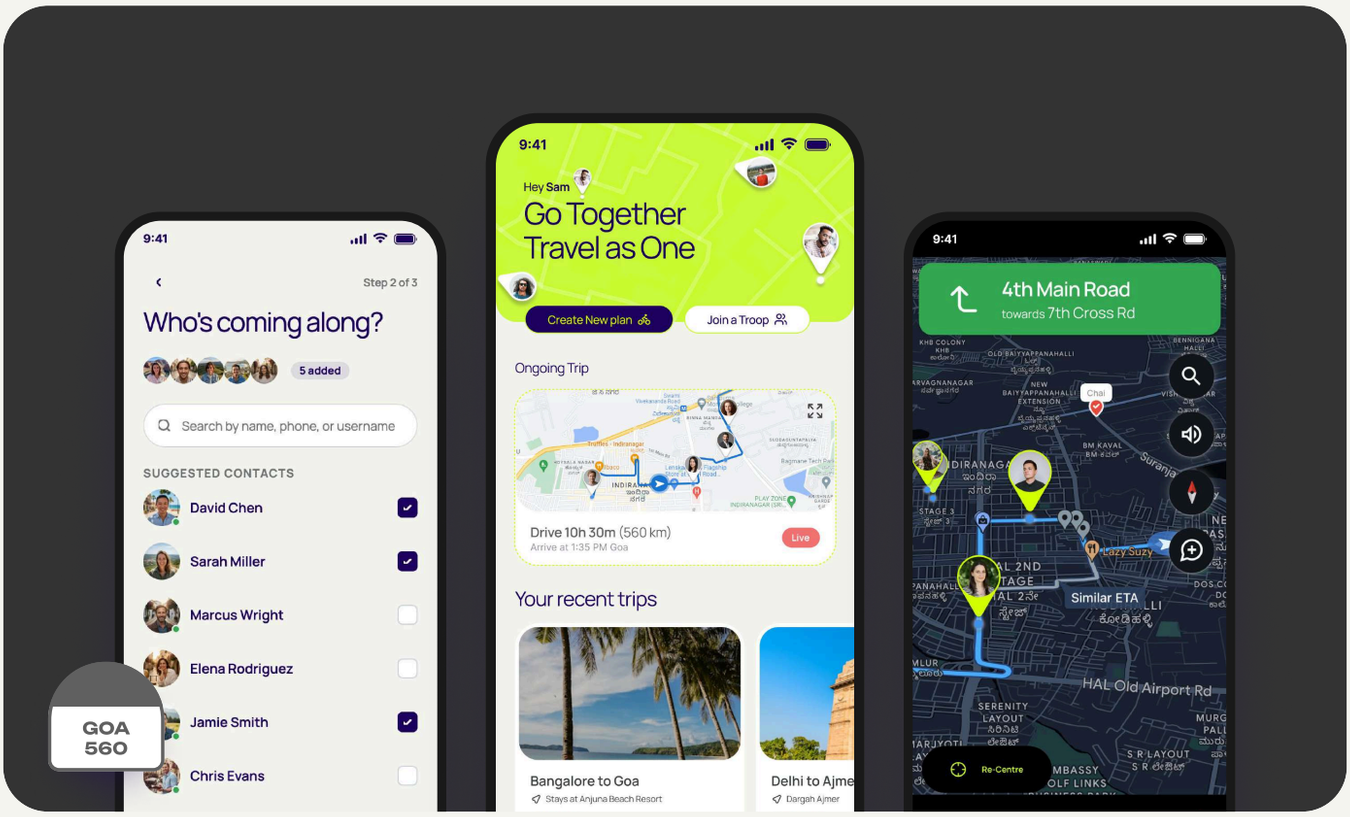
KM 0

A UX case study · Wagn, group road-trip planning

Six friends, one van, and a plan that lived in a group chat.

How I designed Wagn — an app that follows a group trip from the first "Goa?" in the chat to the last kilometre, so nobody has to be the human itinerary.

