

Seasons Recipe App, Case Study

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Project overview



The product:

This is a recipe planning app designed for food truck cooks and chefs. Usability and accessibility for home cooks of varied skill levels or backgrounds was taken into consideration during the design process.



Project duration:

April 2021- December 2022



Project overview



The problem:

Professional and home cooks alike, are frustrated with food waste. Additionally, lack of tracking on-hand ingredients, and convenient access to information about in ingredients leads to increased food expenses and wasted time.



The goal:

This recipe planning app will let food truck culinary staff, as well as home cooks, create and follow recipes using seasonal, local, and on-hand ingredients for recipes.

Project overview



My role:

Sole UX Design, Sole UX Research, Sole Graphic Artist



Responsibilities:

user research, empathy mapping, wireframing, prototyping, user interviews, competitive audits, logo design

Understanding the user

- User research
- Personas
- Problem statements
- User journey maps

User research: summary



I interviewed 5 individuals that all plan and prepare meals on a regular basis every week. Open ended questions were asked that involved finding out what individuals did for a process when planning meals. Participants were also asked to describe frustrations and challenges associated with cooking and planning. My assumption was that some people may forget what ingredients they had on hand, however, it was surprising to find that every person interviewed expressed the same frustration of having double purchased items they already had available.

User research: pain points

1

Waste of Food

Professional and home cooks want to reduce food waste by knowing what is on-hand.

2

Seasonal Items

Users want to be able to find out what ingredients are in season, without needing to search online.

3

Waste of Time

Professional and home cooks get frustrated when they spend time buying ingredients they already have.

4

Easy Access

Users want a quick way to review their favorite recipes.

Persona: Antonio

Problem statement:

Antonio is a food truck owner and chef who needs to create recipes that set new trends with in season ingredients, and using what's on hand so he can avoid food waste and make dishes that sell.



Antonio

Age: 44

Education: Associate Degree

Hometown: Las Vegas

Family: Married, 1 Kid

Occupation: Food Truck Owner

“Great food is never out of season”!

Goals

- Wants to cook seasonally because it saves money
- Easily find personal recipes that have been successful

Frustrations

- Hates when accidentally buying an ingredient he already has.
- Not knowing what ingredients are in season
- Using multiple apps to get info is clumsy.

Antonio is a food truck owner in the Philadelphia area, and needs to plan a menu for an upcoming arts festival. He wants to feature seasonal ingredients that are healthy alternative to other festival options while drawing on signature dishes in his repertoire. It's a big frustration for him to order items he already has in his inventory and can be a waste of money if it not a regularly used item.

User journey map

Based on the goals of the Persona “Antonio”, my goal for this app is to provide as many in app options as possible to provide a one stop location.

