

zomato
GROUP ORDERING

BACKGROUND

Purpose

The project was taken up as part of an assessment task for a Bangalore-based startup.

Problem Statement

Create a group-ordering solution for Zomato.

An interesting pattern at Zomato suggests that people order food from multiple restaurants to be delivered at the same address. These are orders larger than usual for the particular address, which has given rise to the hypothesis that these are made for parties/gatherings. Build an experience for this situation, keeping in mind-

The entire journey, from discovery to delivery

Empathy to the existing tech and restaurant partners

The shared experience of the group

The assumption that only one delivery partner will be deployed for the entire order

The assumption that Zomato will take care of the alignment of pickup times.

Duration

48 hours

The entire project, from the research to designing the feature to prototyping it had a time limit of 48 hours.

THE PROCESS

Day 1: Research

Heuristics, assumptions, and making sense

No talking to people, browsing the internet. A couple hours to myself with a notepad and a pen, scribbling down thoughts, ideas and personal experiences. A firm believer of experience-informed decision making (while on sprints), at times the lines between experience-informed and experience-driven becomes blurry. The key is to know when to move on to real data.

Having conversations, drawing insights

Interviews with fixed questions often provide stale insights when trying to be exploratory. I prefer to scribble a few open ended topics, and have conversations with people- the best way to conduct use research on a time crunch. The key is to have casually probing conversations with a wide spectrum of people. A lot of the insights might not be refined, but reading between the lines becomes important when discovering user behavior, in my opinion.

More on this later.

An in-depth study of the app

The aim was to make the solution fit right into Sushi (zomato's own design system). This called for an informal audit to understand how Zomato used its screen real estate.

Competitive analysis, validation of assumptions

I finally Google around, trying to know if competitors exist, their business/design models, and trying to validate my assumptions, if the data exists.



Tip: find a comfortable spot in a corner to conduct your interviews. Slapping post its on the floor helps.
Also, cheesecakes are an important research tool.

THE PROCESS

Day 2: Design

Definition of goals

Before actually getting to designing the solution, I usually set a few simple keywords as my guiding principles for the project. These define a few goals and thus, success metrics for the solution.

Develop post-intervention flow/IA

I then developed a textual IA with my understanding of what the natural flow would be, having studied the app for a bit.

Wireframe

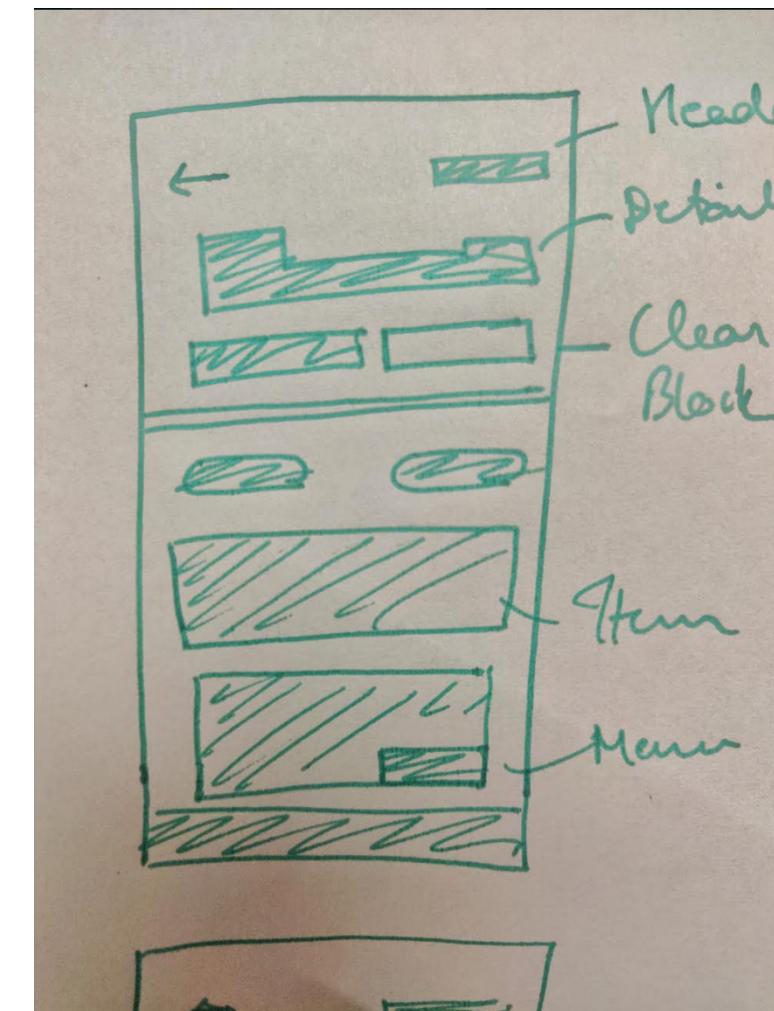
Scribbles on a few sheets of paper, since I was working with a pre defined design system, there were a few things I couldn't touch. Hence, I blacked out these elements and worked with the rest. Seems pretty messy, but I find it a very effective strategy to define guidelines for the UI.

Develop UI

Doing justice to pre-defined, successful design systems is harder than developing a conceptual one. I spent about half a day developing screens for all possible scenarios I could think of.

Prototype

Prototypes to the primary flows are at the end of the presentation. Please note there may be flaws, I tried my best to create realistic prototypes in the time I had. 😞



One of the earliest wireframes, to map out the current screen and trying to find suitable screen real estate for the initiation CTA.

PRE-INTERVENTION MAPPING

			
<p>Step 1: Assembly You and your friends get together to chill</p>	<p>Step 2: Hunger A while later, everyone's hungry. Karaoke is paused.</p>	<p>Step 3: "Decision" After 40 mins of yelling, there's finally a decision. Kebabs it is.</p>	<p>Step 4: Division 3 people just realised its Tuesday, they're placing a separate order.</p>
<p>Step 5: Compromise You wanted pizza, but have to settle for kebabs.</p> 	<p>Step 6: Payment You're in charge of payment. Rajeev promised he'll repay you "later".</p> 	<p>Step 7: Reception Kebabs arrive when it isn't your turn on the karaoke. The salads arrive as soon as you reach back up.</p>	<p>Step 8: Hangriness Read step 2. Add anger. You're also Rs 400 poorer. Thanks, Rajeev.</p> 

CONVERSATION INSIGHTS

I had a conversation with 4 people- a design student, a young psychologist, a middle-aged teacher and a young professional. The aim was to understand food ordering patterns in general over a wide spectrum of age and professions and to collect experiences that people have had specific to group orders.

There were a few general questions I asked everyone to get the ball rolling in the right direction-

Have you ever ordered food online as part of a group?

Do you take charge of ordering or finances when you're ordering in groups?

When ordering alone, do you feel the need to order from multiple places? What about when you're with multiple people?