Role	Type	Team	Tool
UX research · UX/UI · Testing	0 → 1 mobile app	Solo	Figma



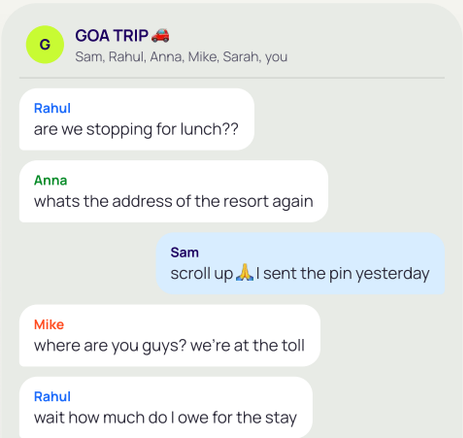
KM 12

Where it started

It started with a Goa trip and 1 exhausted friend.

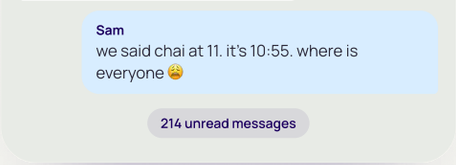
Last December six of us drove from Bangalore to Goa. The plan lived in a group chat. Stays were booked from three different apps, the route was a pin one person had saved, and "chai at 11" was agreed in a voice note nobody could find by 10:55.

Somewhere past Hubli, my friend Sam — who had planned everything —



was answering the same question for the fourth time while trying to navigate. That's when it clicked for me:

Why does a group of six need four apps and one exhausted organiser to take a single road trip?



KM 60 Identifying the problem

The four-app shuffle.

When I mapped how that trip was actually run, the plan was split across four tools that were never built to talk to each other. Every hand-off lost something — and the organiser was the glue holding it together.

1 · Group chat
Decisions, jokes and polls in one scroll.
lost: what we actually decided

2 · Maps app
A route on one phone. Everyone else asks for the pin.
lost: where everyone is

3 · Booking sites
Everyone books their own room, at their own price.
lost: the real cost per person

4 · Split-bill app
Opened after the trip, when the money talk is awkward.
lost: goodwill

"I end up being the travel agent, the map and the bank. By day two I'm not on holiday."
— Organiser, 29, Bangalore

"I never know the plan. I just get in the car and hope someone does."
— Rider, 25, Pune

"The worst part isn't the drive. It's asking friends for money after."
— Organiser, 31, Hyderabad

Problem statement

Groups planning a road trip have no single, shared plan. One person carries it in their head, so they become the help desk, and everyone else travels in the dark.

KM 110 Research

Was it just us? I went and asked.

One trip is an anecdote. Before designing anything I needed to know whether other groups broke in the same places — so I ran three small studies.

8
Interviews
People who had organised — or just survived — a group road trip in the past year. 5 organisers, 3 riders.

5
Guerrilla tests of today's tools
At a café near Indiranagar: "plan a weekend in Goa for six and share it with the group" — using the apps people already have.

1
Trip, reconstructed
Our own Bangalore → Goa chat export, coded message by message: decisions, questions, and the moments the plan changed.

What a group needs	Group chat	Maps app	Booking site	Split-bill app	Wagn
One plan everyone can see	partly	—	—	—	✓
Where is everyone, live	one-off pins	1 : 1 only	—	—	✓
Stops planned on the route	—	manual	—	—	✓
Cost per person, up front	—	—	per room	after the trip	✓
Invite with one link	group link	—	—	yes	✓

KM 150 Affinity map

112 sticky notes, five piles.

I wrote every observation and quote from the interviews and tests on its own note, then grouped them until the piles stopped moving. Five themes came out — and each became a design problem.

Owning the plan

- "it's always me who plans"
- plan = 40 min of scrolling back
- gave up planning, "let's just go"

Getting people in

- chasing "are you in?" one by one
- friend of a friend has no context
- won't install an app for 1 trip

On the road

- "where are you?" × 11 calls
- missed the chai stop, 2 cars split
- driver can't text

Money

- "how much is it for me?"
- hidden fees = broken trust
- everyone pays by UPI

Trust

- "who can see my location?"
- hates passwords for small apps
- "is this hotel an ad?"

KM 190 Personas

Meet Sam, and everyone in Sam's car.

Every group had the same two roles, and they want opposite things. The organiser wants control and proof. The riders want to be included — without having to ask.

Sam, 28

The organiser · product manager, Bangalore

"If I don't plan it, it doesn't happen. If I do, I'm the help desk."

Goals

Build the plan once. Share one link. Stop answering the same question.

