

MapsAlive® Tutorial

Interactive Restaurant Menu

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What this Tutorial Demonstrates

This tutorial shows you how to create an interactive restaurant menu and demonstrates the following MapsAlive features:

- Using a restaurant menu as a map image.
- Using markers and marker styles to highlight menu entrées.
- Importing food photos from a zip file.
- Displaying instructions to help users.
- Integrating an interactive restaurant menu with your web site.

Level of Skill Required

This tutorial is appropriate for beginner to advanced users.

Resources

The following resources are available on the web as part of this tutorial.

<http://samples.mapsalive.com/23754> - a working version of the interactive menu that we'll be creating in this tutorial. Click the link or type it into the address bar of your browser to see the menu in action.

<http://docs.mapsalive.com/Tutorials/InteractiveRestaurantMenu/BreakfastMenu.jpg> - a jpg file containing the breakfast menu image used in this tutorial.

<http://docs.mapsalive.com/Tutorials/InteractiveRestaurantMenu/FoodPhotos.zip> - a zip file containing the food photos used in this tutorial. *The food photos provided are for your personal use only.*

http://docs.mapsalive.com/Tutorials/InteractiveRestaurantMenu/MapsAliveArchive_InteractiveRestaurantMenu.zip – an archived version of the interactive menu created in this tutorial. You can import the file directly into your MapsAlive account in addition to or instead of following the tutorial. The archived tour also contains lunch and dinner menus in addition to the breakfast menu created in this tutorial.

Introduction

This tutorial explains how to create the interactive restaurant menu shown in the screenshot below. This sample lets you mouse over the each menu item name on the left to see its photo on the right. This is just one of many possible layouts and behaviors. For example, you could have the photo pop up on top of the menu instead of appearing next to it. To see many other variations of interactive restaurant menus, visit <http://www.mapsalive.com/LearningCenter/RestaurantMenus.aspx>.



To try a working version of the menu shown above, visit <http://samples.mapsalive.com/23754>.

Overview of the steps you will perform in this tutorial

Below are the steps necessary to create the interactive restaurant menu shown above. Each step is explained in the sections that follow.

1. Download the menu image and photo files used in this tutorial.
2. Create a new MapsAlive tour and upload an image of the menu (the item names and prices).
3. Create a gold and red rectangular hotspot marker for the menu items.
4. Import a zip file containing food photos of the menu items.
5. Place a hotspot on the menu for each food item.
6. Type in a description of each menu item.

If you are in hurry, just follow the numbered steps in the sections below. You'll be done in about 10 minutes. You can go back and read the supplementary text later to learn more.

Step 1 – Download the Image Files for this Tutorial

We have provided the menu and food images you need to create the interactive menu shown on the previous page. You can of course use your own images if you like. Here's what you'll need:

- One breakfast menu image that lists the food items and prices.
- One zip file containing nine images, one for each of the nine items on the menu.

When you are creating a real menu for your restaurant and you don't have a photo for an entrée, you can still display descriptive information about it. That way people will still learn something about every item they mouse over or touch. You might do this for daily specials that are always changing or for side dishes that you didn't take pictures of.

Menu image

The menu image with item names and prices is located here:

<http://docs.mapsalive.com/Tutorials/InteractiveRestaurantMenu/BreakfastMenu.jpg>

When you go to the link above, the menu image will appear in your browser. You'll need to right click it and save it to your computer.

Food images

The food images are located here:

<http://docs.mapsalive.com/Tutorials/InteractiveRestaurantMenu/FoodPhotos.zip>

When you go to the link above you will be prompted to download the zip file to your computer. Save it in the same location as the menu image, but don't unzip it – MapsAlive will unzip it for you when you import it into your tour later in this tutorial. *The food photos provided are for your personal use only.*

Step 2 – Create the Tour and Upload the Menu Image

Follow the instructions below to create a tour with one map. In this tour, the map is an image of the breakfast menu. Later you could add a second map for the lunch menu and a third for the dinner menu.