How often does your family order in as compared to going out?

Do you see yourself, or someone else making compromises when ordering in groups?

Surprisingly, even the middle aged school teacher had an interesting group-order story. Important not to stick by one's assumptions and just ask away. :)

I find collecting quotes from these conversations apart from the obvious pain points really important, to try and draw reasonable insights or patterns.

"There's always a veg-non veg delay" "Dominos once took my order of 8 pizzas, then cancelled after 15 minutes" "Does Zomato have trucks or vans?"

"Group ordering could be really helpful if you're travelling by train" "School picnic was interrupted many times; had to receive multiple deliveries."

"I often order from Zomato for house parties and just enjoy the compliments when people say the food is nice" "We just have unspoken groups now"

PROBLEMS

As a result of the little bit of research done, I zeroed down on these few primary problems when ordering food in groups.

Co-location

“Bro kya khaega?” x10 on a phone call

All diners may not be in the same room at the same time. One person is in charge of the ordering, and communication takes place over external apps, causing the need to rapidly switch between them.

Time

15 people yelling at each other for 20 mins before ordering McDonald’s

Decision making, budgeting, ordering is chaotic and takes a lot of time. Can’t schedule orders, especially in bulk.

Delivery

“I went to collect the order last time. You go now.”

Different orders are delivered at different times. Picking these up cause multiple breaks in ongoing activities.

Finances

“I’ll pay you na :)

Multiple delivery charges on multiple orders, relevant discount codes or memberships available with only one participant often end up in making the experience more expensive than it should be. Collecting payment is another issue.

Division

“It’s Tuesday. Shreya and I won’t have chicken.”

There’s a subdivision of groups with specific preferences to place different orders, requiring them to break away from the main group to deliberate, taking away more time from the group’s planned activity.

Lack of options, having to settle for less

“Theek hai bhai. Order one for me too.”

People have different preferences, which may not all be fulfilled by one restaurant.

ASSUMPTIONS

Platform-facing

The available tech is the same

The core technology hasn't changed, the feature will make use of the same technology and not propose extensive R&D.

Zomato uses hexagonal geospatial tech to assign delivery executives.

Since one delivery executive will be deployed, the radius for available restaurants must be shortened to keep the logistic limitations and business interests intact.

Zomato will release orders to the restaurant in a way that it maximises efficiency

Calculate and minimise the wait time of the rider, and hence the users.

Offers and memberships have no “no group order” clause

All offers and membership benefits can be applied as usual.

Only restaurants that can handle bulk orders have “Group order” option displayed on their page

Restaurants do not cancel after receiving the order through the “group order” flow

User-facing

Users have a working internet connection

The users can use mobile applications that require them to go online.

Users have a pre-established way of communicating with each other

They have access to the mobile numbers of people they want to invite (host-participant or participant-participant)

Users are simultaneously available to make the order

They may not be co-located, but will take out time to be a part of the ordering process. Generous time caps to actions will be provided in the solution.

GOALS

I set some goals for the solution I would be creating. IMO, these simple keywords would be important success metrics if the solution were to ever be implemented.

Unobtrusive

The solution must be tucked into the current natural flow of the app, yet be easy to locate and operate. Giving the the solution L1 real estate didn't make sense as individual or small orders are larger in number (assumption). Maybe it could be initially introduced by an L1 banner or pop up, till user memory is built.

Efficient

Make the entire process- from choosing restaurants, to enabling everyone to be able to eat what they actually want to, to smoothening out updates, delivery and reviewing restaurants much quicker, more democratic and efficient.

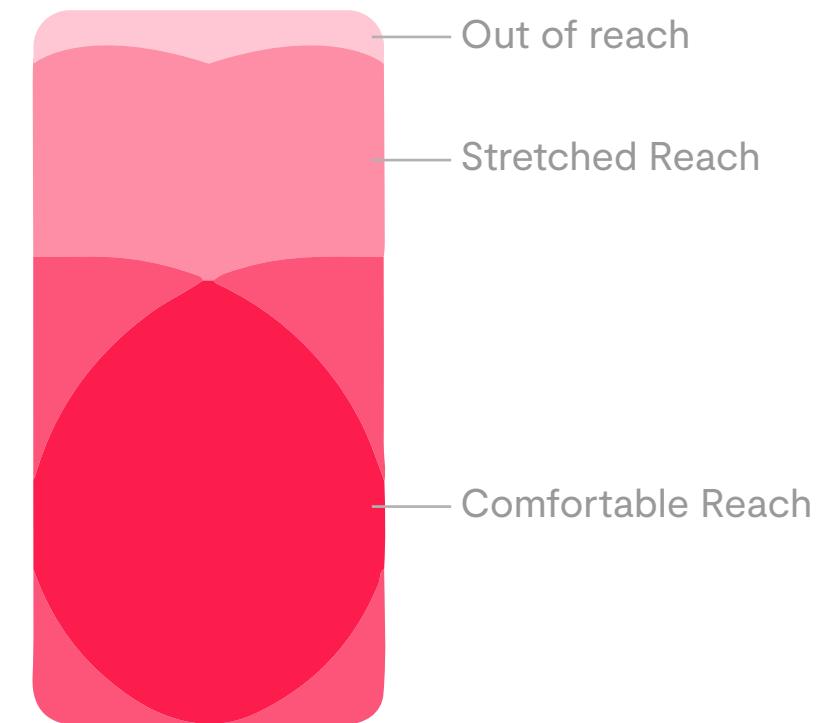
Interactive

While finalising the restaurants is chaotic and time consuming, it still is a vital part of social gatherings. The goal was to let everyone have an opinion, but make it quick, interactive and fun.