Frustrations

Re-sending pins, chasing confirmations, fronting money for six people.

Rahul, 25

The rider · designer, Pune

"I'm happy to go anywhere. I just want to know when, where, and how much."

Goals

See the plan and his share before saying yes. Know where the others are.

Frustrations

Finding out last. Being the car that holds everyone up.

KM 230 Ideal scenario & task flow

What should Sam's trip look like?

I wrote Sam's ideal trip as a six-beat story, then turned it into the task flow the app had to support. Anything off this path had to justify itself.

01 Sam picks Goa and the dates

02 Adds five friends — or sends a link

03 Accepts suggested chai & fuel stops

04 Picks a stay; everyone sees their share

05 On the day, the troop follows one live map

06 Sam enjoys the trip. Nobody asks "where are you?"

↑ *"no" at the diamond doesn't block Sam — the link lets late joiners in after the plan is made*

How might we…
make planning a trip finishable in one chai break?

How might we…
let a friend of a friend say yes without a phone call?

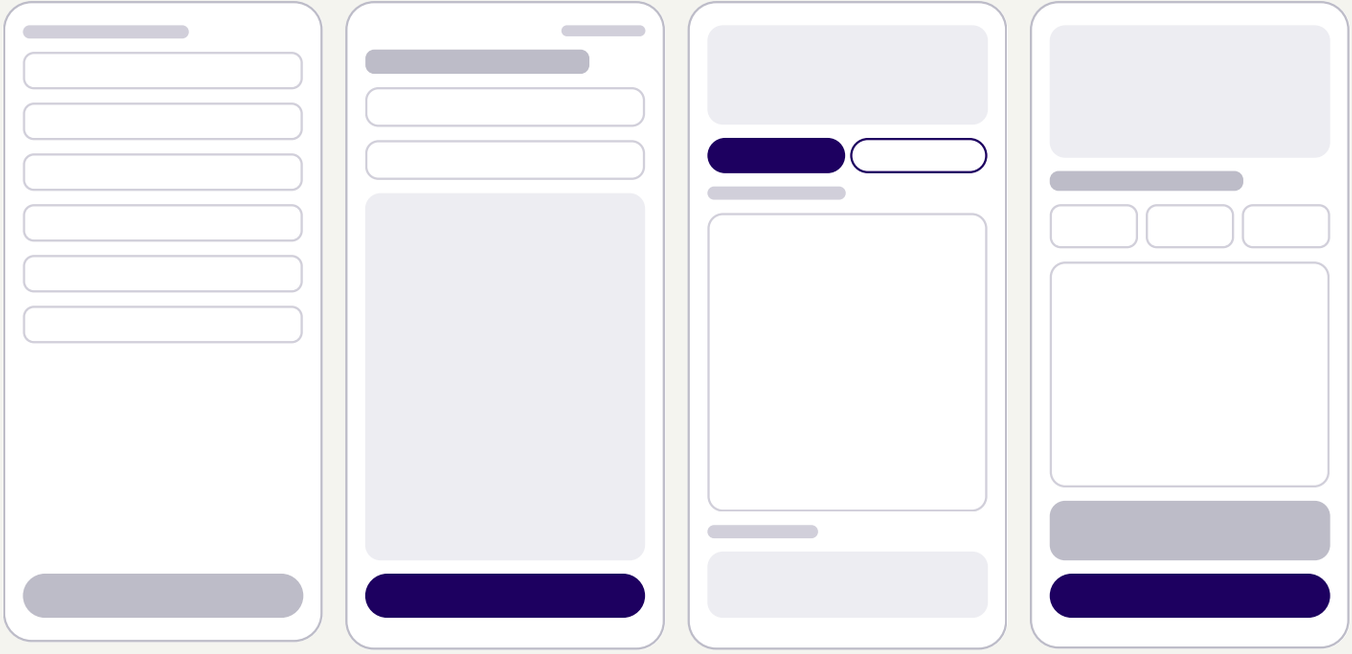
How might we…
answer "where is everyone?" before anyone asks?

How might we…
put money on the table before it gets awkward?

KM 270 Crafting the solution · lo-fi

Boxes first, pixels later.