1. Go to the MapsAlive Tour Builder.
2. Choose **New > Tour** in the menu.
3. On the Create New Tour screen click **Continue**.
4. On the New Tour Setup screen:
 - a. Type "Interactive Menu" as the **Tour Name**.
 - b. Choose **Large** for the tour size.
 - c. Choose **Embedded in another web page** for how people view the tour.
 - d. Choose **White** for the Color Scheme.
 - e. Click **Continue to Map Setup**.

5. On the New Map Setup screen:
 - a. Type "Breakfast" for the **Map Name**.
 - b. Choose **Tiled** for how the content will appear.
 - c. Click **Continue**.
6. On the Choose Map Image screen:
 - a. Choose **My map is in a file on my computer**.
 - b. Click the **Browse** (on a Mac its Choose File) button.
 - c. Browse for the **BreakfastMenu.jpg** image you saved in Step 1.
 - d. Click the **Load** button to load the image into the tour as its map.
7. Choose **Layout > Advanced Tour Layout** in the menu.
8. On the Advanced Tour Layout screen set the **Tour Size** option dropdowns to:
 - a. **Exact Tour Width** 910px.
 - b. **Exact Tour Height** 588px.
9. Choose **Map > Advanced Map Options** in the menu.
 - a. Uncheck the box labeled **Show Hotspot Title**.

Before we move on to step 3, let's talk for a minute about what we just did.

After creating the tour and uploading the menu image to use as the map, we set the exact dimensions of the tour. By default, MapsAlive will take its best guess at good dimensions based on the tour size option chosen on the New Tour Setup screen (in this case we chose Large), and it will also take into consideration the size of the menu image (BreakfastMenu.jpg image is 370 x 588 pixels). That usually gives you a good starting place, but it's often the case that you need the menu to have exact dimensions so that it will fit in a specific location in a web page. In this case we pretended that our web designer told us that we needed to fill a rectangular area of the web page having dimensions 910 x 588 pixels. So that's what we set the tour size to.

The last thing we did was to uncheck the option to show hotspot titles when you mouse over a hotspot. We could have left that on, but in the sample we only show descriptions of the food items beneath the photo so we turned the title off. You can turn it back on if you'd like to see what the tour looks like with titles. We'll be adding the descriptive text for the food items in step 6 of this tutorial.

Step 3 – Create a Gold and Red Rectangular Hotspot Marker

The next thing we are going to do is create the marker that will be used for the menu item hotspots. Note that we'll only create one marker, but we'll use it for all nine menu items.

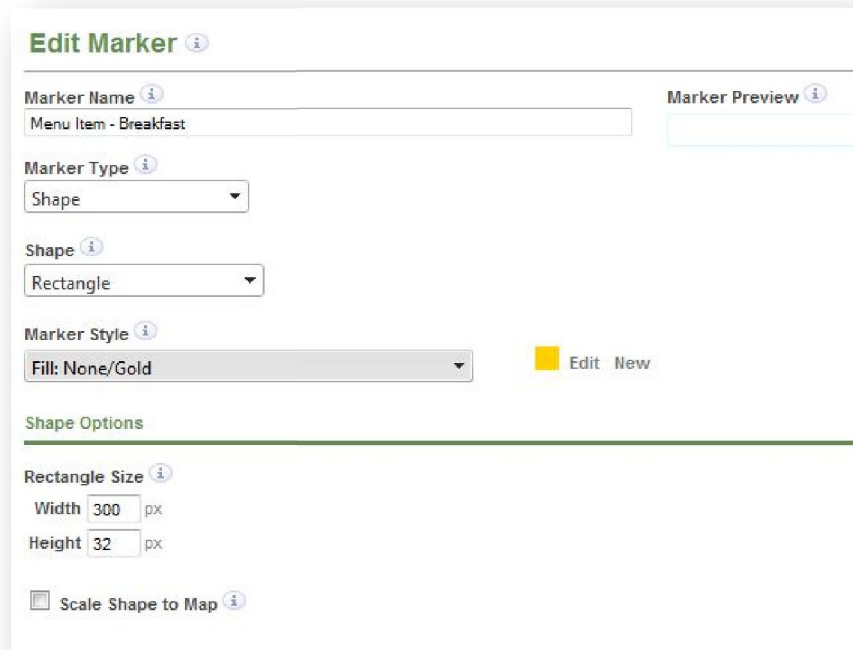
Create a new marker

Follow the instructions below to create a marker that's about the size of our menu items.

