collaborative Date Planning

This solution directly addresses the **decision fatigue** faced by users by enabling them to co-plan dates seamlessly within the app. The feature will provide curated date ideas, allow matches to vote on options, and include budget-friendly filters, making date planning **effortless and enjoyable**.

Ideal User Flow & Experience Map

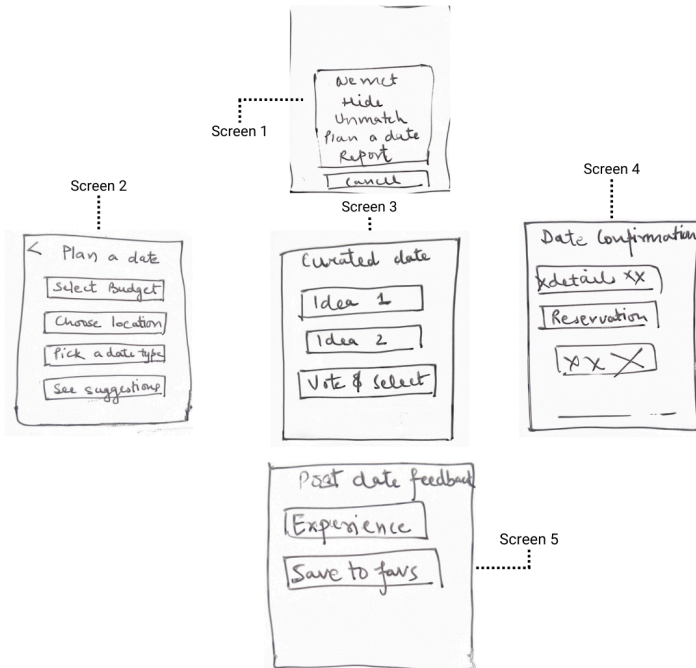
Stage	User Actions	System Actions	User Experience
 Discover	User opens the Hinge app and sees a prompt to	System displays a "Plan a Date" feature on the	Excited, Curious

	plan a date	chat screen	
 Select Preferences	User selects preferences (budget, location, type of date)	System filters and generates curated date ideas	Engaged, Empowered
 Collaborate	User and match vote on their preferred date activity	System syncs votes and confirms the chosen date	Interactive, Fun
 Finalize Plans	System suggests available time slots and allows users to book reservations	System confirms booking and provides details	Relieved, Satisfied
 Experience the Date	Users go on the planned date	System sends reminders and suggested conversation starters	Confident, Excited

Key Features & Critical User Actions

1. **Personalized Date Suggestions** – AI-curated recommendations based on mutual interests and budget.
2. **Collaborative Voting System** – Matches can vote on date options, reducing decision fatigue.
3. **Integrated Booking & Reservations** – One-click booking for restaurants, events, and activities.
4. **Mood-Based Date Selection** – Users can select a vibe (casual, adventurous, romantic) for tailored ideas.

LET'S DELVE INTO SOME LOFI WIREFRAMES



Let's delve into our high fidelity mockups

Here's the link to my mockups :)

<https://www.figma.com/design/E6TTUObx0PtJrQNBypeUA5/Untitled?node-id=0-1&t=eMrSyDYcvjnFS98E-1>

Design Choices & Justifications

- **Minimalist UI** – Clean design for easy navigation, focusing on **functionality first**.

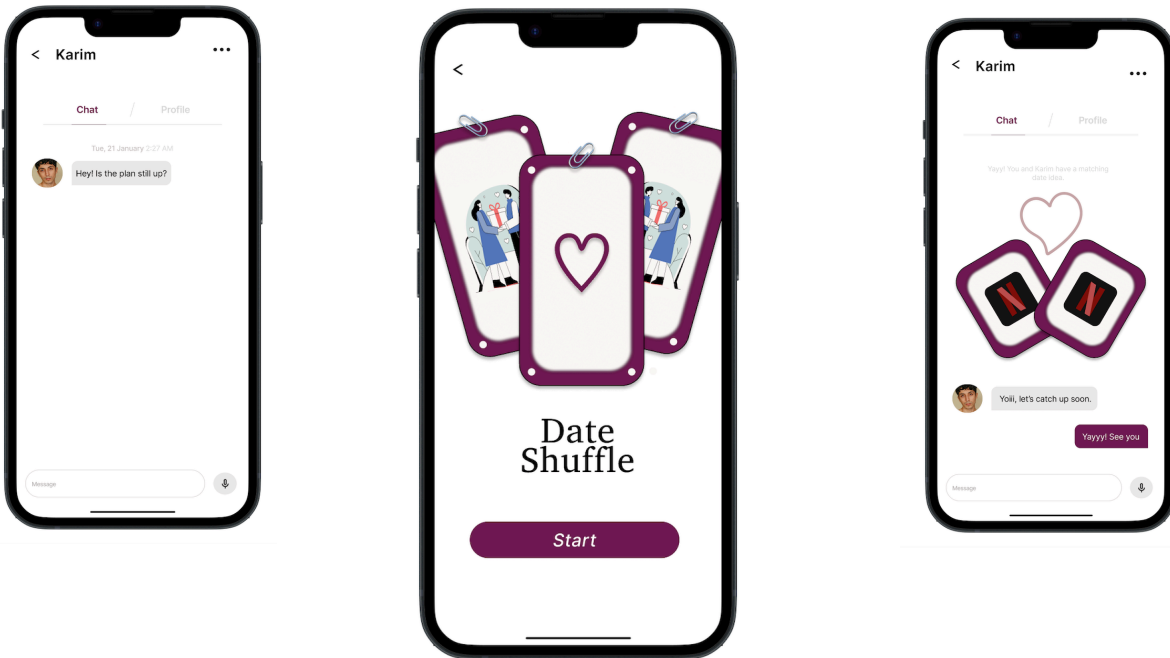
- **Card-Based Date Ideas** – Users can **swipe through** different options for seamless interaction.
- **Smart Filtering Options** – Allowing **custom budget, location, and date type selection** to refine suggestions.
- **Gamified Date Selection** – Users can **shuffle** date ideas to make planning more engaging.
- **Chat-Based Integration** – Making date planning feel like a **natural extension of the Hinge chat experience**.