The earliest wireframes put the whole plan on one long form. It tested terribly — people stalled at the first empty field. Splitting it into three steps was the single biggest decision in the project.



v0 - one long form. 3 of 5 gave up.

v1 — one question per step, progress top-right

home - just two doors: plan or join

trip detail - cost block before the button

Pain points → solutions

Five problems. Five fixes.

Each theme from the affinity map became a problem to solve. For every one: what went wrong in research, what I designed, and what changed when people tried it.

01

Problem

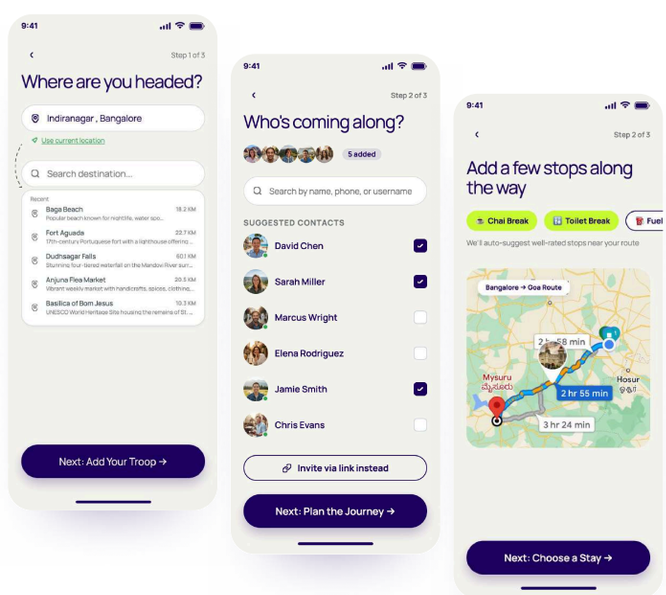
Planning a whole trip at once is a task people postpone forever.

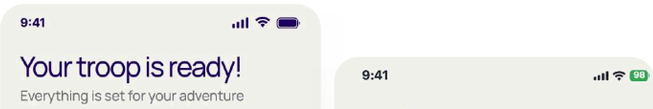
In testing the old tools, 3 of 5 people abandoned the task within ten minutes. The long form in v0 did no better.

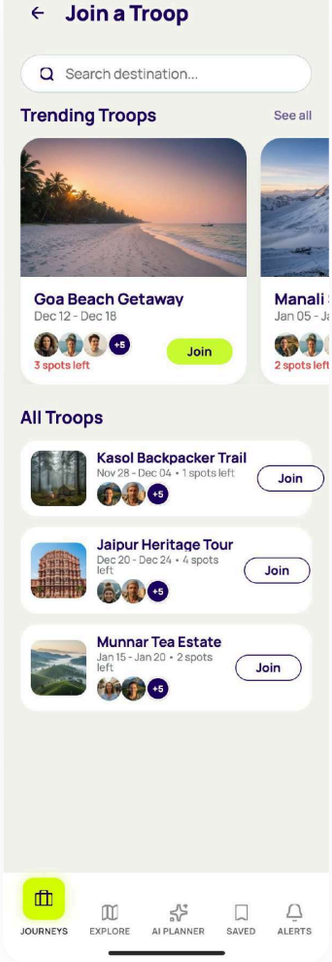
Solution — a three-step planner

1. One question per screen: where, who, then stops & stay. "Step 1 of 3" is always visible.
2. The button names the next step - "Next: Add Your Troop →" — so people know how far they are from done.
3. Stops are suggested on the route (chai, toilet, fuel) instead of asking anyone to think of them.

Result: 6 of 6 finished a plan, avg 3 min 40 s







02

Problem

Getting everyone in is a chase, one person at a time.

Organisers described DM-ing each friend separately. A friend of a friend had no context and no way to say yes.

Solution - sharing as a step, not a menu item

1. The last step of planning produces a link and a QR code, front and centre, with WhatsApp one tap away.
2. "Invite via link instead" sits inside the troop step, so the group doesn't need to be final to start.
3. Join a Troop shows open trips with dates and "3 spots left" - a fact, not a countdown.