1. Choose **New > Resource > Marker** in the menu.
2. Type "Menu Item - Breakfast" as the **Marker Name**.

3. Set the **Marker Type** dropdown to **Shape**.
4. Set the **Shape** dropdown to **Rectangle**.
5. Skip past the **Marker Style** dropdown for now.
6. Set the **Rectangle Size** to have a **Width** of 300px and a **Height** of 32px.

The screen shot below shows what the Edit Marker screen should look like for the marker you just created (except for the Marker Style selection which we'll work on next).



Create a new marker style and assign it to the marker

We now have a 300 x 32 pixel rectangular marker that is the size we want for our menu, but we need a Marker Style to get the gold and red appearance we want. Since MapsAlive does not come with a style like that, we'll have to create our own. The quickest and easiest way to do that is to click the **New** link that appears to the right of the Marker Style dropdown. This creates both a new marker style and assigns it to our breakfast menu item marker.

1. Click **New** to the right of the **Marker Style** dropdown as shown on the right.
2. Click **OK** on the confirmation dialog.
3. On the Edit Marker Style screen, type "Menu Item - Breakfast" as the **Marker Style Name**.
4. Set the Line Thickness to 3px.
5. In the Normal Appearance section, set both opacity sliders to 0% (invisible).
6. In the Selected Appearance section, set both opacity sliders to 100% (opaque).



7. Type #ffcc00 as the **Selected Fill Color** (gold).
8. Type #aa0000 as the **Selected Line Color** (dark red).
9. Type "blend" (without the quotes) in the **Selected Effects** text box.
10. Choose **Recent > Marker: Menu Item - Breakfast** in the menu to get back to the marker.

The screen shot below shows what the Edit Marker Style screen should look like for the marker style you just created. It doesn't matter what colors you have for the Normal Appearance since their opacity is set to zero which means invisible.

Edit Marker Style ⓘ

Marker Style Name ⓘ [Usage](#)
Menu Item - Breakfast

Options

Line Thickness ⓘ
◀ ▶ 3 px

Normal Appearance

The Normal Appearance is what shows when a marker is not selected and the mouse is not over it.

Normal Fill Color ⓘ #ffffff

Normal Fill Color Opacity ⓘ ◀ ▶ 0%

Normal Line Color ⓘ #ffffff

Normal Line Color Opacity ⓘ ◀ ▶ 0%

Normal Effects ⓘ

Selected Appearance

The Selected Appearance is what shows when a marker is selected or the mouse is over it.

Selected Fill Color ⓘ #ffcc00

Selected Fill Color Opacity ⓘ ◀ ▶ 100%

Selected Line Color ⓘ #aa0000

Selected Line Color Opacity ⓘ ◀ ▶ 100%

Selected Effects ⓘ
blend

Preview ⓘ

Preview the new marker

If you followed the exact steps above, you should be back on the Edit Marker screen and the Marker Style dropdown should be set to the *Menu Item - Breakfast* style that you just created.

If you look under the words Marker Preview in the upper right of the Edit Marker screen, you should see a light blue rectangle outline and then if you mouse onto it, it will change to gold with a red border as shown on the right. If you don't get that result, double check your settings on this screen and on the Edit Marker Style screen (you can get there by clicking Edit to the right of the Marker Style dropdown).



What the blend effect does

You can of course play with any of the settings to change the marker's size and appearance, but make sure that you keep "blend" as the Selected Effects for the marker style's Selected



Appearance. Blend allows the gold color of the marker to blend with the black-on-white letters of the menu items so that the rectangle turns gold when moused over, but the words still show through. Without blend, the rectangle would be solid gold because we set its opacity to 100%. As an alternative to blend, you could change the Selected Fill Color opacity to say 50% to make the rectangle semi-transparent. That would allow the menu item text to show through, but the lettering might appear a little bit muddy instead of solid black like you get when blend is used with 100% opacity.