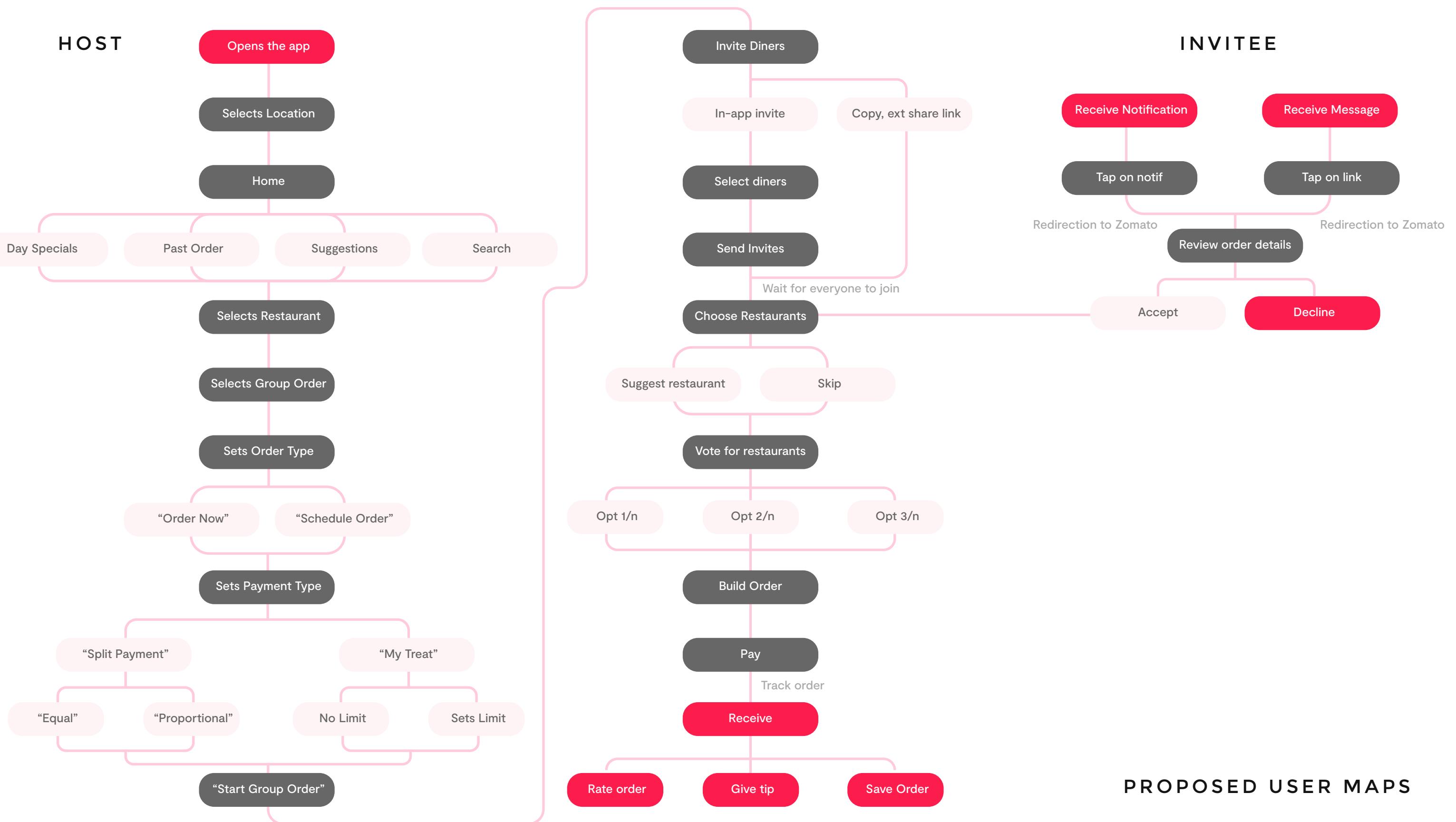
Realistic

The business can't compromise its model and revenue to enable one feature. Make the solution viable, and have reasonable restrictions on use, so as to keep the business' interests intact, yet not hamper the customer experience drastically.

Comfortable



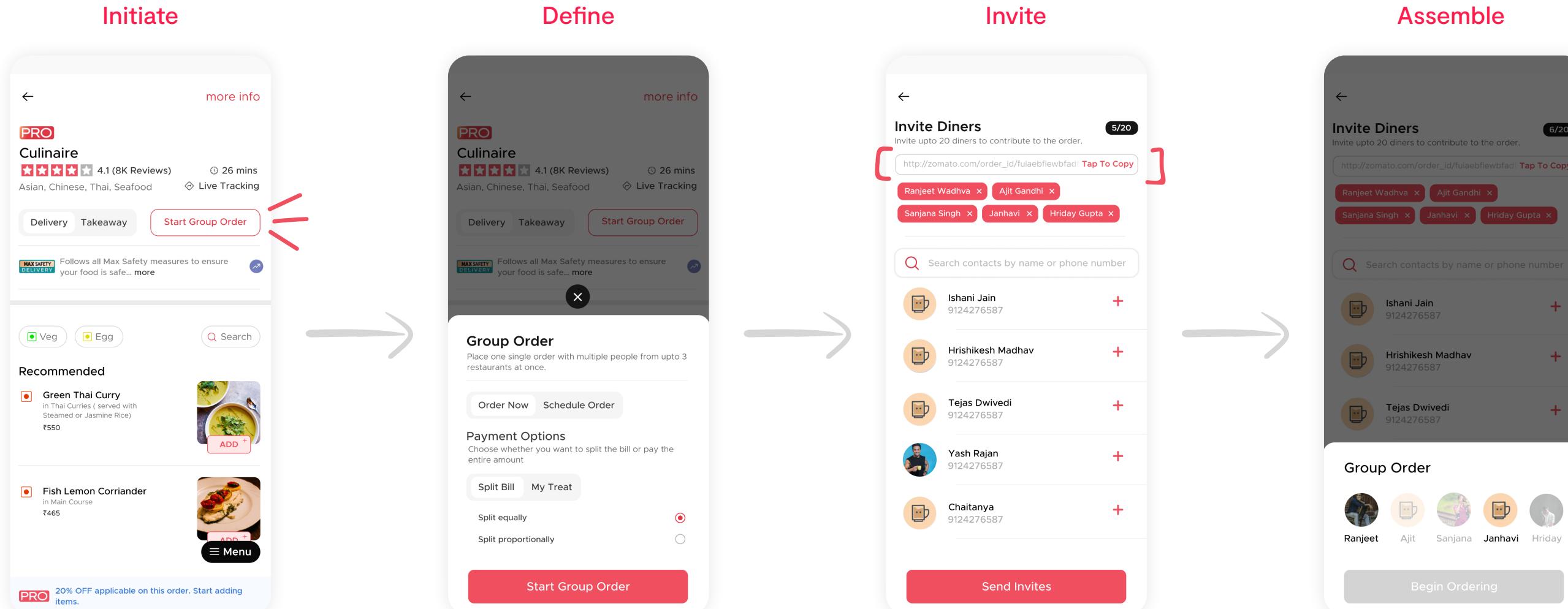
Place as many of the important actions in the most comfortable zones. The challenge was to do this without disturbing the current UI



CREATING AN INVITE (HOST'S POV)

Prototype links are at the end of the presentation.

The flow starts with the user finding a restaurant as they would, either by tapping on the suggestions or searching by cuisine/restaurant.



Choose restaurant, tap on “start group order”

Unobtrusive, takes into account that some restaurants may not be able to handle group orders.

Set the parameters

Set delivery time as per convenience. Choose payment method between splitting the bill or paying all of it yourself. Set an overall budget if required.

