Parts 1 & 2:

1. **From Phase 2**: Solving "Hidden costs not obvious upfront" improves growth
2. **From Phase 3**: Including seat selection in booking pricing to address one dimension of hidden costs to user
3. **Metrics**:
4. **Anticipate Pitfalls and Mitigations**

Assumption at risk	**Failure mode**	**Impact (H/M/L)**	**Likelihood (H/M/L)**	**Mitigation (practical)**	**Detection signal (metric)**	**Containment / rollback**
Seat pricing is wrong on Google Flights	User sees added costs at fina booking on airline website	H	M (untested at scale)	1.Fixing seat selection APIs	Purchase completion rate	1. "Safe mode": Call out seat costs as "anticipated" 2. Revert feature 3. A/B tests at launch 2. Slow rollout (by region, airline, etc.)
Booking with seat pricing proves too complicated to user	Harder for users to make a decision on what ticket to purchase	H	M (untested at scale)	1. A/B tests 2. Slow rollout (by region, airline, etc.)	Search completion rate, Time spent per search	1. "Safe mode": Call out seat costs as "anticipated" 2. Revert feature
Inclusion of ticket price is not obvious to user	User perceives Google Flights shows higher pricing	H	M (untested at scale)	1. Re-build feature to show base flight cost only and add "add-ons" at the end		

5.

Product Requirements Document

Title/Initiative: Include seat selection and pricing in Google Flights
Date & Version: Oct 18, 2025 v0.9
Product - Point of Contact (POC): Kartik Vasudev

Why? (Objective)

1. Why? (Objective)
    a. For business
        i. Reduce booking drop-offs at partner checkout caused by “hidden” seat or bag fees that inflate prices at the end.
        ii. Strengthen user trust and repeat intent for Google Flights as the most transparent flight comparison product.
        iii. Improve partner satisfaction by increasing qualified traffic that converts to completed bookings.
    b. For users
        i. Help travelers see true total trip cost upfront, including seat and baggage fees.
        ii. Eliminate frustration from “price surprises” at the final booking step.
        iii. Make it easier to compare apples-to-apples across airlines and fares.

How do we measure success?

Metric Type	Metric Name	Definition	Why it matters
Key Metric	**Search completion rate**	Number of people who booked a flight using	Underlying hypothesis is that users will move

		Google Flights (before and after)	away from competitor travel website and use Google Flights instead to book their trip
Secondary Metric	**Flights-browsed traffic**	Number of people who at least search for flights using Google Flights	A sustained uptick here will mean that users are being drawn to the seat selection feature
Secondary Metric	**Time spent per search**	Duration from search start to "Book trip" (in one or across multiple sessions)	A sustained uptick here will mean that the seat selection feature is saving users from discovering hidden seat costs later and needing to re-do their search
Guardrail Metric	**Purchase completion rate**	Number of users who click "Book trip" on Google Flights but don't complete purchase on airline website	A sustained drop here will mean that the seat selection feature isn't truly helping increase bookings via Google Flights

Who are the users:

Top 2 personas:

1. Frequent, mixed-use traveler - both domestic & intl, high decision time
2. Frequent personal traveler - international, high decision time

Persona 1: Frequent, Mixed-Use Traveler

- **Name:** Priya, 36
- **Profile:** Works as a consultant; flies often for work but also extends trips for leisure.
- **Travel Pattern:** 8–10 trips/year (domestic + international). Often combines work trips with personal stays.
- **Decision Style:** High decision time — spends days or weeks comparing prices, schedules, and routes to maximize both convenience and savings.
- **Pain Points:**
    - Overwhelmed by too many options across airlines.
    - Difficulty tracking price fluctuations over time.
    - Needs flexible ticket options because work travel changes last minute.

- **Goals:**
    - Find reliable, flexible flights that balance cost and convenience.
    - Optimize trip extensions for leisure while still aligning with work obligations.
    - Save time in comparing across multiple sites/tools.

