

Restaurant Reservation App Design



Role: Research & UI/UX

Timeline: April - June 2022

Executive Summary: Restaurant Reservation App Design

This project aims to build a revolutionary mobile application for restaurant reservations, specifically designed to solve the problem of **wasted time** experienced by busy professionals when trying to book a table using traditional methods.

Problem and Key Objectives

The research identified a core problem: traditional reservations involve time-consuming challenges like endless phone calls and tedious email chains.

The design mission (My Mission) was to create an app that achieves the following goals:

- **Lightning-Fast Reservations:** Develop a seamless and prompt reservation system that lets users secure a table in just a few taps, giving them back their valuable time.
- **Effortless Coordination:** Allow users to share reservation details with friends and colleagues with a single tap, eliminating back-and-forth messaging.
- **Seamless Entry:** Offer flexible sign-up options, including social logins and email registration, to ensure a friction-free onboarding experience.
- **Community-Powered Insights:** Build a vibrant community where users can rate and review their dining experiences to make informed decisions and discover new favorites.
- **Explore Before You Reserve:** Enable users to browse and preview the full restaurant menu before they even book a table, adding convenience and helping match their cravings and dietary needs.

Design Methodology and Findings

The design process focused on understanding the user through **empathy maps** and **user personas**, such as "Susan," a busy software developer who cannot afford to waste time on reservation calls. Paper wireframes were used as a strategic roadmap to ensure every element in the later digital design solved a real problem.

Usability studies led to critical refinements, including:

- **Refining Focus:** The design was updated to make the Booking button the primary action, with added icons to make buttons easier to identify, ensuring a faster and more intuitive experience.
- **Simplifying Login:** The sign-up page was modified to include a clear "Sign in" button, anticipating the needs of existing users for a smooth experience.

Visual Identity and Expected Impact

The visual identity was built on the foundation of trust and professionalism. The primary color palette is based on blue, chosen for its association with strength, calm, and trust, instilling a sense of security from the first moment.

The app is projected to achieve the following positive results upon launch:

- Increase Booking Completion Rate by 20% to 30% compared to traditional methods.

- Reduce No-Shows by up to 40% for restaurants by encouraging pre-payment or deposits.
- Increase User Base Growth by a predicted 25% increase in referral rates due to the positive user experience and ease of booking sharing.

This project confirms that initial ideas are just the beginning, and the true design process lies in continuous iteration and development driven by valuable user feedback.

Conclusion

This project served as a unique and valuable launchpad into the world of UX/UI design. The process confirmed that initial ideas are merely the start, and the true design process relies on continuous **iteration and development**. Every decision was driven by comprehensive competitive audits, usability studies, and valuable peer feedback. This journey strengthened the designer's skills, transforming simple paper sketches into advanced digital designs using Figma, ultimately building a product that conveys a sense of calm and trust for the user.

1. Project Overview

Introduction

This case study documents the design and development of a mobile application aimed at streamlining the restaurant table reservation process. The application is designed to facilitate quick booking at a specific time and allow users to conveniently identify the restaurant's location using an integrated mapping feature. The project, which took place from April to June 2022, was guided by a core mission to transform the dining experience by solving the central problem of wasted time.

The primary challenge identified was that traditional reservation methods—such as endless phone calls and long email chains—significantly waste a busy employee's most valuable resource: time. The goal was to build a revolutionary app that not only solves these functional problems but also makes dining out more social and enjoyable.

Key objectives for the design included:

- Developing a seamless system for lightning-fast reservations in just a few taps.
- Integrating an effortless coordination feature that allows users to share reservation details with friends and colleagues with a single tap.
- Building a community-powered insights system where users can rate and review their dining experiences to help others make informed decisions.
- Allowing users to explore before they reserve by previewing the full restaurant menu prior to booking.

Given the lack of local restaurant reservation services, the initial journey involved exploring uncharted territory, relying heavily on user experiences and empathy maps to truly understand daily challenges, which ultimately guided every design decision.

Key Users and Purpose

Key Users

The core user group is identified as busy professionals who regularly eat out. The case study details a specific persona, Susan, a full-time software developer at a major tech company, whose life is busy, often working on tight deadlines. She enjoys eating out with colleagues but cannot afford to waste time.

User Frustrations

The key frustration is the wasted time associated with traditional reservation methods. Susan's specific frustrations include:

No Time for Calls: Calling a restaurant during work hours is considered unprofessional and disruptive, often resulting in long holds.

Uncertainty: Not wanting to spend limited break time guessing which restaurants are available.

Complicated Processes: Frustration with long email exchanges or complex booking forms.

App Purpose

The revolutionary app is designed to transform the restaurant experience by solving the problem of wasted time and making dining out more social and enjoyable.

Goals (Susan's Needs):

The app's purpose is specifically aligned with Susan's goals:

Quick, Discreet Booking: To book a table from her desk without a distracting phone call.

Time-Saving Solution: To find and reserve a restaurant quickly so she can get back to her work.

My Role

The designer's role in this project encompassed both research and the execution of the UI/UX design.

Key Responsibilities

- **Research & UI/UX:** The primary role was conducting the necessary research and executing the user interface and user experience design.
- **Problem Identification:** Leading the effort to dive deep into user experiences, build empathy maps, and confirm that the core problem was not just a lack of an easy booking option, but specifically wasted time.
- **Design and Iteration:** Creating the solution, from initial paper wireframes to advanced digital designs (mockups), and defining the visual identity (colors, fonts).
- **Usability Testing:** Conducting two rounds of usability studies (Round 1 for low-fidelity, Round 2 for high-fidelity) to refine the design and pinpoint needed improvements before the final launch.
- **Skill Development:** The project served as a launchpad, strengthening skills in exploring and testing the capabilities of Figma and transforming sketches into functional digital designs

2. The Challenge/Problem

Discovering the Real Problem

My research confirmed that our core user group is indeed busy professionals who regularly eat out. While we initially assumed their problem was simply a lack of an easy booking option, the research revealed a bigger surprise: the issue wasn't just about convenience, it was about wasted time.

I discovered that users face frustrating challenges with traditional reservation methods, such as:

- 1. Endless phone calls:** Repeated, unsuccessful attempts to reach a restaurant during peak hours.
- 2. Tedious email chains:** Getting stuck in a long back-and-forth of emails that drains their energy and focus.

This deep understanding of the real problem is what guided every design decision I made for the app.

The Challenges

My goal is to build a revolutionary app that transforms the restaurant experience. I am creating a tool that not only solves problems but also makes dining out more social and enjoyable.