Select upto 20 phone contacts to be invited, or copy and send a secure link

The former sends a notification by zomato to the invitee, the latter enables people without the app or friends of friends to join. Capped at 20 keeping logistics infra in mind

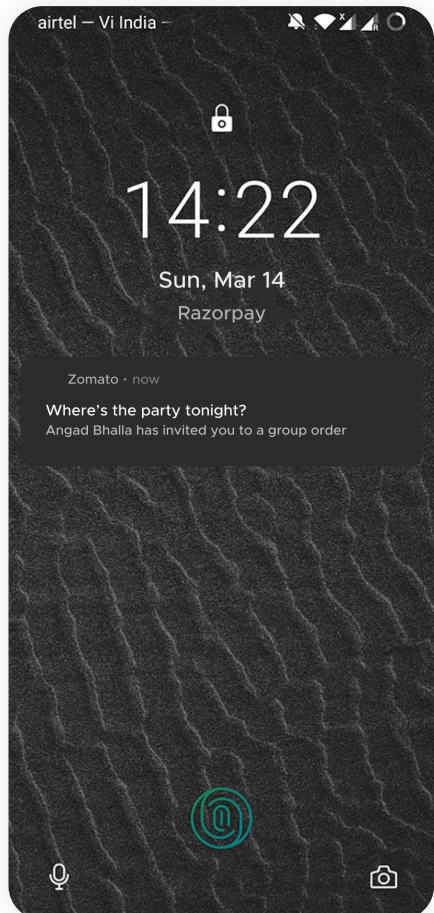
Wait for everyone to join.

Enables the democratic decision making process that follows.

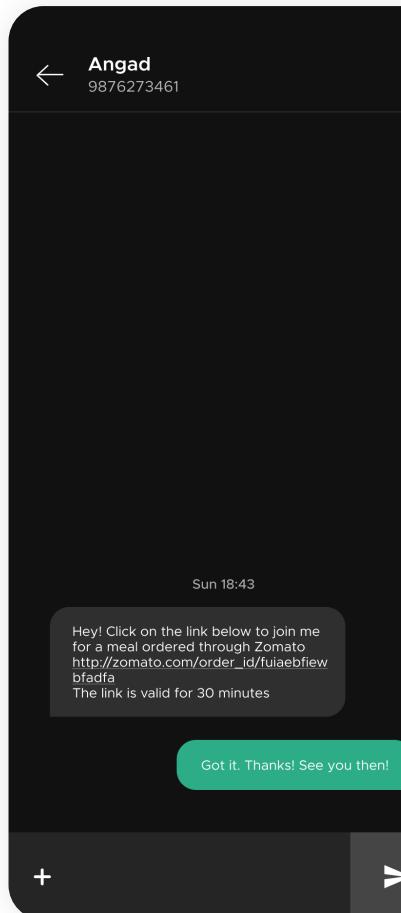
RESPONDING TO INVITES (INVITEES' POV)

Prototype links are at the end of the presentation.

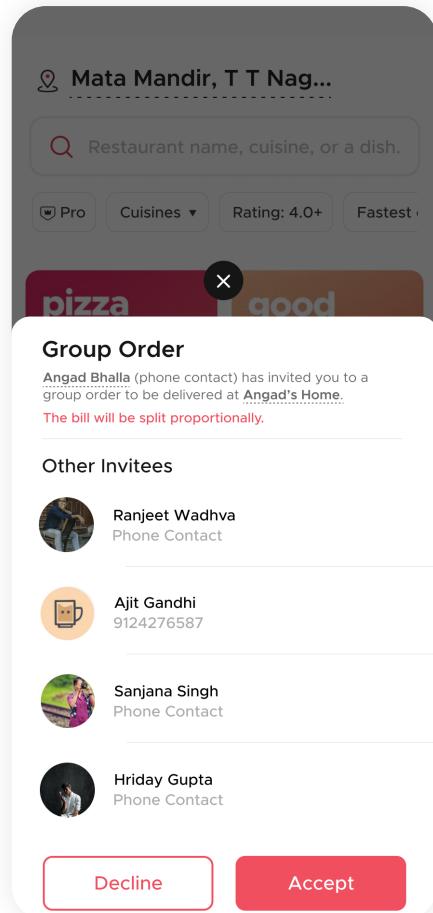
Receive



OR



Review and Respond



Invitees in the host's contact list with the app installed receive a notification.

Tap on it and unlock your phone to directly open the invite.

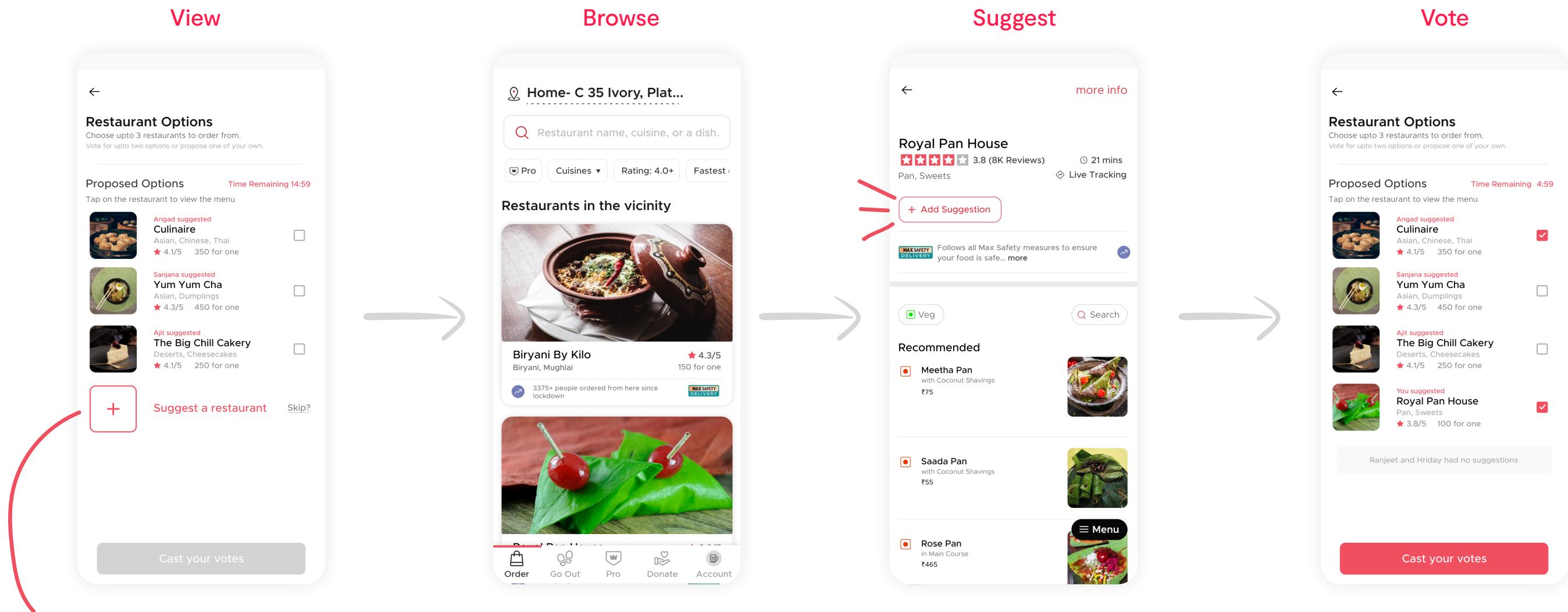
Invitees in the host's contact list without the app or friends of friends are sent a secure link through a messenger app of choice

The link redirects you to the app or the website prompting the invitee to download it.