Persona 2: Frequent Personal Traveler

- **Name:** Jason, 29
- **Profile:** Travel blogger. Lives away from family; travels regularly to visit friends/family, plus leisure trips with partner.
- **Travel Pattern:** 6–8 trips/year, almost entirely domestic.
- **Decision Style:** High decision time — spends days scanning for lowest fares and best departure times. Often sets price alerts.
- **Pain Points:**
    - Price swings create anxiety and FOMO ("Should I book now or wait?").
    - Hard to coordinate across multiple people (friends, family schedules).
    - Too much effort to track different airline policies and baggage fees.
    - Has built up a bunch of points and doesn't have an easy way to integrate that into searching for best combination of points + money
- **Goals:**
    - Book affordable flights without worrying they'll drop later.
    - Easily compare airlines and find convenient timings.
    - Get clarity and confidence in booking decisions.

Top Problems/Needs (via user research surveys and interviews):

1. User experiences added friction → Cannot complete bookings directly within Google flights → users must switch to airline or OTA sites → Google flights doesn't have the feature set to host secure payments, book airline tickets, etc (like in Expedia, etc.)
2. User doesn't truly get the best possible personalized deal → Not all dimensions that impact air tickets costs are accounted for in Google Flights → Loyalty programs not integrated → miles, credit card points, limited time offers, etc. are not supported
3. User doesn't get the true price of travel (although the price of just the flight tickets themselves may be accurate) → Multiple hidden costs (ex. → seat selection fees, cost of meals, wifi/entertainment fees, early check-in fee, etc.) → all these are not integrated into a single tool and shown at the time of booking
4. Repetitive data entry and lack of Personalization→ no cross-site traveler info autofill; no pre-suggest of user's common traveler filters (timings, non-stop, luggage needs) → all these are not integrated into a single tool and shown at the time of booking

Problem Prioritization

User Reported Weakness	Business Goal: Improve growth	
	Persona 1: Frequent, Mixed-Use Traveler	**Persona 2: Frequent Personal Traveler**
Cannot complete bookings directly → users must switch to airline or OTA sites, adding friction	**Frequency**: Always **Severity**: Low-Med (doesn't block workflow) **Effort**: High (have to build out a full booking engine)	**Frequency**: Always **Severity**: Low-Med (doesn't block workflow) **Effort**: High (have to build out a full booking engine)
Loyalty programs not integrated → miles, credit card points, limited time offers, etc. are not supported	**Frequency**: Always **Severity**: Med (doesn't impact business travel as much) **Effort**: High (highly custom systems for miles, CC points, offers, etc.)	**Frequency**: Always **Severity**: High (price sensitive customer segment; travels a lot - can save a lot) **Effort**: High (highly custom systems for miles, CC points, offers, etc.)
Hidden costs → baggage/seat fees not obvious upfront	**Frequency**: Sometimes (airline dependent) **Severity**: Med (doesn't impact business travel as much) **Effort**: Med (expand existing API with airlines to include details on seats and fees and use that information to provide total price up front)	**Frequency**: Sometimes (airline dependent) **Severity**: High (price sensitive customer segment; travels a lot - can save a lot) **Effort**: Med (expand existing API with airlines to include details on seats and fees and use that information to provide total price up front)
Repetitive data entry and lack of Personalization→ no cross-site traveler info autofill; no pre-suggest of user's common traveler filters (timings, non-stop, luggage needs)	**Frequency**: Always **Severity**: Low-Med (doesn't block workflow - needs manual entry) **Effort**: Med (support multiple travel types for same user)	**Frequency**: Always Severity: Med (doesn't block workflow - needs manual entry) **Effort**: Low

Solutions & Prioritization:

	Reach (1 = Few users, 2 = Many users, 3 = Most users)	**Impact** (Based on $ amount)	**Confidence** (1 = lots of assumptions; 2 = predictable; 3 = deterministic)	**Effort**	**Final Score**
Include seat selection in booking pricing	3	2	3	1 (info exists in airline website already; one-time port over)	18
Include cost of early check-ins	2	1	3	1 (info exists in airline website already; one-time port over)	6
Include cost of carry-ons	3	1	3	2 (policies change; special offers, etc.)	4.5
Include cost of	1	1	2	1	1

in-flight meals					
Include cost of in-flight Wifi, entertainment	2	1	2	1	4
Include cost of dynamic pricing from cookies	3	3	3	3 (complex search to find best price)	9
Include cost of refund/change processing fees	1	2	1	3 (complex search to find right policy that applies; docs may not be available)	0.7
Exclude cost of "auto-selection" of travel insurance	1	3	3	1 (should be a quick UI fix)	9
Include cost of other service charges, convenience fees charged	1	2	1	3 (complex search to find right policy that applies; docs may not be available)	0.7