- 1. Lightning-Fast Reservations:** I am developing a seamless and prompt reservation system that lets users secure a table in just a few taps. The days of frustrating phone calls and long waits are over; we're giving users back their valuable time.
- 2. Effortless Coordination:** The app will allow users to share reservation details with friends and colleagues with a single tap. This eliminates the hassle of back-and-forth messaging and ensures everyone is on the same page, making social planning a breeze.
- 3. Seamless Entry:** I will offer flexible sign-up options, including social logins and email registration, to ensure a friction-free onboarding experience. This makes it easy for every user to get started quickly, no matter their preference.
- 4. Community-Powered Insights:** I am building a vibrant community where users can rate and review their dining experiences. By providing the ability to view others' feedback, we empower users to make informed decisions and discover new favorites.
- 5. Explore Before You Reserve:** Users will be able to browse and preview the full restaurant menu before they even book a table. This not only adds convenience but also helps them choose a restaurant that perfectly matches their cravings and dietary needs.

3. The Methodology and Solution

The design process transitioned from initial research and sketching to final mockups and validation, guided by the goal of saving the user's time.

Design Methodology (The Approach)

- **User Research & Empathy Mapping:** The journey began by diving deep into user experiences and building empathy maps to understand the daily challenges of busy professionals.
- **Problem Confirmation:** Research confirmed the core user problem was not just a lack of booking options, but specifically wasted time due to endless phone calls and tedious email chains.
- **Paper Wireframes:** The design process began with pen and paper sketches, creating multiple versions of each screen to establish the correct foundation for the app.
- **Usability Studies (Two Rounds):** Two rounds of studies were conducted:
 - 1.Round 1: Guided the designs from low-fidelity wireframes to polished mockups.
 - 2.Round 2: Helped pinpoint exact aspects of the mockups that needed refinement before launch.

Key Design Solutions

The app was designed to solve several core challenges, focusing on speed and convenience:

1. Simplifying Reservations:

- **Primary Action Focus:** The booking button was made the primary action, and icons were added to buttons to make them easier to identify, ensuring a faster user experience.
- **Curated List:** The home screen presents a carefully curated list of available restaurants to reduce user confusion and allow for a quick decision.
- **Smart Search:** A feature was added to allow users to quickly find any specific restaurant.

2. Seamless Group Coordination:

- **Easy Share Button:** An integrated share button allows the user to send all relevant reservation details (time, location, menu link) to friends with a single tap, eliminating coordination hassle.

3. Friction-Free Onboarding:

- **Social and Email Login:** The login process was simplified by integrating options for social media or email sign-up/login, ensuring a completely friction-free experience.
- **Clear Sign-In:** The sign-up page includes a clear "Sign in" button to anticipate user needs.

4. Building Community and Trust:

- **Rating and Review System:** A comprehensive system was designed to allow users to review others' experiences and provide their own feedback, empowering users to make informed decisions.
- **Menu Preview:** Users can preview the full restaurant menu before making any reservation, ensuring they won't be surprised upon arrival and can check dietary needs.

User Persona: Susan



"I need to book lunch, but I can't be on the phone for 10 minutes trying to get a reservation. I need a way to do this from my computer in 30 seconds, and just get back to my work."

Susan is a full-time software developer at a major tech company. Her life is busy, and she often works on tight deadlines. She enjoys taking a break to eat out with colleagues or friends, but her schedule is packed, and she can't afford to waste time.

Frustrations:

- **No Time for Calls:** Calling a restaurant during work hours is a hassle. She finds it unprofessional and disruptive, and she often gets put on hold.
- **Uncertainty and Guesswork:** She doesn't want to spend her limited break time guessing which restaurants are available.
- **Complicated Processes:** She's frustrated with long email exchanges or complex booking forms that take too much time.

Goals:

- **Quick, Discreet Booking:** She wants to book a table for lunch or dinner from her desk without making a distracting phone call.
- **Time-Saving Solution:** She needs a way to find and reserve a restaurant quickly so she can get back to her work.

Empathy map

Says

- "I need to book lunch, but I can't be on the phone for 10 minutes trying to get a reservation."
- "I'd prefer to eat with my colleagues, but our schedules are so tight."
- "I have to find an easier way to plan these lunch outings."

Thinks

- (While working) "Is there a nearby restaurant that has an open spot right now?"
- (After a failed phone call) "I wish there was a digital solution for this. It's such a waste of my time and energy."
- "What will I do if I show up and the restaurant is full?"

Does

- Uses her phone to search for nearby restaurants during a quick break.
- Avoids making phone calls whenever possible.
- Browses restaurant websites, but gets frustrated by the lack of clear booking information.
- Talks to her colleagues about their negative experiences with restaurant reservations.