When you might need to create more markers

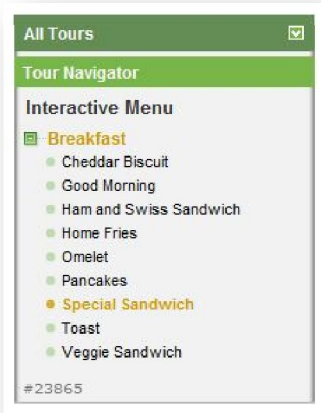
We put the word "breakfast" in the marker name to distinguish it from a different marker that we might use for a lunch or dinner menu. It's often the case that the entrée names on one menu are narrower, or wider, or taller, or shorter, than on another menu and so sometimes we need more than one marker. This can be true even on the same menu where some menu items are just one sentence tall and others are two or three sentences tall. You can create as many sizes of markers as you need so that you have one that's the right width and height for any item on any menu. It helps to pick names that will make it easy for you to know which marker to use. For instance you might have markers named "Menu Item – Breakfast" as well as "Menu Item – Lunch Short" and "Menu Item – Lunch Tall" if some of your lunch items are taller than others. By prefixing each name with "Menu Item" they will all sort together in the marker library. These are suggestions, not rules, to make it easier to manage markers.

Step 4 – Import a Zip File Containing Photos of the Menu Items

At this stage we have a correctly sized tour with a menu and an entrée marker, but no food photos. We are going to import the photos from a zip file and MapsAlive will automatically create a hotspot for each one. Note that you can also create hotspots one at a time and upload a photo for each one, but importing a zip file is a lot faster – just zip up your photos and bring them into MapsAlive in one operation.

1. Choose **Tour > Import > Photos from Zip** in the menu.
2. Choose "Menu Item - Breakfast" from the **Marker** dropdown.

3. Click the **Browse** button (on a Mac its Choose File).
4. Browse for the **FoodPhotos.zip** file you saved onto your computer in Step 1.
5. Click the **Import** button to upload and unzip the food photos.



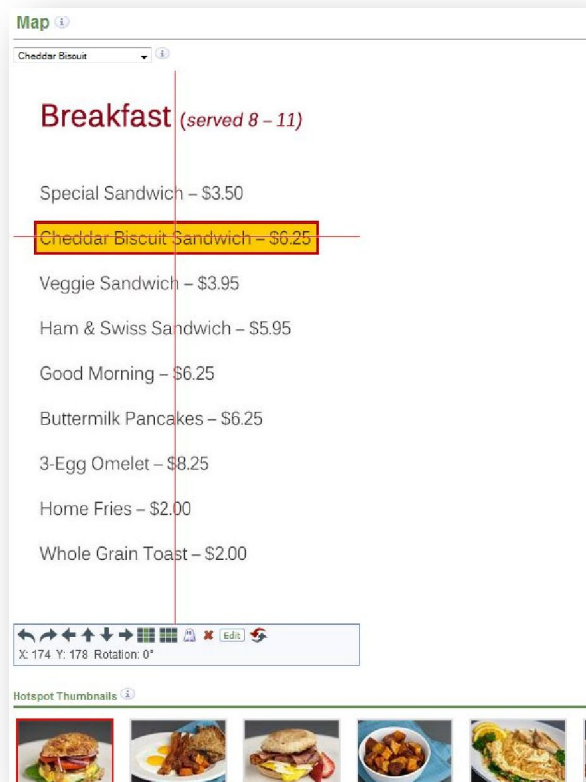
You should now see a list of nine food items in the Tour Navigator on the left side of the Tour Builder as shown at left. During the import MapsAlive created a new hotspot for each photo and gave it the photo's file name as the hotspot title. It also assigned the "Menu Item - Breakfast" marker to each hotspot.

The only thing it couldn't do was place the hotspots on the map because it didn't know where they go. You'll do that yourself in the next step.