Product flow (Details of the feature/product):

Customer Journey

1. User searches for flights on Google Flights.
2. Search results show an *"Includes seat & bag fees"* badge (if data available).
3. User expands "Price breakdown" to view base fare, taxes, seat fee, checked and carry-on costs.
4. On the Summary Page, total per passenger is displayed clearly before redirecting to partner site.
5. User proceeds to booking with clear expectation of total cost.

Wireframing - Purpose/Central Themes

1. Show the total trip cost upfront with clear breakdowns
2. Predict additional fees where applicable and share with user
3. Build trust with users by comparing with other websites

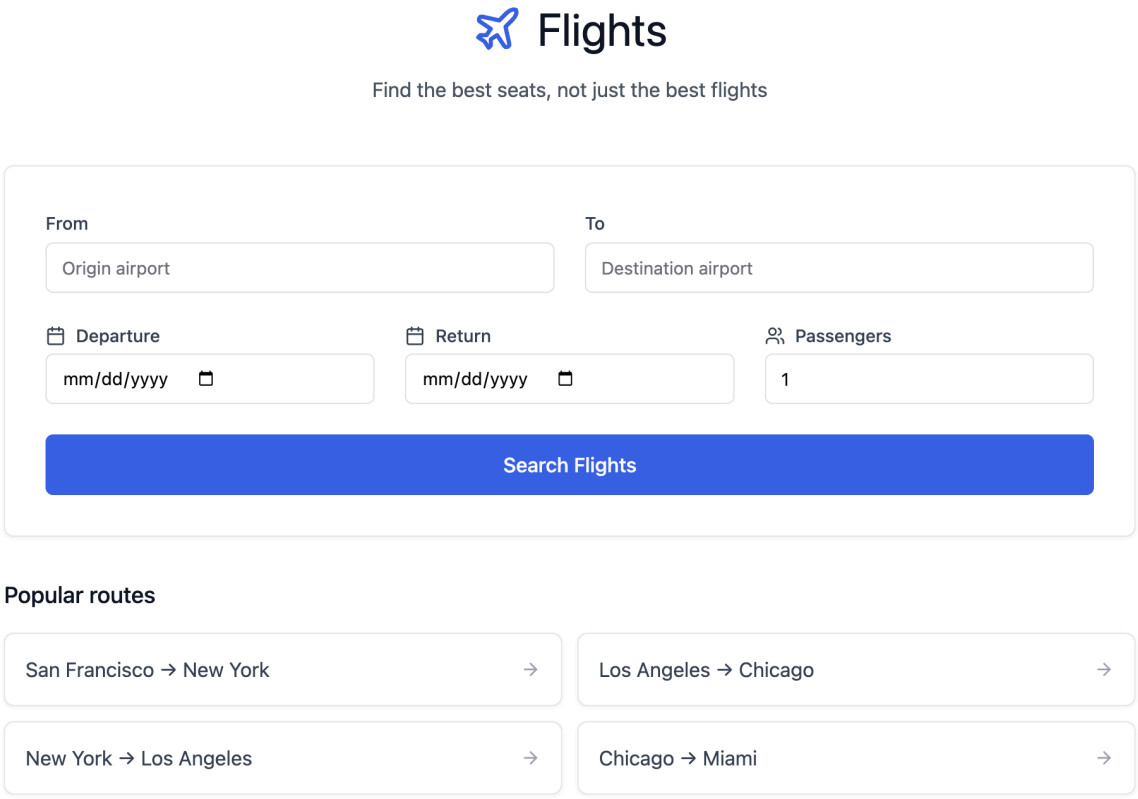
User flow delta

Before	After
User lands on landing page	No change
User enters from, to, dates, travel class, number of travelers → Search	No change
Each leg's flight options show up, best flights first	1. "Best flights" now include seat selection fares 2. Breakdown of total price is available 3. The difference is obvious to user
Summary page → transfer to booking site	1. Clear price breakdown and options (incl where some prices are estimated) 2. 1<> transfer of info to the booking site