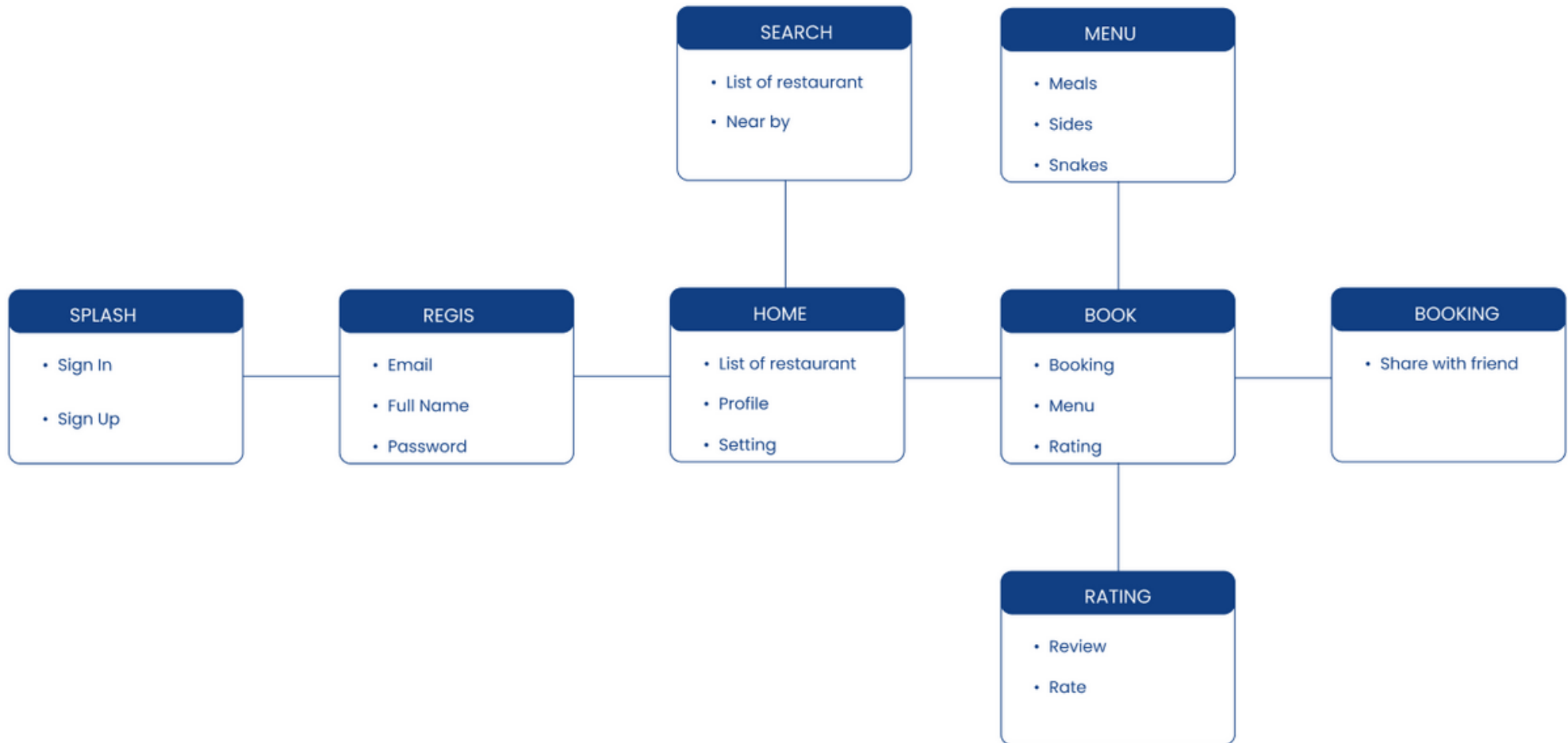
Feels

- Frustrated: because she's wasting time on booking attempts.
- Pressured: because she doesn't want to get sidetracked from her work or lose her focus.
- Anxious: about arriving at a restaurant with no table available.
- Relieved/Happy: when she manages to get a reservation easily, as she sees it as a small win.

User Journey Map

Action	Pick restaurant	Call to Book	Get a confirmation call	Show up	Get the reservation
Task list	• Search online for a restaurant. • Check hours and location.	• Find the phone number and call. • Ask about availability. • Wait on hold.	• Wait for a callback or text. • Respond to a confirmation call/text.	• Arrive at the scheduled time. • Find the host or hostess.	• Confirm name on the reservation list. • Get seated at the table.
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Hopeful, then disappointed.	Stressed, drained.	Anxious, then relieved.	Nervous, cautious.	Satisfied, relaxed.
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	One place to pick from that includes a map and availability.	Offer different booking options besides phone calls.	Provide an instant confirmation text message.	Offer a way to easily check in upon arrival.	Streamline the check-in process.

Information Architecture



4. UI design and visual Identity

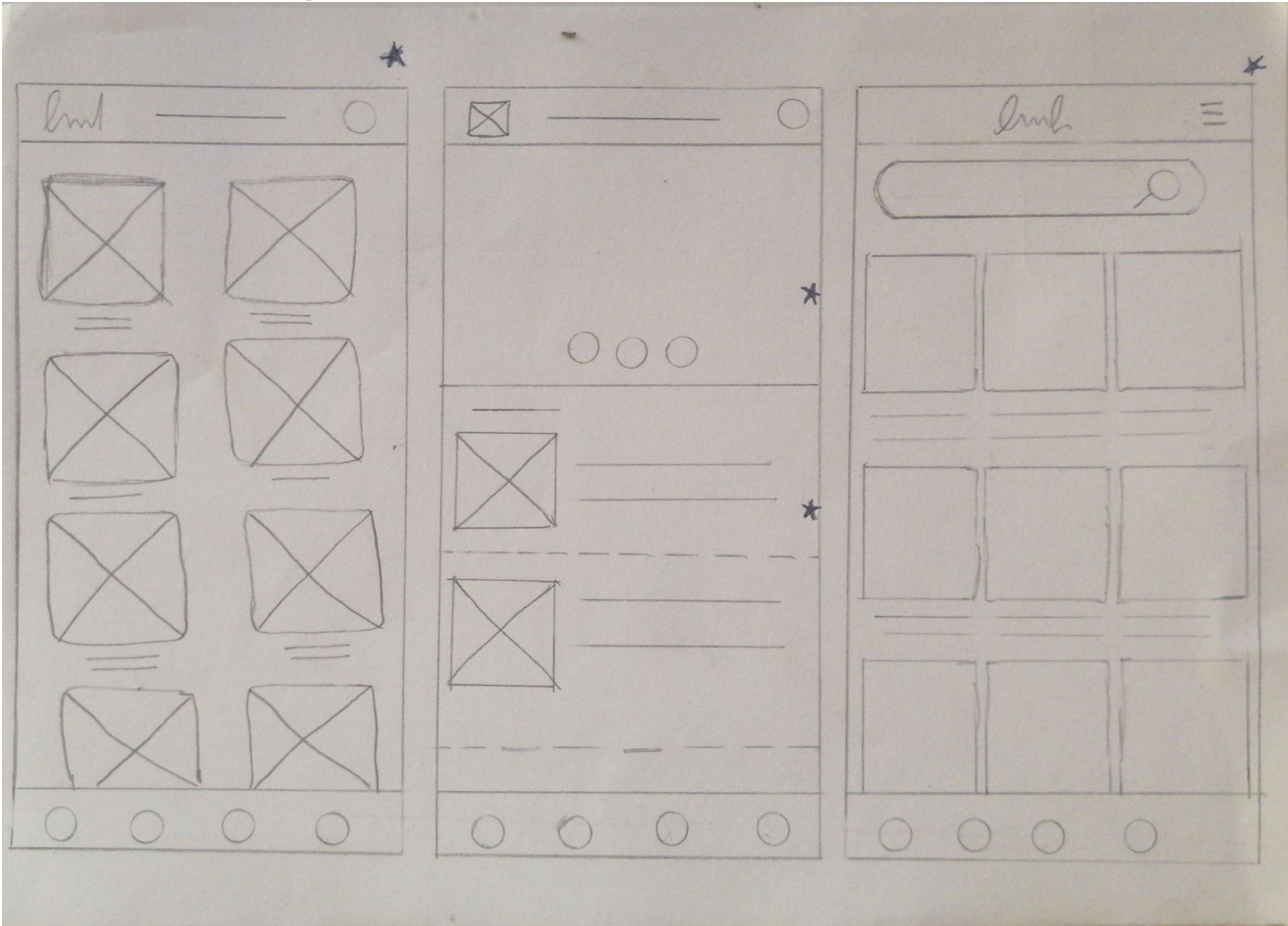
My design journey began with pen and paper, where I invested my time sketching multiple versions of each screen. I believe that great ideas are born from initial sketches, and these paper drawings were my strategic first step to ensure every element we later integrated into the digital wireframes on Figma would solve a real user problem.