The invitee sees all the details relevant to the group order, and chooses to accept or decline

The host, the delivery address, the payment method, the budget, if set and all other invitees are shown.

INTERACTIVE DECISION MAKING



Once everyone has joined, view suggested restaurants, suggest **one** of your own, or skip

Gives everyone a say in what they want to eat, and consider other peoples' suggestions.

The suggestion period has a 15-min time cap.

Tap on a restaurant from a familiar looking catalogue to view menu

Review the menu, tap on “add suggestion” to suggest it to the group

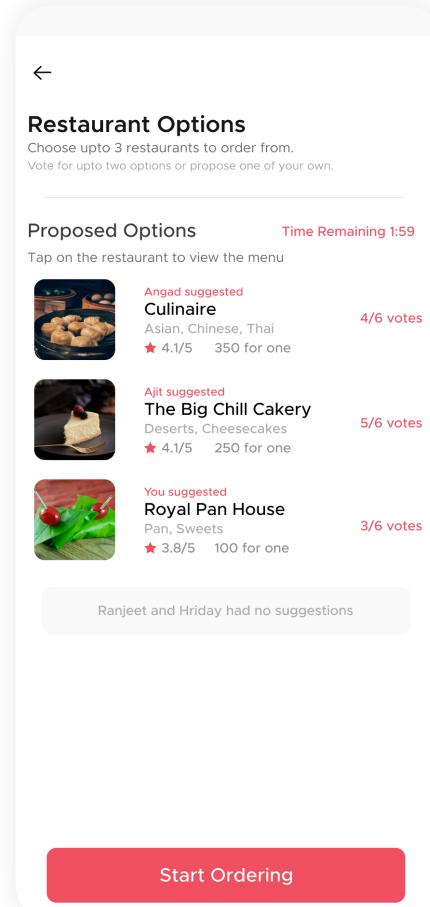
Once each participant has sent in a suggestion/skipped, the group votes for upto 3 restaurants

Retains the interactive “group” element of the decision making process by making it democratic, more efficient, yet fun

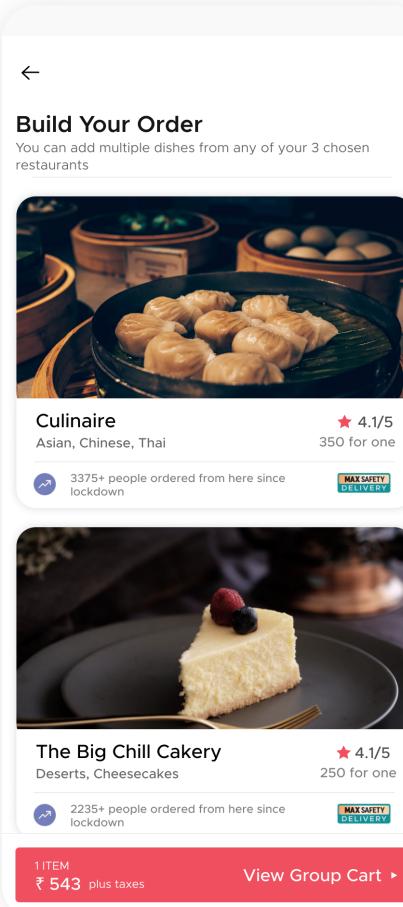
The voting period has a 2 min time cap.

PLACING THE ORDER

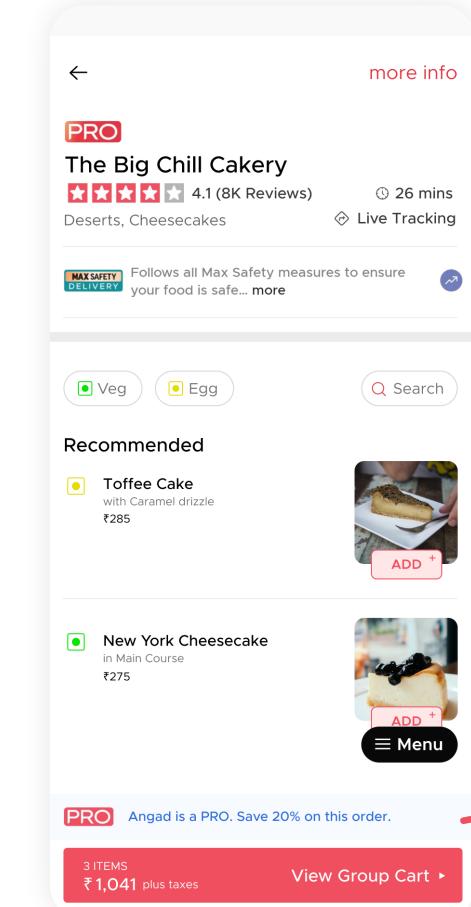
Review Options



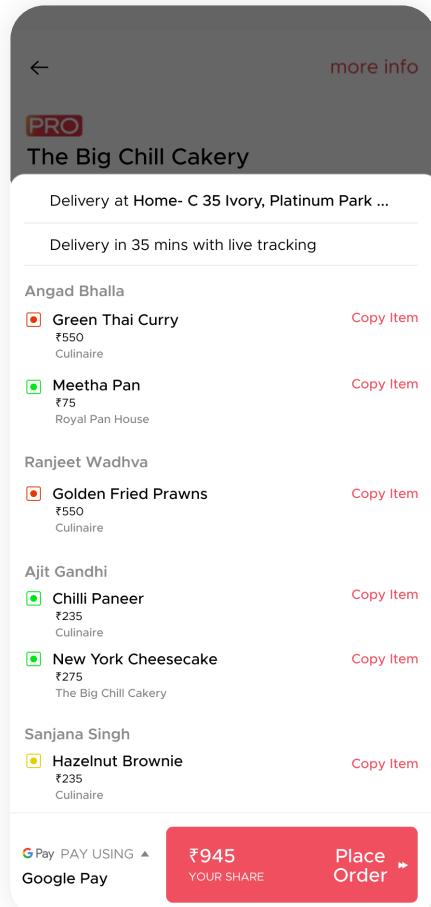
Browse



Build Order



Pay



The 3 restaurants with the highest votes become available options

Click on “start ordering” to get to the serious business.
Capped at 3 to make it logically viable

Browse the 3 chosen options

Familiar visual setting, more information, larger images to help with decision making

Build order from the restaurants chosen by the group as usual.