Result: first invite sent in under a minute by 5 of 6

03

Problem

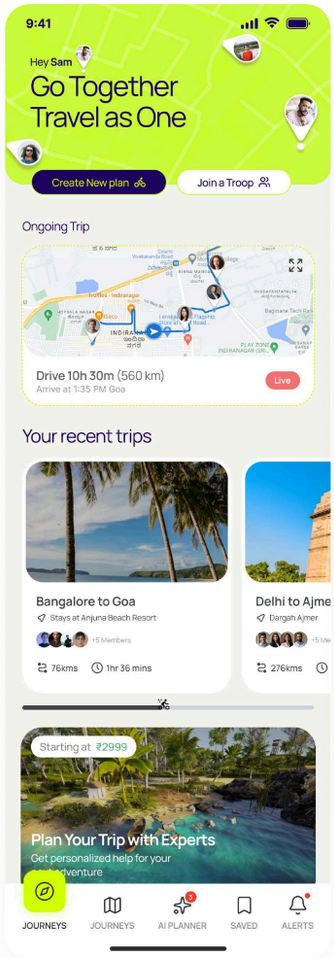
On the road, nobody knows where anyone is.

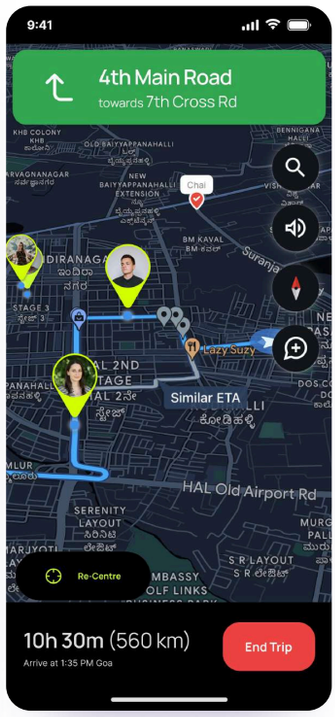
Our own trip had 11 "where are you?" calls. Location sharing in maps apps is one-to-one and expires.

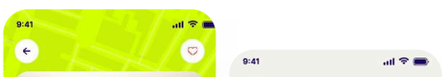
Solution — one live map for the whole troop

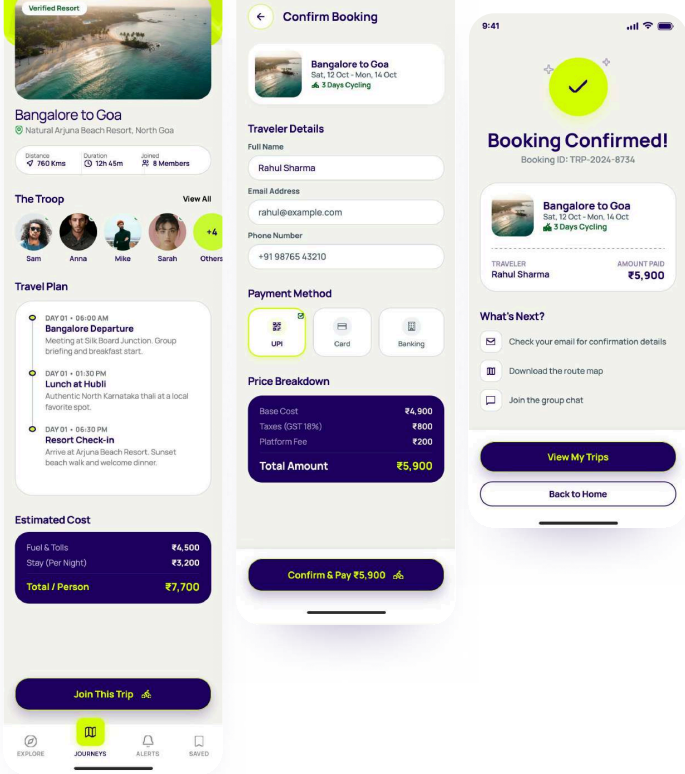
1. When a trip is live, the Ongoing Trip card takes the top of home: faces on the route, ETA, a Live badge.
2. Navigation goes dark and full-screen, with every member's pin and the agreed "Chai" stop on the map.
3. Re-Centre and ETA stay pinned to the edges; End Trip is the only red thing on screen.

Result: "find Mike" in a 5-second glance, 6 of 6









04

Problem

Money comes up late, and awkwardly.

Only 1 of 5 could work out their share of the trip using today's tools. Hidden fees were the fastest way to lose trust.