When designing the home screen, my priority was to save the user's time, so I focused on creating a simple, clear, and easy-to-use list of restaurants. This choice wasn't random; it was a deliberate decision to ensure users could find what they needed in seconds.

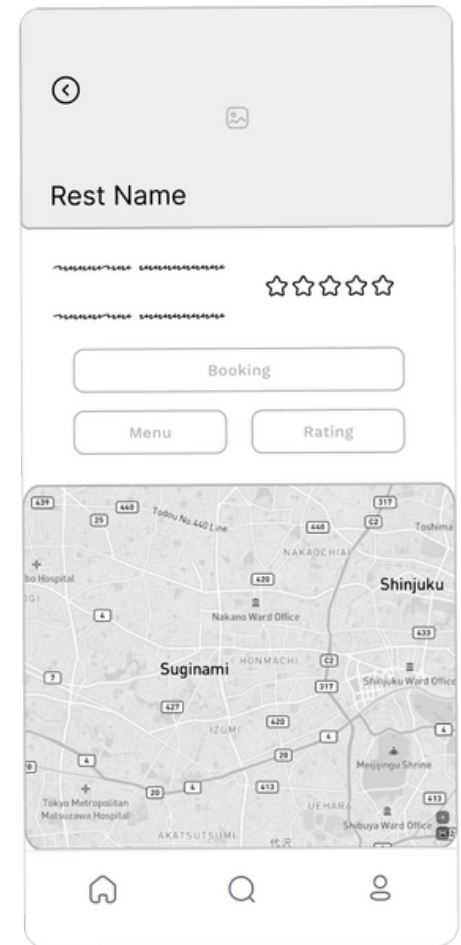
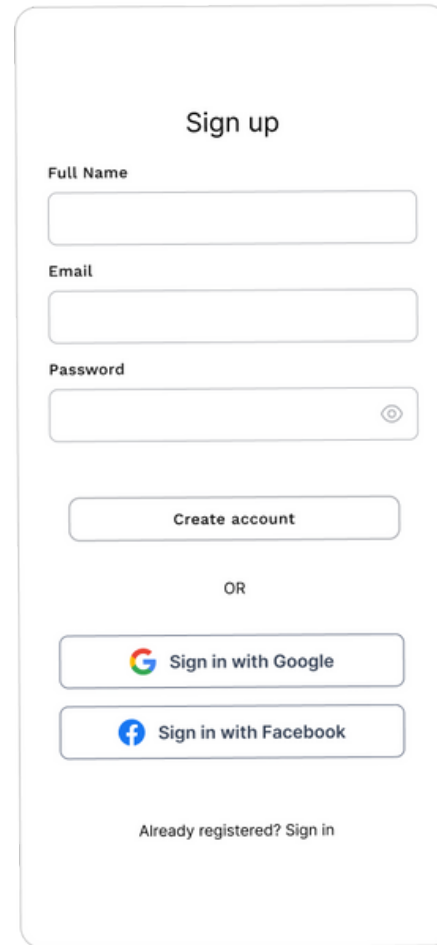
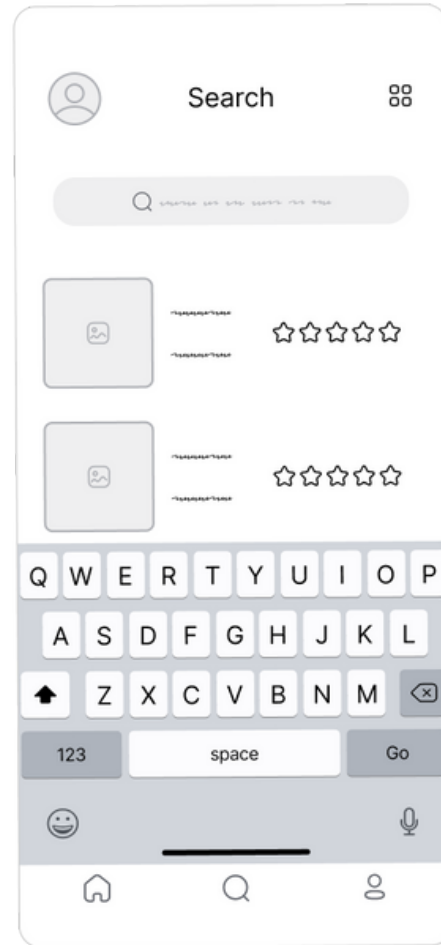
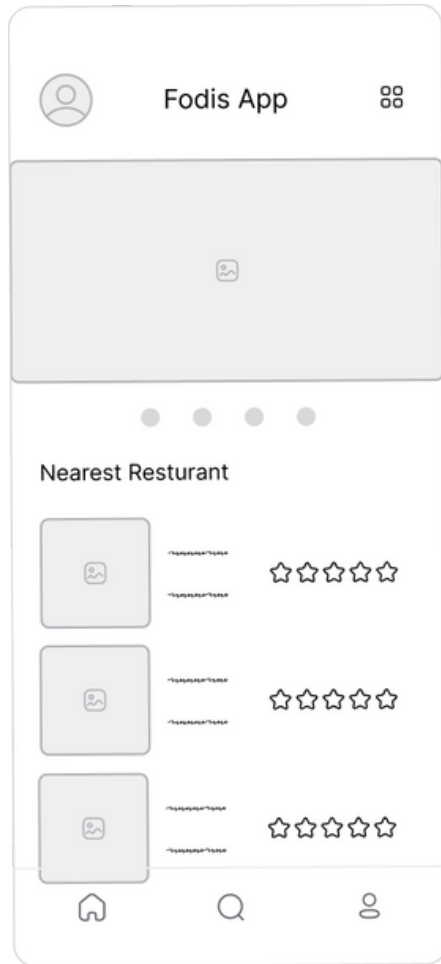
Ultimately, the wireframes weren't just drawings; they were our roadmap.

They gave us a precise, initial vision for the design path, allowing us to build the correct foundation for the app and avoid any future missteps.

Paper Wireframing



Wireframing



Prototyping and Iteration

I ran two rounds of usability studies. The first round's findings were crucial for guiding the designs from low-fidelity wireframes to polished mockups. The second study, which used a high-fidelity prototype, helped me pinpoint exactly what aspects of the mockups needed refinement before the final launch.

Round 1 findings

1. Adding a quick feedback screen right before the final confirmation is a great way to gather insights without creating any friction. This page will appear after the user has selected their booking details and is one step away from finalizing the reservation.
2. The screen is designed to be easy and optional, allowing users to give a quick rating (e.g., using stars) with a single tap.