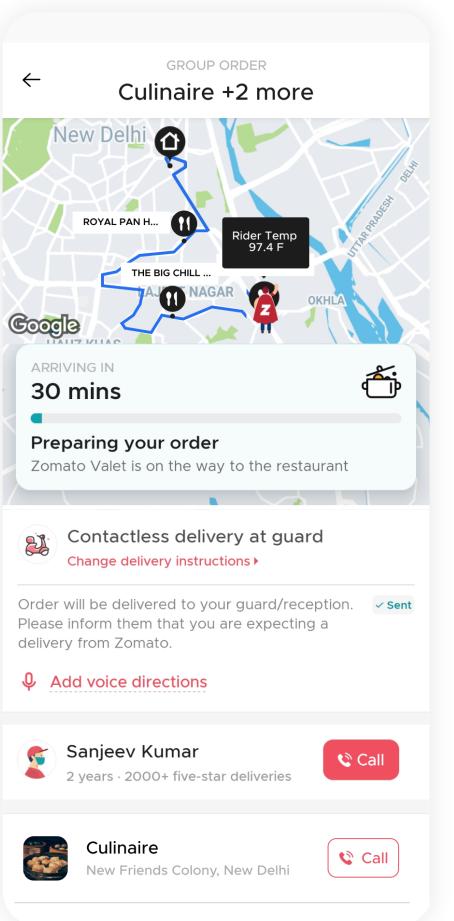
Select your items as you would. Get extended membership benefits if ANY of the invitees is a member

Pay as per the arrangement agreed to.

Pay online as per convenience.

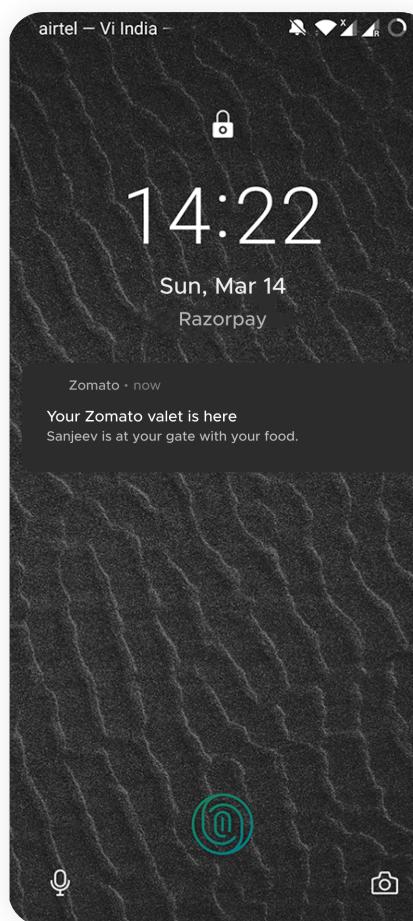
POST ORDER

Tracking and Updates



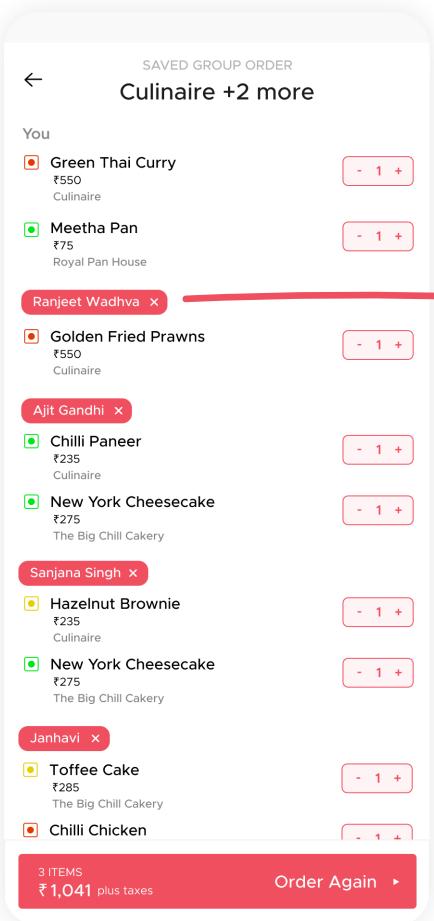
Map with all restaurants, ETA, valet details visible to all participants.

Delivery



Each participant gets a notification regarding delivery attempts.

Save Order



Saved Group Orders
Simply remove the person if they're not attending

You can save the group order for future ordering ease

Some people have that one pizza they always order. Save everyone's preferences from your frequented restaurants

SCENARIO-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Scenario 1: The “Aaj tera bhai party dega”

Multiple participants, multiple restaurants; one person pays for the entire order. The host of the party has a fixed budget, does not have PRO membership.

Guiding principle: Economy

The screenshots illustrate the steps for placing a group order:

- Step 1: Group Order Selection**
The host selects the "Start Group Order" button on the restaurant's profile page. An "Overall Budget" bar is shown at the bottom left.
- Step 2: Group Cart Overview**
The host views the group cart, which shows items from multiple restaurants. A promotional message "PRO Angad is a PRO. Save 20% on this order." is displayed.
- Step 3: Final Order Summary**
The host reviews the final order summary, including item details, quantities, and total cost (₹4911.4). Payment options like G Pay and Google Pay are available.

The host can select the “My treat” option and sets an overall budget, incl of taxes

This overall budget is then split depending on the number of people attending, and balanced as people place their orders. Someone may want more expensive food, someone may want to eat light.

If any PRO member joins the group, the membership benefits are automatically applied to the order

The host does not have to be a PRO member. They get a temporary benefit while making the payment. Increases people’s exposure to benefits of PRO, might end up in conversion.

The host may add more coupons that apply to the entire cart

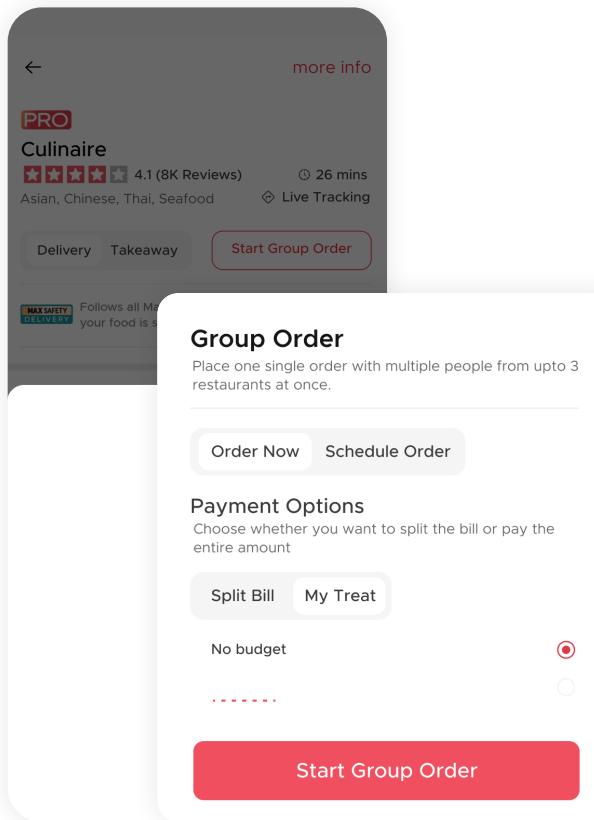
Any external coupons added will be applicable.