Step 5 – Place Hotspot Markers on the Menu for Each Food Item

In this step the interactive menu really comes together and in a few minutes you'll be able to try using it. You are going to select each hotspot one at a time and drag its marker to its place on the menu.

1. Choose **Map > Go to Map** in the menu.
2. Select a hotspot from the dropdown that appears above the menu.
Or click a hotspot thumbnail image below the menu.
In either case, the rectangle marker for the hotspot will drop down onto the center of the menu.
3. Drag the marker to position it over its menu item (e.g. drag the Cheddar Biscuit Sandwich marker over the Cheddar Biscuit Sandwich menu item).
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 for each hotspot.
5. When you are done, click **Tour Preview** at the top of the screen to try out the menu.



The screen shot above shows what the Map screen looks like after selecting the Cheddar Biscuit hotspot and dragging its marker into position. Notice the dropdown list at the top of the screen that lets you select hotspots, and the thumbnails at the bottom that you can click on – whichever you prefer.

If you find that it was a little difficult to get your markers to line up perfectly by dragging them, don't worry. We provide some tips and techniques for doing that on page 11 of this tutorial.

Step 6 – Type in a description of each menu item

When you previewed your tour and moved your mouse over a menu item you saw a photo of that item, but no text. In this last step we'll add descriptive text below the photo.

Follow these steps to add descriptive text for the hotspots.

1. Click **Return to Tour Builder** on the Tour Preview screen.
2. Click a hotspot name in the **Tour Navigator** e.g. Cheddar Biscuit. That should take you to the Edit Hotspot Content screen. If you are not on that screen, choose **Hotspot > Edit Hotspot Content** in the menu.
3. Type a description for the hotspot in the **Text** area near the bottom of the screen. For example type *"One egg, Cabot cheddar, bacon or sausage, with spinach, tomato, red onion and chipotle mayo served on a homemade cheddar biscuit. Served with home fries or toast."*
4. Repeat steps 1 and 2 for each hotspot.
5. Click Tour Preview to see the completed interactive menu.

Changing the appearance of the descriptive text

If you want to change the appearance of the hotspot text, you can use the various controls in the text editor to set the font, font size, and color. If you want to set the same text appearance for all of your hotspots without having to use the editor controls for each one, you can add some CSS to your tour, but you'll need the Pro Plan and need to be familiar with CSS. To do this, choose **Tour > Custom HTML** from the menu and enter text similar to that shown below into the CSS text area on the Custom HTML screen:

```
#maHotspotText
{
  color:green;
  font-style:italic;
}
```

Using the CSS shown above, the hotspot descriptive text would appear in green italics. If you decided later to change the color to blue, you could simply edit the CSS and republish your tour to make all your hotspot text change color.

To learn more about overriding MapsAlive styles see the *MapsAlive User Guide for the JavaScript API*.

Displaying Instructions for the Viewer

You can provide instructions that tell the user how to use your interactive menu. These instructions automatically display when the menu first loads. To enable instructions:

1. Choose **Map > Advanced Map Options** in the menu.
2. Check **Show Instructions When Map Loads**.
3. This displays several fields that let you specify the width of the instructions box, the color of the text and the color of the background.
4. Type a **Title** for the instructions message box.
5. In the **Text** box, type specific instructions that tell viewers to move their mouse over markers and how to navigate your interactive menu.

You can specify different instructions for mobile devices by separating your text with three hash (#) marks like this:

```
Move your mouse over the menu items to see photos.###Touch the  
menu items to see photos.
```

The text before the ### marks will display when your interactive menu is viewed on a PC or Mac browser. The text after the ### marks will display when your interactive menu is viewed on a touchable mobile device like an iPad or an iPhone.

Integrating an Interactive Restaurant Menu with Your Web Site

You can use your interactive restaurant menu in several different ways, even if you don't have a web site at all. This flexibility lets you choose the method that makes sense for you.

Use your interactive restaurant menu as a standalone web page

Every tour created with MapsAlive has a unique URL and is actually a mini web site. So, if you don't have a web site at all you can use the URL for your interactive restaurant menu as your web site address. List this URL in advertising materials or restaurant directories.