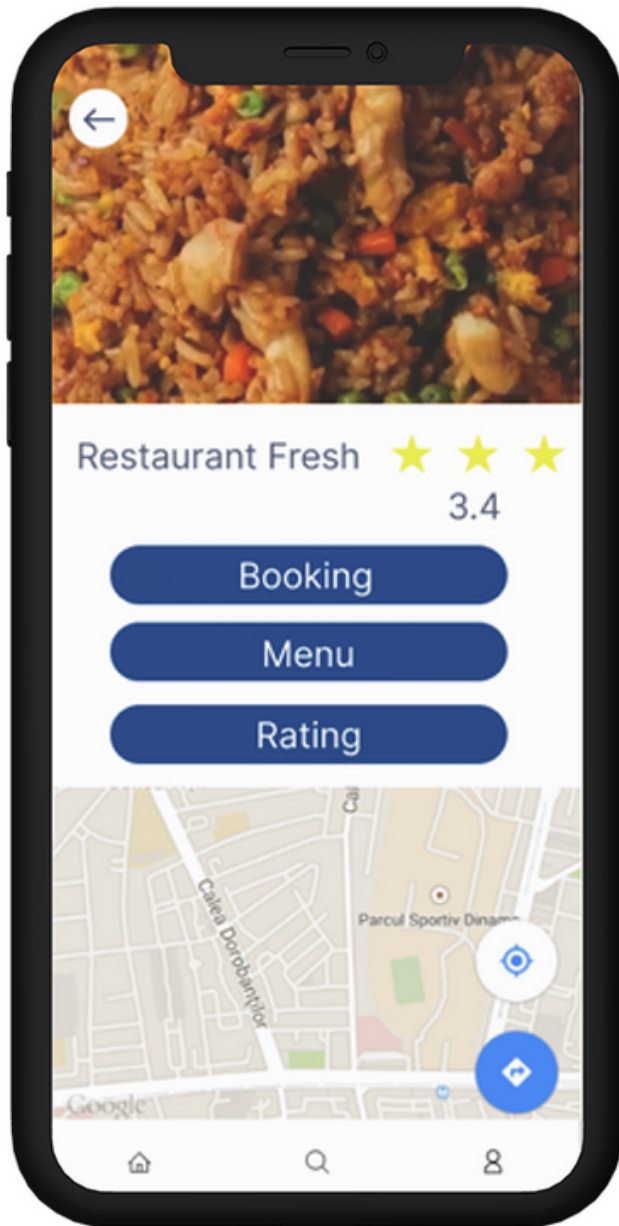
This allows us to collect valuable data about their experience without forcing them to complete a long survey or interrupting their booking flow. By making it simple and non-mandatory, we respect the user's time while still gaining valuable insights to improve the app.

Round 2 findings

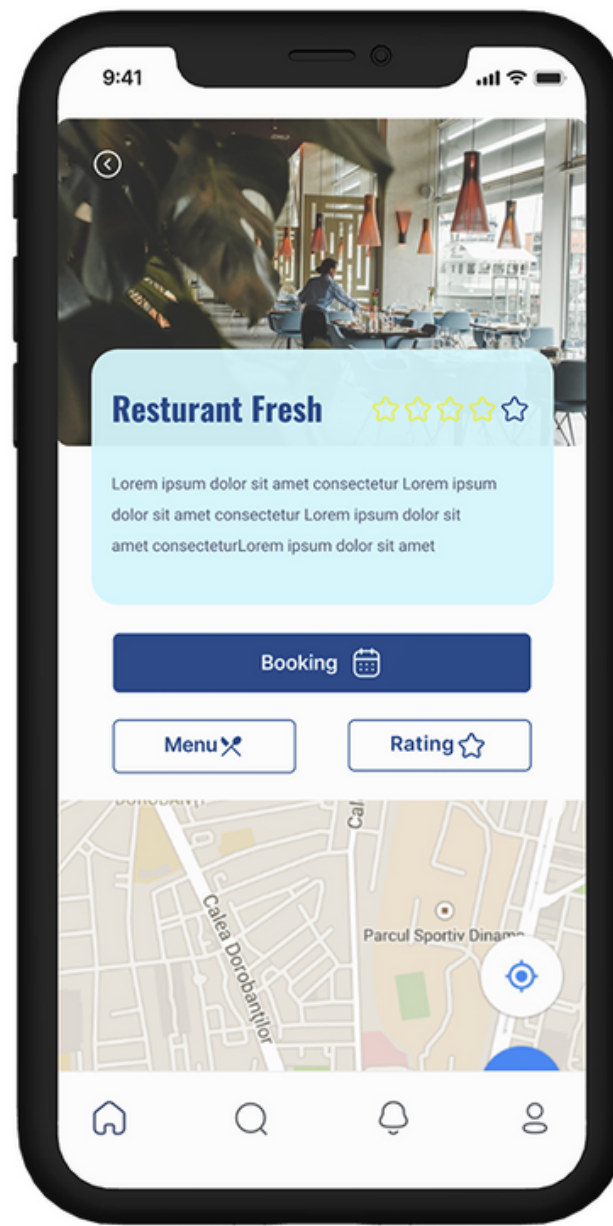
To ensure a smooth experience, the sign-up page also includes a clear "Sign in" button. This design choice anticipates the user's needs, allowing those who already have an account to log in effortlessly without having to navigate back to a different screen.

Refining the design

In my initial design, all the buttons had the same priority. However, after conducting usability studies, I made some key changes. I added icons to the buttons to make them easier to identify, and most importantly, I made the booking button the primary action. This change helps users focus on the most important task, making their experience faster and more intuitive.



Before



After

Style Guide Creation

To ensure the app's design reflects reliability and professionalism, I created a strong and deliberate visual identity.

The Colors: A Foundation of Trust

I used a color palette primarily based on blue. This color wasn't chosen at random; it's based on its association with trust, strength, and calm. Blue serves as a powerful foundation for the user experience, instilling a sense of professionalism and security from the very first moment.

Typography: A Balance of Classic and Modern

I designed a font system that balances style with clarity:

- **Oswald for headings:** This bold font gives the headings a classic yet modern aesthetic, grabbing the user's attention and adding a unique visual flair.
- **Roboto for the main app text:** Roboto is the ideal choice for the primary content due to its clean lines and excellent readability on various devices, ensuring a seamless and consistent experience.