SCENARIO-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Scenario 2: The promotion dinner

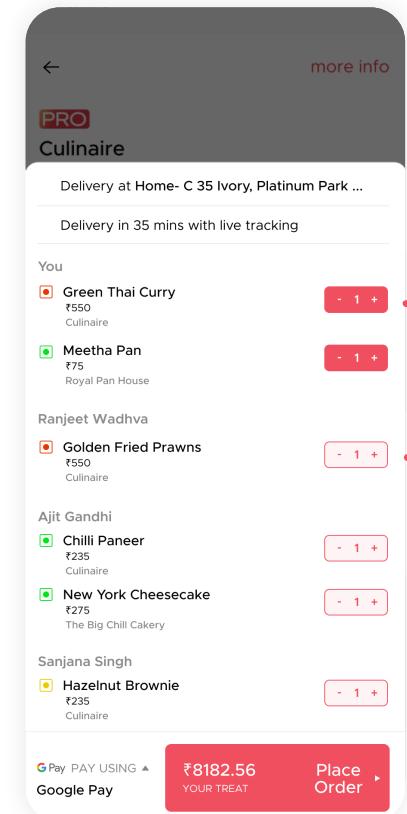
Multiple participants, multiple restaurants; one person pays for the entire order. The host of the party does not have a fixed budget.

Guiding principle: Non chaotic freedom



The host selects the “My treat” option and proceeds without any budget

Invitees may add any items they want without a budget cap.



The host can edit the entire order.

For reasons they deem valid, the host may add or remove items other people have added. All other participants have this privilege over their order only.

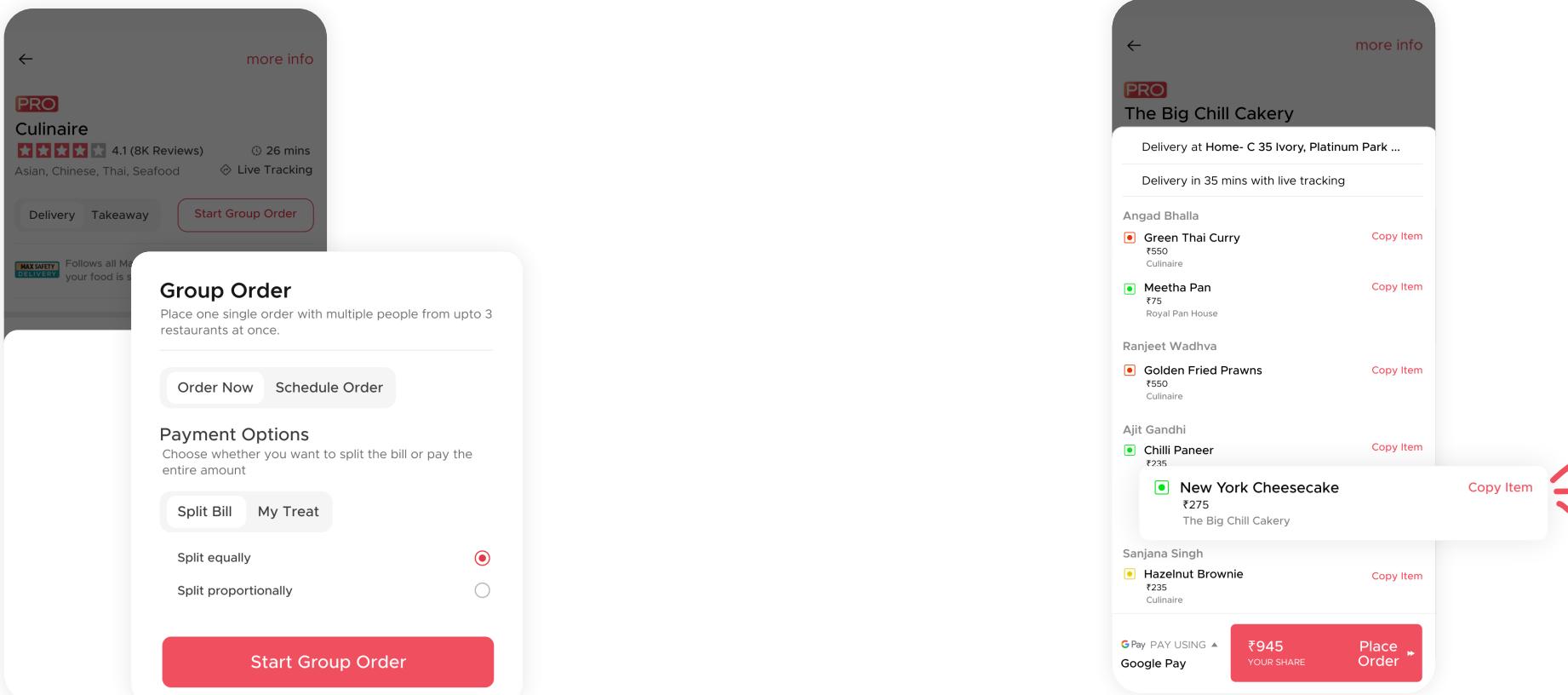
Clear demarcation between the host’s order and the participants’

SCENARIO-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Scenario 3: The work lunch

Multiple participants, multiple restaurants; the bill is equally split amongst all diners.

Guiding principle: Variety



The host taps on “Split Bill”, then selects the “Split Equally” option.

This prompts the billing gateway to split the entire bill equally amongst participants.