Solution — cost per person, before the yes

1. Trip detail ends with an Estimated Cost block - fuel & tolls, stay, and Total / Person — above "Join This Trip."
2. UPI is the first payment option, because that's how this audience pays.
3. The platform fee (₹200) is itemised, not folded into the base - the button reads "Confirm & Pay ₹5,900."

Result: 6 of 6 stated their share correctly

05

Problem

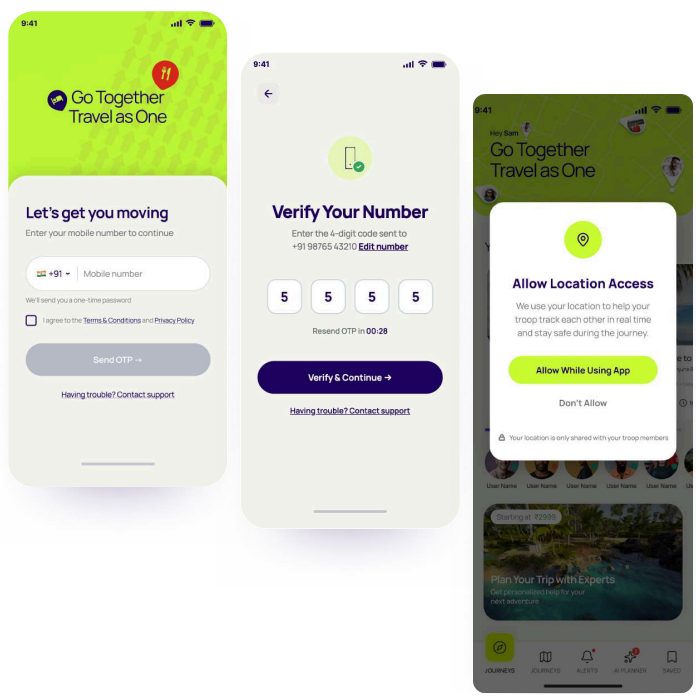
Sign-up and permissions kill trust before the trip even starts.

People won't make a password for a one-trip app, and a cold "allow location?" prompt was the moment most said no.

Solution — phone in, trust framed first

1. Phone number + 4-digit OTP, with a visible resend timer and "Edit number" right beside it.
2. Location is asked in the app's own words first: "only shared with your troop members," while using the app.
3. The Send OTP button stays muted until the number and consent are complete - it's honest about readiness.

Result: 5 of 6 allowed location on first ask



KM 420

Iteration · before → after

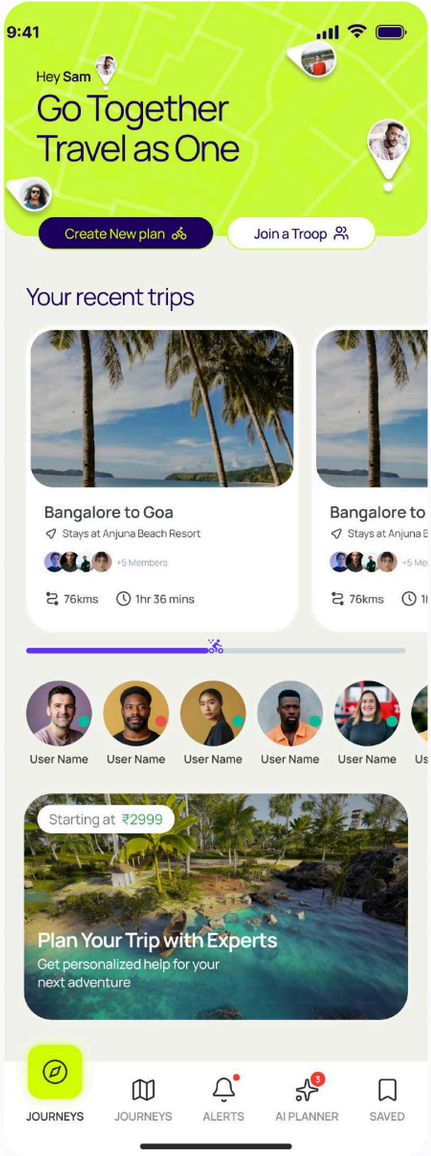
Home, three drafts later.

The first home screen was a poster: big condensed type, recent trips, faces. It looked great once and said nothing new the tenth time. Testing pushed it towards context.