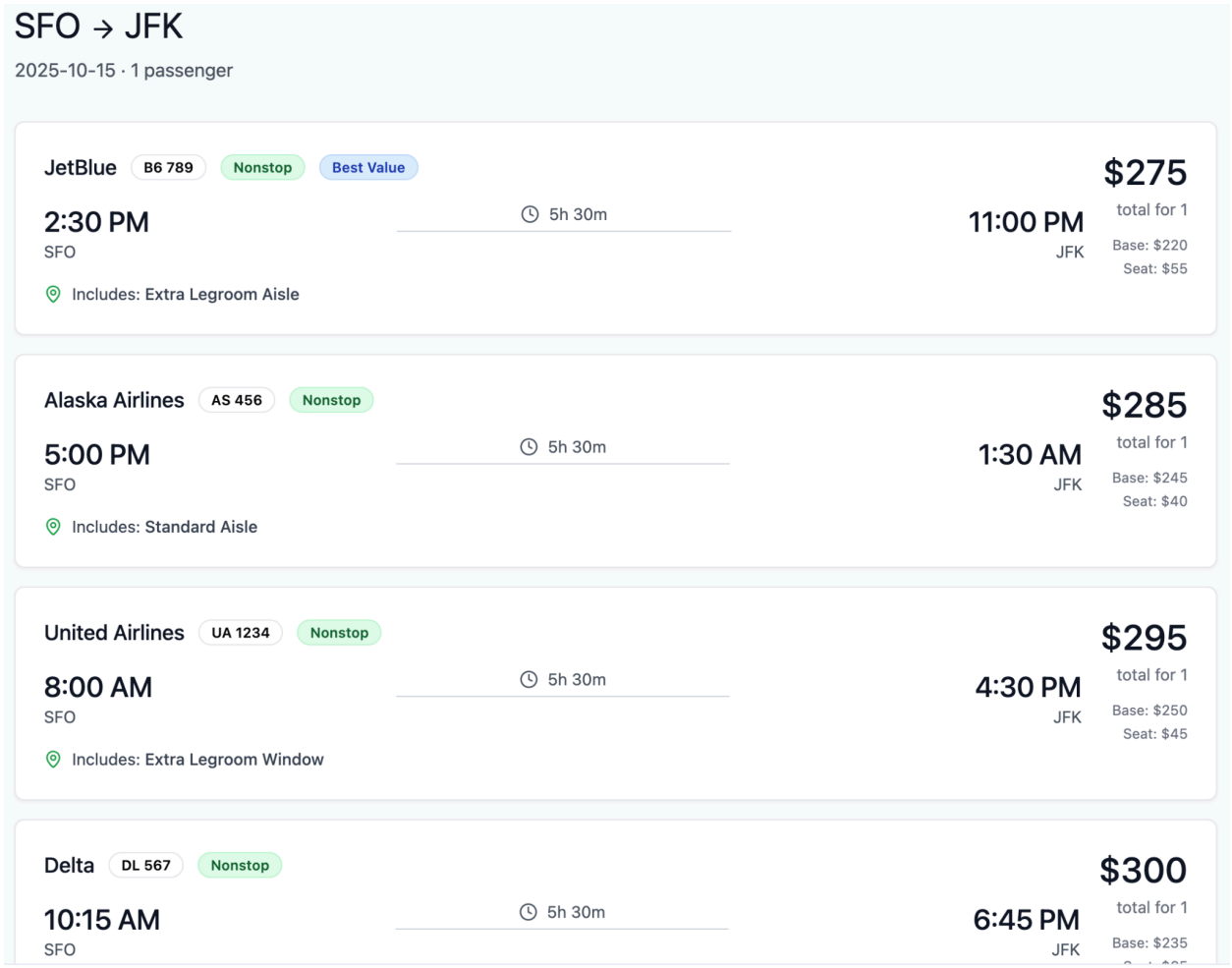
Wireframes

Tool used: Base44
Link to build: https://seat-saver-flights-4a3c1f4f.base44.app

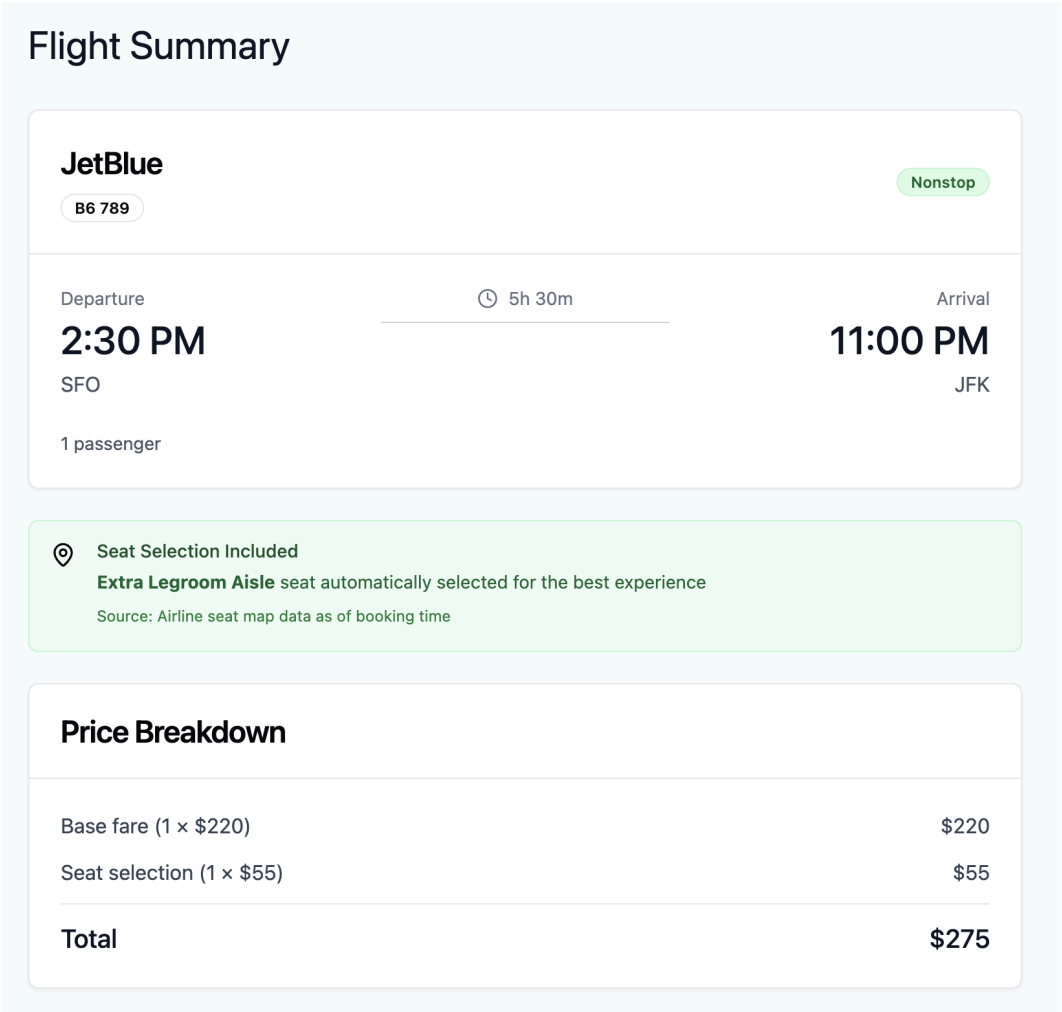
1. Landing page



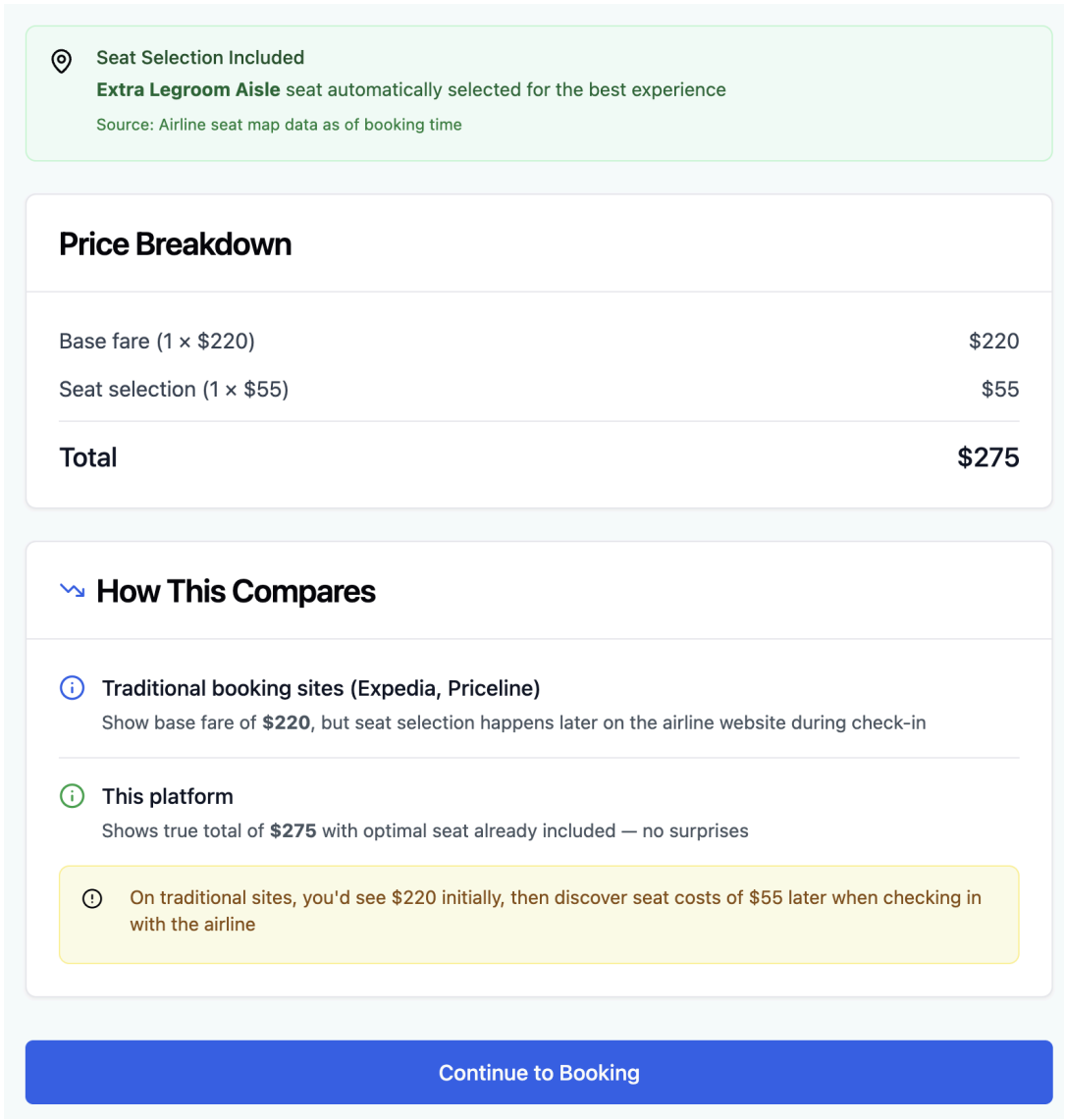
2. Search returns



3. Summary page reinforcing pricing breakdown



4. Summary page building trust by comparing pricing with other websites



Tentative Timelines:

Task	Date
Leadership approval	30/11/2025
Design ready	20/12/2026
Prototype testing	27/1/2026
Development starts	2/1/2026

Beta Launch 3/1/2026

Dependencies:

1. Open Questions
    a. Which partners will share accurate fee data (vs estimated)?
    b. Will mobile & desktop rollouts be simultaneous or staggered?
    c. A/B test plans
    d. GTM strategy
2. Infrastructure requirements
    a. Ancillary Fee Service API for seat/bag fee lookup
3. Budget approvals
    a. UX research + data licensing for airline fee tables (~$Xk)
4. Partner Support
    a. Airline & OTA API access to fee tables
    b. Legal approval for displaying “estimated” labels