Add a link on your existing web site to your interactive restaurant menu

Linking is the simplest way to make your interactive restaurant menu accessible from your web site. When a user clicks the link, your menu appears in the current browser window or a new window. This option minimizes any changes you need to make to your web site and adding a link is usually easy to do from most content management or blog tools.

Embed your interactive restaurant menu in a web page on your site

The most seamless way to present your interactive restaurant menu is to embed it within a web page on your site. That way a user sees your web page content and the interactive menu together. When you publish your tour, MapsAlive gives you the HTML code you need to copy and paste into your web page.

This is usually pretty straightforward, but you do need a web page with a specific area dedicated to displaying the interactive menu.

To learn more about integrating MapsAlive tours with web pages, see the *MapsAlive User Guide for Integrating Interactive Maps*.

Tips and Techniques for Working with Markers on the Map Screen

Here are some tips for working with your menu and its hotspots on the Map screen. Below the map image is a toolbar of icons as shown below. They let you fine tune the placement of your markers.



Once you master the techniques described below, you should find that you can easily, quickly, and accurately place markers onto any map.

Display the selected appearance for all markers

The normal appearance of the markers we created in this tutorial is invisible because we set the normal opacity to 0%. We did that so that the markers don't show on the menu until you move your mouse over an entrée name. However, that makes them invisible on the map screen too which makes it hard to see how they are positioned. We can get around that problem by having the map screen display the selected appearance instead of the normal appearance. Just click the icon on the far right of the toolbar that looks like two arrows, one gray and one red. This will cause the markers that are not selected to display with their selected appearance and the markers that are selected to display with their normal appearance. Click the icon again to restore the normal appearance.

Selecting multiple markers on the map or none at all

To select multiple markers, Ctrl-click (Command-click on Mac) each one you want to select. To deselect all markers, Ctrl-click (Command-click on Mac) on the menu in a location where there is no marker. When multiple markers are selected, you can drag them as a group and you can align them vertically or horizontally as explained next.

Aligning markers horizontally or vertically

When you place your markers on the map they may not be perfectly aligned in a row or column. You can select some or all the markers together and align them horizontally or vertically. To align the selected markers in a column, click the icon in the toolbar that looks like a light green column between two dark green columns. This will align all the selected markers to the same horizontal position as the last marker that was selected. To align the selected markers in a row, click the icon in the toolbar that looks like a light green row between two dark green rows. This will align all the selected markers to the same vertical position as the last marker that was selected.

Nudging or rotating the position of a marker

To fine tune the position of a marker one pixel at a time, use the nudge arrow icons (left, up, down, and right) in the toolbar. You can rotate a marker in 5 degree increments using the first two curved-arrow icons in the toolbar. To rotate in 1 degree increments, hold down the Ctrl key (Command on Mac) while clicking the curved-arrow icons.

Moving a marker in one direction

If you want to move a marker in one direction (up/down or left/right) without allowing it to shift in the other direction you can select the marker, grab its horizontal or its vertical crosshair *outside* of the marker rectangle and drag in one direction.

Identifying markers that have not been placed on the map yet

If you see a red dot below the thumbnail image for a hotspot, it means that the hotspot has not been placed on the map yet. This makes it easy to identify any markers that you haven't gotten to yet.

Changing the Look and Behavior of an Interactive Menu

This tutorial has taken you through the steps of creating an interactive menu that displays a food photo in a fixed location to the right of the menu image. You could modify this tour to display the menu on the right and the photo on the left, change the size of the photo area or make the photo pop up when you mouse over the menu item and then disappear when you mouse off the item. There are lots of possibilities.

To learn how to make these kinds of changes to your interactive menu, see the *MapsAlive User Guide for Tour Layout*. It focuses on interactive maps in general, but everything in that user guide is also applicable to interactive menus.

To see other examples of interactive menus to help you get an idea of what is possible and to give you ideas for your own web site, see <http://www.mapsalive.com/LearningCenter/RestaurantMenus.aspx>.

We hope you found this tutorial helpful. If you have questions, or if you found anything that was confusing or not clear enough, please let us know so that we can improve it for the next reader.