Before

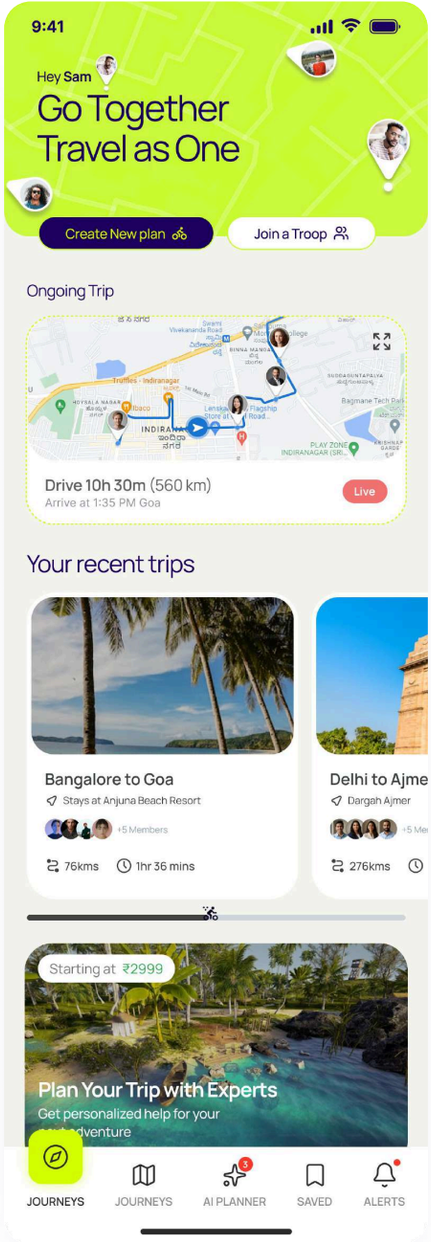
Middle

After

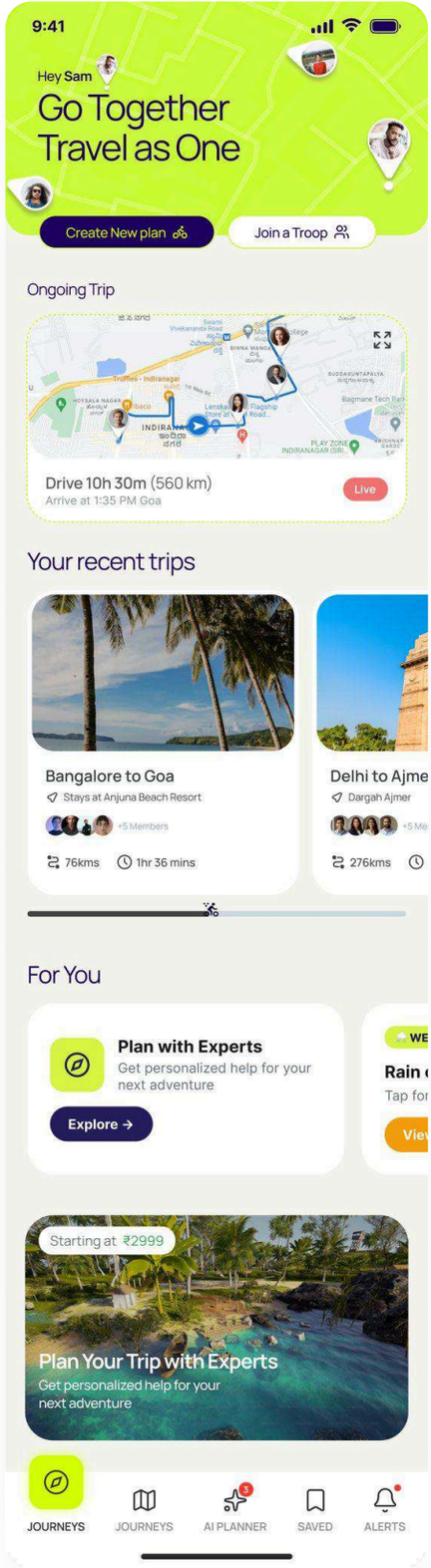


"nice... but what do I do here?"

- tester, round 1. A brand moment with no live information.



The live trip claims the top of the page. Everyone's position is visible without a tap.