Style Guide

Logo

FODIS APP

Typography

LOGO: PERMANENT MARKER 24PX

Header : Oswald/regular/24px

Subheader :Roboto /Bold/12px

Body :Roboto /Regular/12px

Button :Roboto /Bold/14px

Color



#D6F8FF



#113F85



#425074



#ECE47

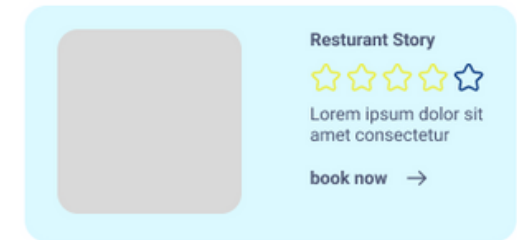


#FFFFFF

Chips



Card



Icons



Buttons



Primary



Secondary

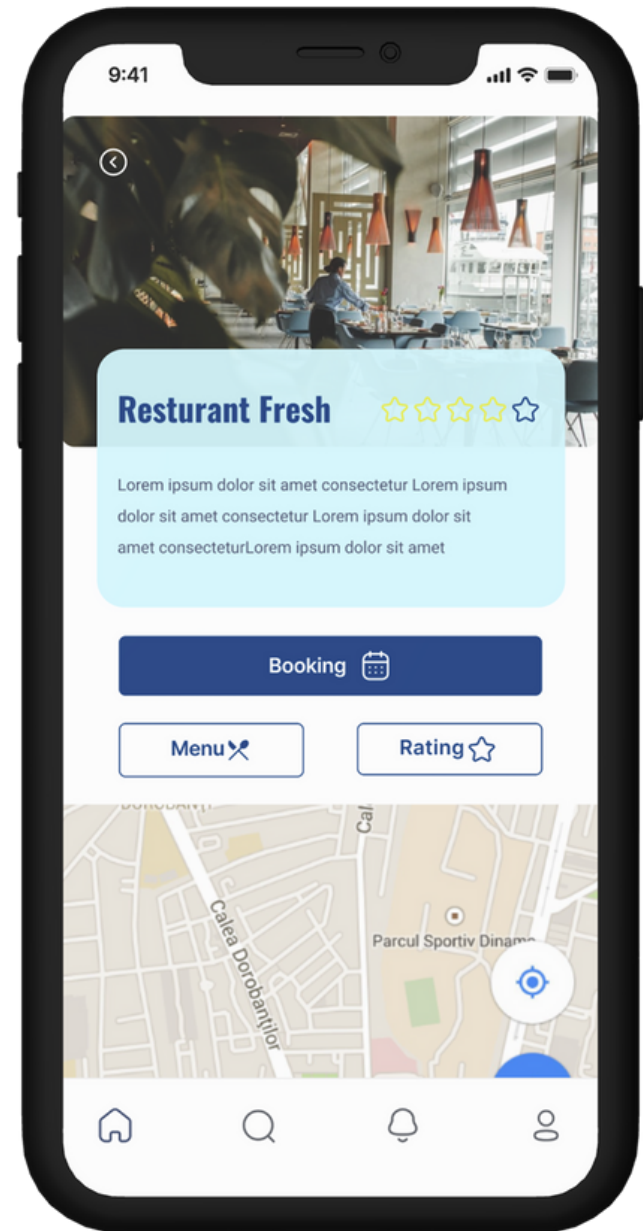
Navigation



5. The Outcome and Final Design

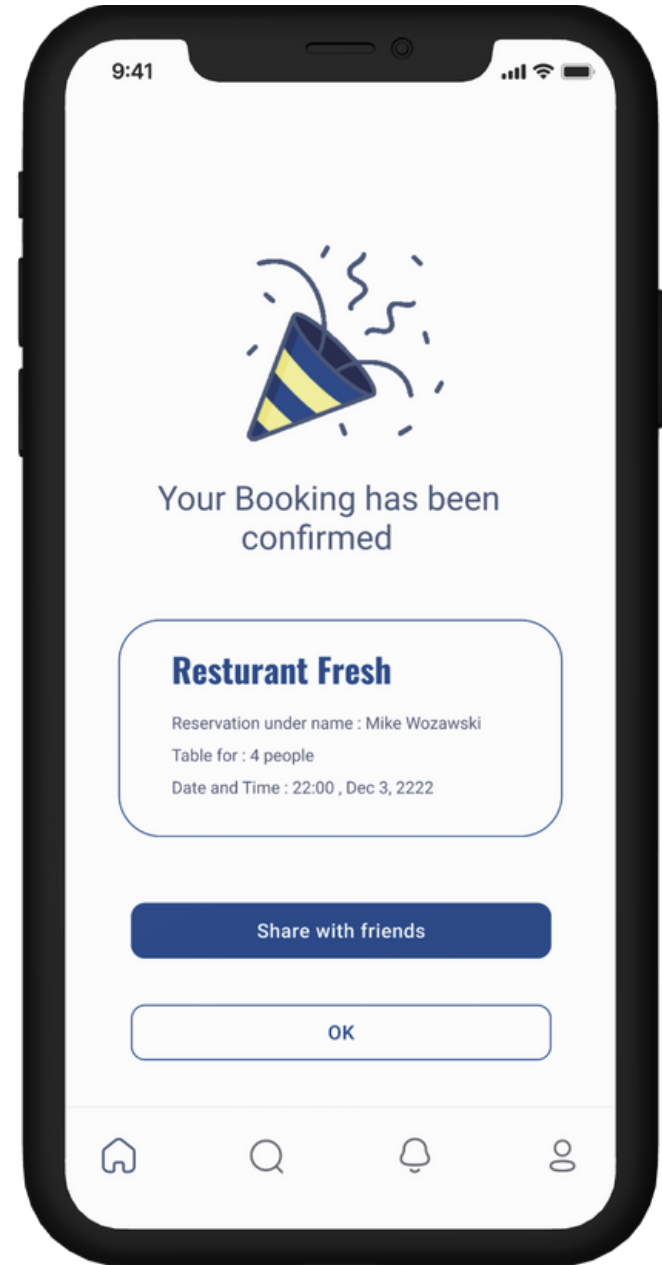
The Challenge: Simplifying Reservations

I embarked on this project with a clear goal: to empower users to book tables with incredible ease and speed, transforming a once-frustrating task into a seamless experience. In designing the screens, I relied on the principle of simplicity. Instead of overwhelming users with endless options, I crafted an interface that presents a carefully curated list of available restaurants. This approach reduces user confusion and helps them make a quick decision without the need to navigate through multiple screens. And for the user who knows exactly where they're going, I added a smart search feature that allows them to find any specific restaurant in a flash. This ensures they can get to their destination quickly and save every precious second of their time.