Prototyping & Usability Testing

Now, have a look at the prototype

<https://www.figma.com/proto/E6TTUObx0PtJrQNByeUA5/Untitled?node-id=116-437&t=RMDf0AFmtKp2g5iz-1>



Learnings from Usability Testing

Key findings from my users feedback:

- **The swiping mechanism was intuitive** – Mimicked existing dating app interactions.
- **Navigation between filters could be smoother** – Users found toggling between filters slightly confusing.

Typography Choices & Their Impact

The design uses a **modern sans-serif typeface**, ensuring:

Readability – Clean & easy to scan, perfect for mobile UX.

Minimalist Aesthetic – Aligns with Hinge's sleek & premium feel.

Emphasizing Key Actions – Larger, bold fonts for buttons & headlines.

✨ Font Styling Breakdown:

- **Headings (H1, H2)** → Bold & slightly rounded for a welcoming feel.
- **Body Text** → Lighter weight for a smooth reading experience.

- **Buttons & CTA** → All-caps or semi-bold for clarity & action-driven intent.

Gradient & Color Psychology

Here's a breakdown of the colors I used in your design:

Color Name	Hex Code	Usage & Meaning
Primary Color	#6E1A52	Deep Purple – Aligns with Hinge's branding, premium and inviting.
Secondary Color	#E5D5CF	Muted Pink – Soft, romantic, and warm feel.
Accent Color	#FAF7F5	Soft Beige – Neutral tone for a clean, minimal UI.
Gradient Start	#E5D5CF	Muted Pink – Warm, engaging background element.
Gradient End	#6E1A52	Deep Purple – Adds focus and contrast.
Button Highlight	#D1A3B9	Soft Mauve – Used for subtle call-to-action buttons.
Background	#F5F0EB	Light Cream – Ensures readability and a soft visual experience.

Why the color scheme works?

Romantic & Premium Feel – Matches Hinge's modern dating aesthetic.

Soft & Inviting – Warmer tones encourage engagement and comfort.

Clear Hierarchy – Strong contrast between actions and background.

Ensuring A Smooth and Intuitive User Experience

I designed this prototype with a **clean and minimal** interface, ensuring it's optimized for **mobile use** (portrait mode, 888x1920 resolution). I focused on using **negative space effectively**, keeping the layout uncluttered and visually appealing. The typography is **well-balanced**, making everything easy to read.

Icons & Visual Elements

I chose **simple, modern icons** that feel intuitive and align with the overall aesthetic. They follow a **monoline or minimalistic style**, ensuring they don't overpower the interface. Each icon and

button is **strategically placed** for smooth navigation, with enough spacing to avoid a cramped feel.

Motion & Transitions

I made sure animations are **smooth and fluid**, with no abrupt transitions. Screens flow seamlessly, using **subtle fade-ins, slide-ins, or material-like motion effects**. Every tap, swipe, or hover interaction feels **natural and responsive** without adding unnecessary complexity.

Navigation & Flow

The navigation is **intuitive**, guiding users effortlessly from one step to another. I placed key elements **within thumb reach**, making it easy to access without extra effort. If swipe gestures are used, they feel **fluid and natural**, enhancing the overall experience.

Overall Experience

I designed the interactions to feel **fast and responsive**, ensuring there's no lag. I kept **consistent animation speeds**, making every motion feel polished and intentional. The final experience is **engaging yet distraction-free**, allowing users to focus on what matters most.