System type, and a "For You" row that only earns its place with something useful - like rain on the Goa route and where to stop.

Results

Same tasks, new group, very different trip.

For the final round I tested the clickable prototype with six new people, using the same scenario as round one. Confusion and phone calls were replaced by “oh, that’s it?” moments.

Task	Round 1 · today’s tools (5)	Round 2 · Wagn (6)
Plan a Goa weekend for six and share it	3 of 5 · 11 min avg	6 of 6 · 3 min 40 s
Invite a friend who isn’t in the group yet	4 of 5 · 2 min	6 of 6 · 40 s
Find where a friend is on the road	called or texted · 2 min	6 of 6 · 5 s glance
Say what the trip costs you	1 of 5 correct	6 of 6 correct

What still tripped people up

Two testers read “Step 2 of 3” on the stops screen and expected one more step. Stops & stay are now Step 3 of 3.

…and

The tab order moved between screens, so “Explore” wasn’t where thumbs expected. It’s now locked: Journeys, Explore, AI Planner, Saved, Alerts.

Heard in round 2

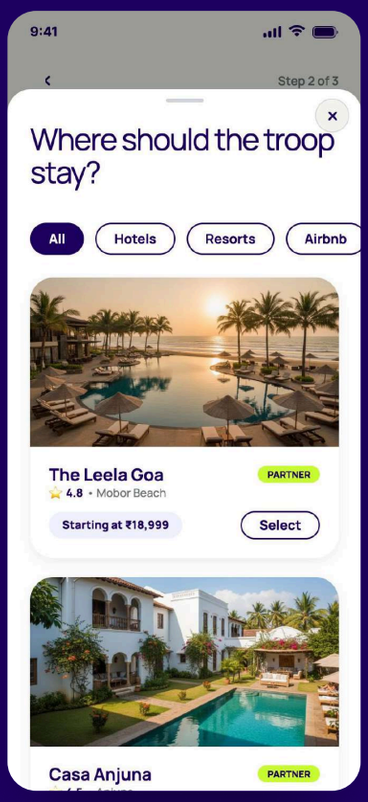
“Wait — I can just send them this link? That’s the whole thing?”

KM 500 How it makes money

Partners, not banner ads.

Planning stays free. Hotels, resorts and cafés pay to appear at the one moment a troop is actually deciding where to stay or stop. The risk is obvious — so I wrote the rules before the screens.

1. **Same bar, or it doesn’t show.** A partner has to pass the troop’s own filters first.
2. **Labelled like a rating.** “Partner” sits at the same weight as the stars.
3. **One per screen.** A suggestion in the mix, never a wall of ads.
4. **The organiser can turn it off.** Per trip, in settings.



KM 520 States, edge cases & accessibility

The unglamorous screens.

Half of this app is used from a passenger seat — in glare, at night, on patchy highway signal. So every screen had to have a state for the bad moments too.

Contrast in sunlight

Indigo on lime is 14.3 : 1. Lime is never text on white (1.2 : 1) — only a fill.

One-thumb reach

One filled, full-width button per screen, always at the bottom.

Permission denied

"Don't Allow" still gets you the plan — you just don't appear on the live map, and can turn it on later.

Not colour alone

Live, Partner and "spots left" always carry words. The red spots label darkens to #C81E1E to pass AA.

KM 540 **Visual system**

Lime means go. Indigo means read.

Troop lime

#C9FC33 — actions, highlights, the brand

Deep indigo

#1E0060 — text, primary buttons, cost cards

Route #1D6BFC

Warning #FF4B1F

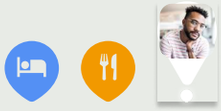
Night #232323

Wagn

Unbounded — the brand's voice. Headlines only.

Join a Troop

Manrope 400–800 — every screen, from 24px street names to 10px tabs.



GOA 560 **You've arrived · Conclusion**

A group trip should feel like one plan, not six phones.

Before Wagn, planning a trip meant four apps and one person holding it all together. With one shared plan, a link, and a live map, the organiser gets to be on holiday too.

Next: settle who owes whom inside the trip, sharpen the AI planner with real routes, and stress-test partner ranking against a sales team trying to game it.

View the prototype →

Say hey

Thanks for reading. Questions or feedback – 786aazam.sheikh1@gmail.com · +91 81860 27476 · LinkedIn

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