The Challenge: Simplifying Group Coordination

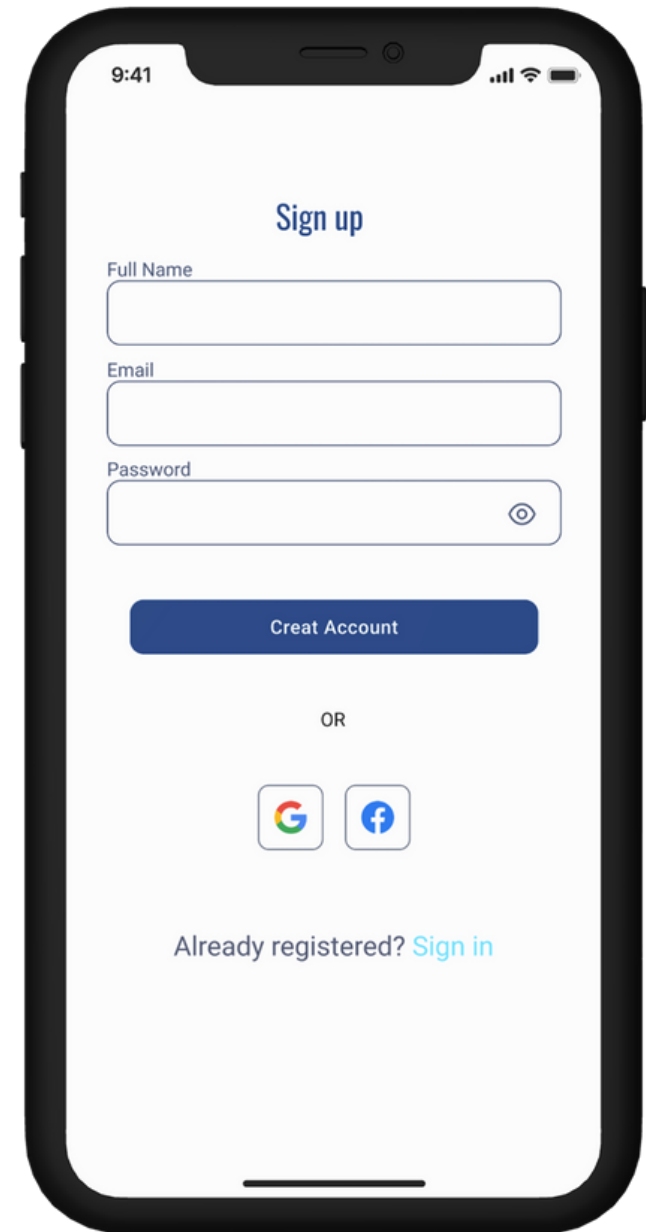
I faced another key challenge: streamlining the process of sharing reservation details, especially when a group of people is involved. The user who makes the booking often finds themselves stuck in a loop of tedious coordination across various messaging apps. To solve this problem, I integrated a simple yet highly effective solution. I added an easy-to-use share button that allows the booking creator to send all the relevant details—including the time, location, and even a menu link—to their friends with a single tap. This feature not only saves valuable time but also reduces the frustration that comes with group planning. It ensures everyone is on the same page, making the entire experience of organizing an outing much more enjoyable and seamless.



The Challenge: Your Gateway to a Seamless Experience

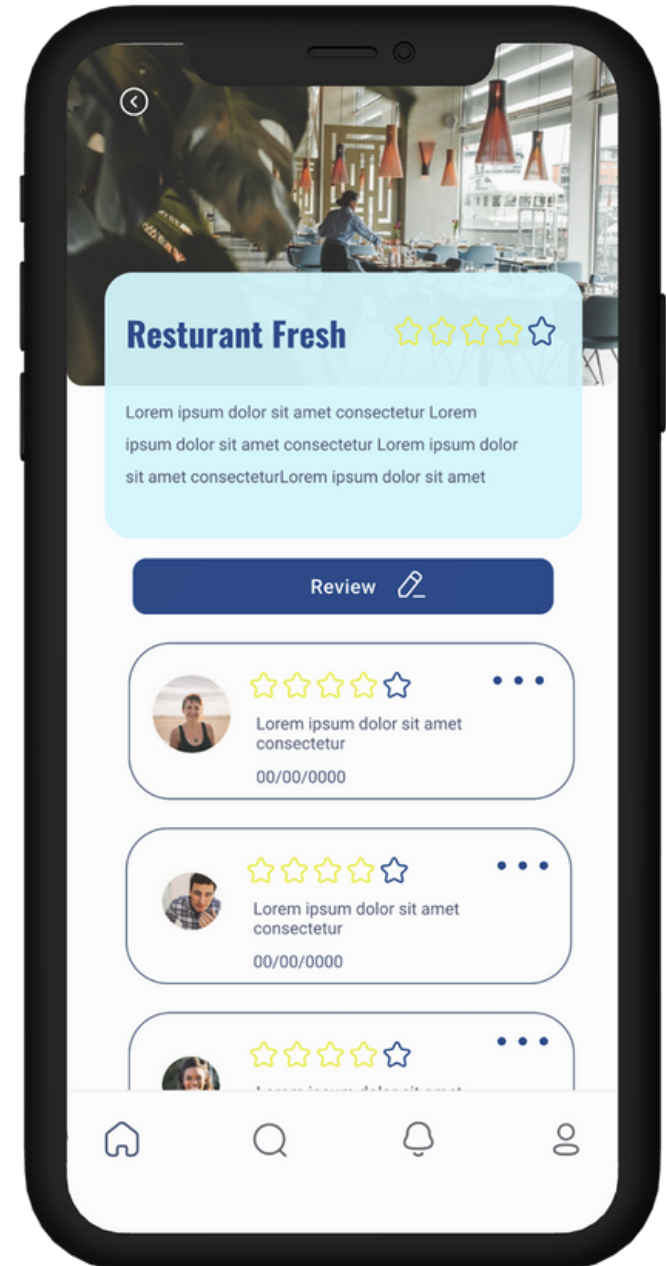
I faced another key challenge: simplifying the login process. Users often hesitate to sign up for a new app because of the hassle of remembering new passwords or filling out long forms.

To solve this, I integrated a simple yet highly effective solution: enabling seamless user registration through integration with various platforms. Now, users can sign up or log in using their preferred accounts, such as social media or email, saving them both time and effort. This step ensures a completely friction-free login experience. Users need only a single tap to begin their journey inside the app. I made access to the service as easy as it is convenient.