Participants may copy items from other people if they like something

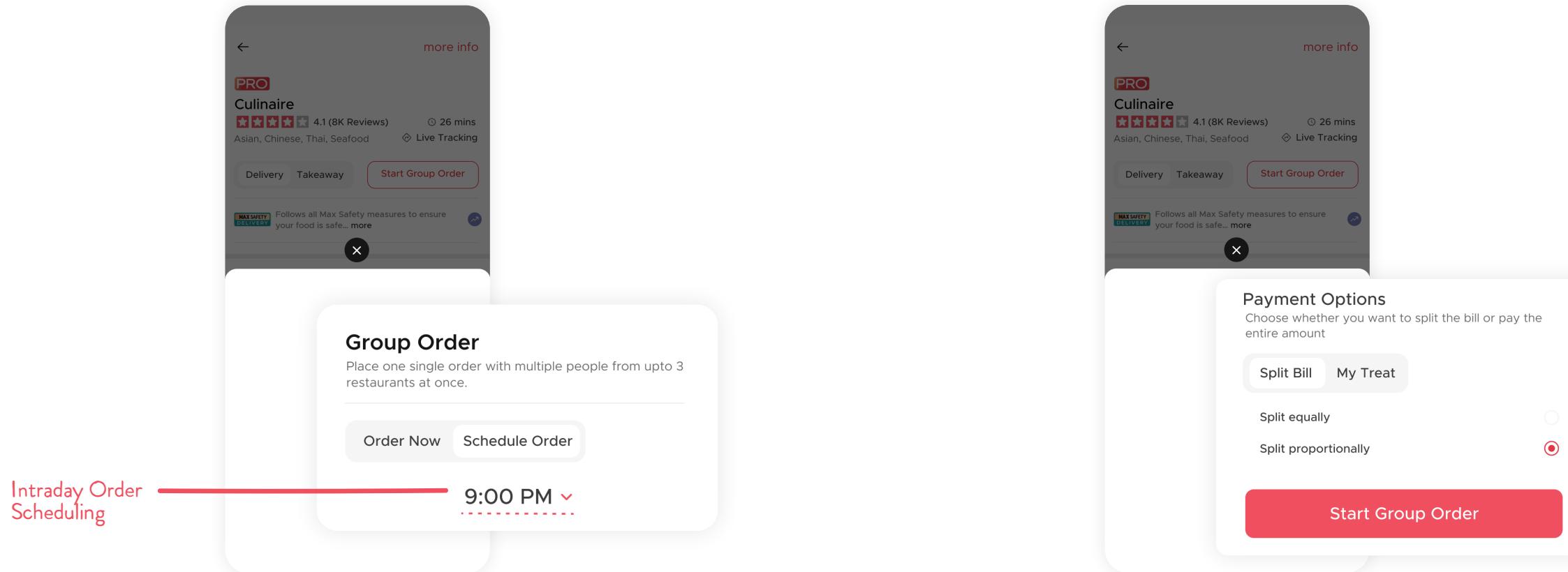
Someone may not want to have dessert initially, but seeing someone else order Toffee Cake might make them want to. The use of a common psychological phenomena to boost sales.

SCENARIO-SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS

Scenario 4: The college night-out

Multiple participants, multiple restaurants; the bill is proportionally split amongst all diners (pay for what you order)

Guiding principle: Economy, time management



The host taps on “Schedule Order”, then feeds in the delivery time

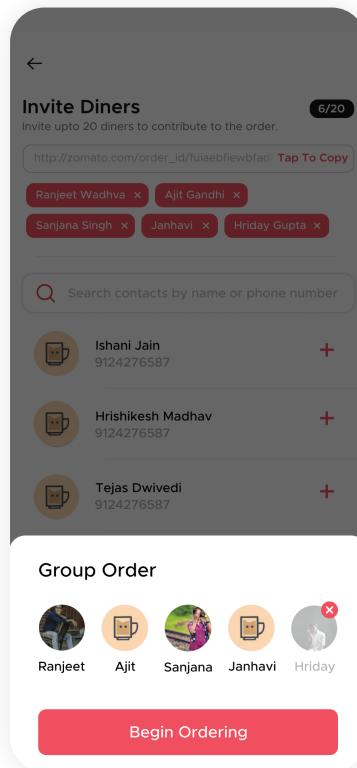
Minimises delivery attempts, time taken to decide, hence, time away from *ahem* “activities”
Only intraday scheduling seemed viable keeping current logistics, tech and restaurant partners in mind

The host taps on “Split Bill”, then selects the “Split Proportionally” option.

This prompts the billing gateway to charge each participant only for what they order.

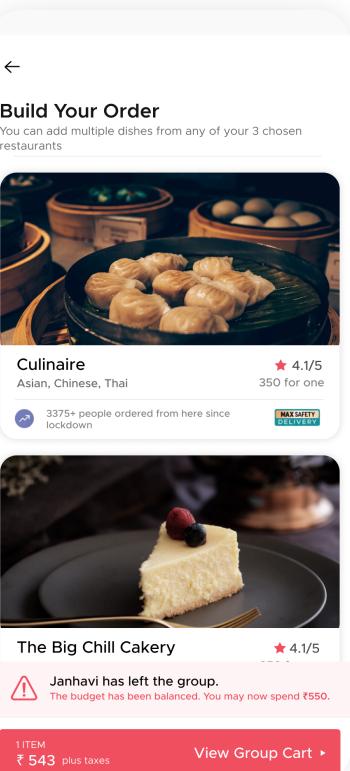
OTHER CASES

Invite Declined



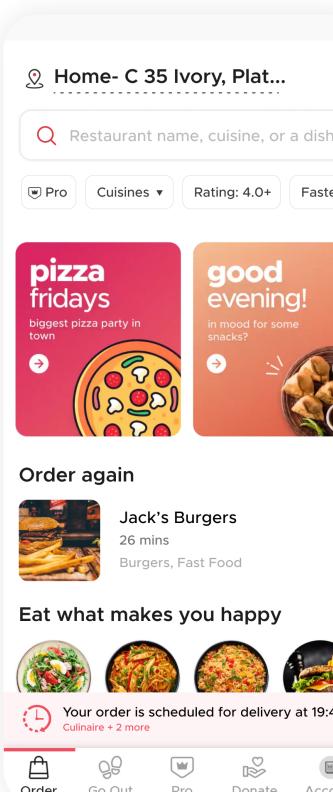
The person's avatar simply greys out at the assembly stage.

Person leaves group mid order



All invitees get a sticky alert, modified allowance, if the order is budgeted.

Edits to scheduled orders



Tap on sticky bar on the bottom to edit scheduled orders.

All changes must be made 60 minutes prior to the delivery time. Restaurant options cannot be changed.

A few edge cases-

Dropping one participant after the order has been placed

Only possible on scheduled orders. A fee may be levied.

Restaurant faces internal issues, has to cancel order

Issue refund

The order is way too large for one valet to deliver

Either the valet takes multiple trips (not very logical) or Zomato deploys another one for a premium

A participant may not want to share coupon

PROTOTYPES

Host's POV

While you can tap around on the initiating group order page to see the various options and interactions, the prototype is wired to proceed only when you select “Split Bill” and “Split Equally” under order now.

<https://www.figma.com/proto/uEieJLzoxAcO4LJLlhjszB/Zomato-Group?node-id=1%3A2&scaling=scale-down>

Participants' POV

<https://www.figma.com/proto/uEieJLzoxAcO4LJLlhjszB/Zomato-Group?node-id=62%3A204&scaling=scale-down>

THANK YOU!