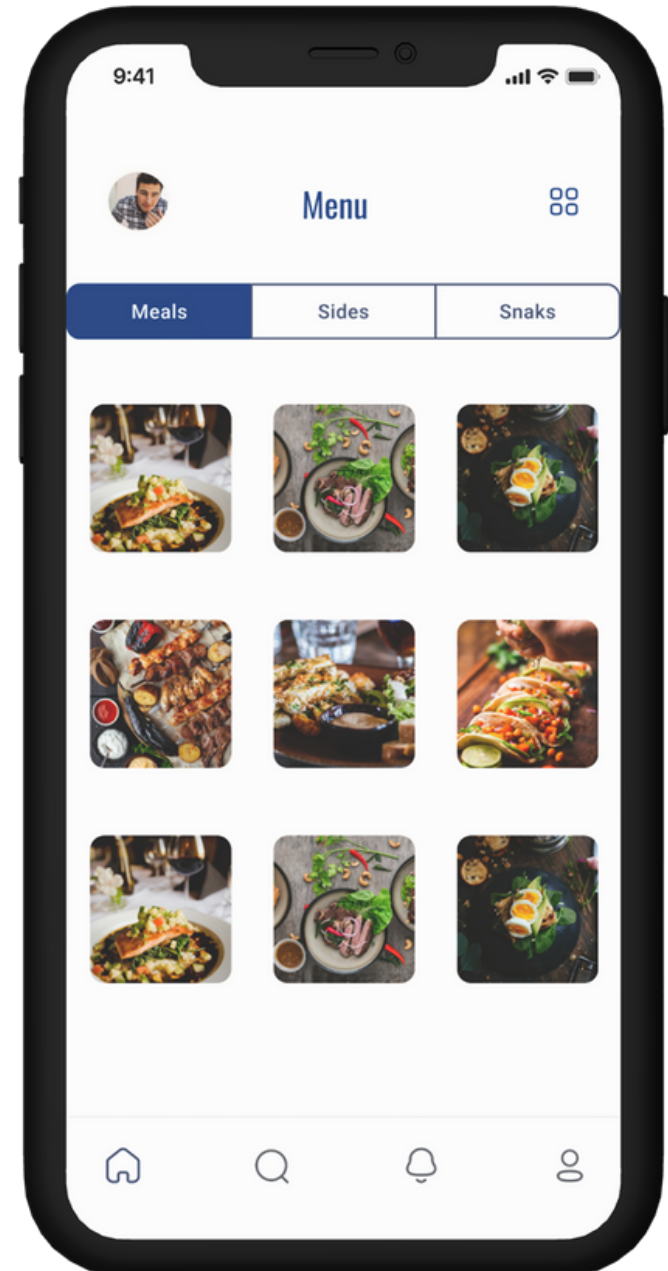
The Challenge: Building a Community of Trust

I faced a pivotal challenge: how can we give users complete confidence in their choices? The answer lies in the power of their community. So, I designed a comprehensive rating and review system that allows users to review others' experiences and provide their own feedback with ease. This feature isn't just about a star count; it enables users to dive into genuine opinions, helping them make informed decisions and avoid disappointment. This step doesn't just build a rich database of reviews—it also sparks a vibrant community within the app, where everyone contributes to a network of trust and valuable information.



The Challenge: Confidence Before Booking

I faced another challenge that gets to the core of the user experience: how can we give users peace of mind before they even step out the door? To solve this, I integrated a feature that allows users to preview each restaurant's full menu before making any reservation. This isn't just an add-on; it empowers them to evaluate dining options, check for dietary preferences or restrictions, and build realistic expectations for their experience. This simple step transforms the booking process from a random decision into a thoughtful, confident choice. It ensures the user won't be surprised upon arrival, which improves the entire experience and makes it enjoyable from the very first moment.



6. Results and Impact

1. Increase Booking Completion Rate:

Expectation: "We expect that simplifying the booking process and reducing the number of steps will increase booking completion rates by 20% to 30% compared to traditional methods."

2. Reduce No-Shows:

Expectation: "By prepaying the booking fee or deposit, we expect to reduce customer no-shows by up to 40%, reducing financial losses for restaurants."

3. Improve User Satisfaction:

Expectation: "Initial reviews indicate that users value the speed and convenience of booking. We expect this to lead to a 15% increase in app ratings in stores within the first six months of launch."

4. User Base Growth:

Prediction: "Due to the positive user experience and ease of booking sharing, we expect referral rates to increase by 25%, leading to organic growth in the user base."

5. Increased Restaurant Revenue:

Prediction: "In addition to reducing losses from canceled reservations, we expect the premium subscription features for restaurants to increase their monthly revenue by an average of 10% by improving their visibility and attracting more customers."

7. Conclusion and Key Takeaways

Conclusion

This project was a unique adventure and a true launchpad for me into the world of UX/UI design. Given the lack of tangible local information, my journey began with a comprehensive competitive audit, which served as my first compass in this field.

This experience confirmed for me that initial ideas are just the beginning of the road; the true design process lies in continuous iteration and development. My work wasn't a solo effort; it was entirely driven by usability studies and the valuable feedback I received from my peers, which allowed each app iteration to be better than the last. Throughout this journey, I had a fantastic opportunity to explore and test the capabilities of Figma. I learned how to transform simple paper sketches into advanced digital designs, which has strengthened my skills and given me the confidence to tackle any future design challenges.

Problem & User Focus

- The core problem identified through research was not simply a lack of an easy booking option, but the significant wasted time associated with traditional reservation methods like endless phone calls and email chains.
- The core user group is busy professionals who regularly eat out.
- The primary goal of the app is to build a revolutionary tool that saves time and makes dining out more

Design Solutions & Features

- The app's solution focuses on lightning-fast reservations, allowing users to secure a table in just a few taps.
- To solve group coordination issues, the app features an easy share button to send reservation details (time, location, menu) with a single tap.
- The design includes seamless entry with flexible sign-up options (social logins and email) to ensure a friction-free onboarding experience.
- To build community and trust, the app features a comprehensive rating and review system, enabling users to make informed decisions.
- A key feature is the ability for users to preview the full restaurant menu before booking, adding convenience and helping match cravings.

Methodology & Refinement

- The design process started with paper wireframes to ensure a strategic first step and build the correct foundation.
- Two rounds of usability studies were crucial for guiding designs from low-fidelity wireframes to polished mockups and pinpointing necessary refinements.
- A key design refinement was making the booking button the primary action and adding icons, based on usability study findings, to make the experience faster and more intuitive.
- The visual identity was built on the color blue to convey a sense of trust, strength, and professionalism.

Methodology & Refinement

- The project expects simplifying the process to increase the booking completion rate by 20% to 30%.
- By using a pre-payment/deposit option, the app expects to reduce customer no-shows by up to 40%.
- Due to the positive user experience and ease of sharing, the app predicts an increase in referral rates by 25%.

**Thank you for taking the time to
review this comprehensive case
study.**