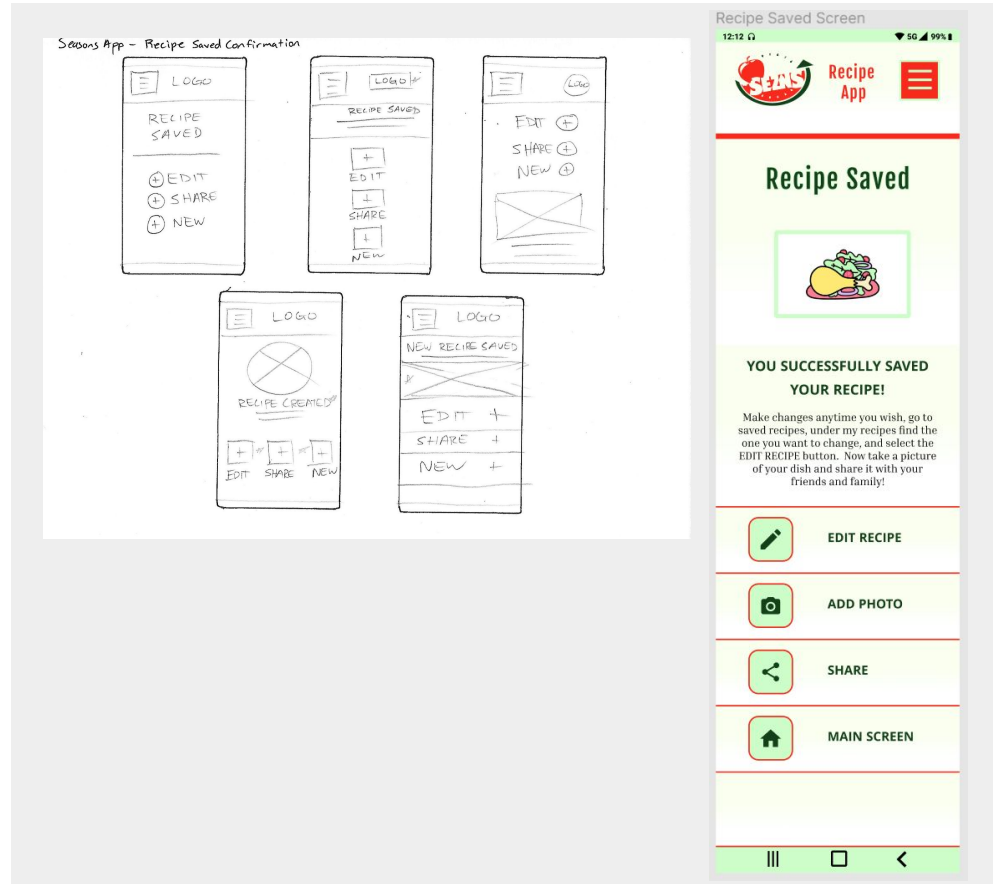
Persona: Antonio

Goal: Plan out recipes using seasonal ingredients to be served at a food truck parked at a big festival.

ACTION	Develop Menu	Place online orders for ingredients	Acquire ingredients	Test Recipes	Serve Food to Customers	Review Recipe Popularity
TASK LIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Find out what ingredients are in season. B. Remember past successful recipes C. Reference which ingredients are on hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Place online orders for delivery. B. Place online orders for pickup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Wait for delivery of online orders B. Pick up online orders. C. Go to stores and local farmers markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Try out new seasonal recipes B. Record steps while cooking new recipes C. Establish which recipes will be recreated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Prep ingredients to have readily available for orders B. Cook food as orders are placed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Evaluate amount of unused perishable ingredients B. Review quantities of ingredients that were needed C. Look at total sales
FEELING ADJECTIVE	Frustrated by searching online for seasonal ingredients. Unsure of what is on hand to plan with.	Excited to have specialty ingredients delivered. Hopeful to not make too many stops for pickup.	Going to too many places is drain on time. Likes farmers markets and prefers getting as much as possible from local sources Gets down when forgetting an item or buying something already on hand.	Nervous about not remembering measurements. Unhappy when touching a device with messy hands to see a recipe.	Surprised to run out of a featured ingredient.	Happy with sales numbers Bumped that opportunities were missed Angry that some items need to be thrown out
IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Include an “in app” list of seasonal items with bold and bright icons of those items. Give option to record purchased ingredients.	Place as many online orders as possible in app by linking accounts.	Have in app listing of farmers market locations and schedules. Have a shopping route planner transferable to navigation apps.	Have function to dictate or video recipe creation in real time through voice control.	Have emergency delivery option available integrated through food delivery apps activated through voice recognition.	Have option to create a “Favorites List”

Paper wireframes

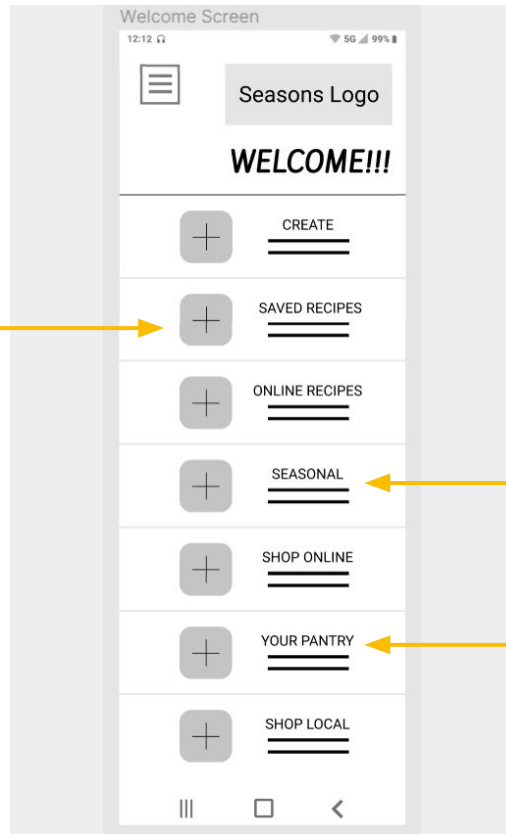
This screen is the primary goal for users to reach in this app. I didn't want it to feel like a dead end landing place, so I still added options to edit, share, take photos, and provide a button to take the user back to the main screen.



Digital wireframes

This is the Main Screen, the user's major pain points are addressed on the first screen that they view within the app.

On the Main Screen, there is a place to review user saved recipes.



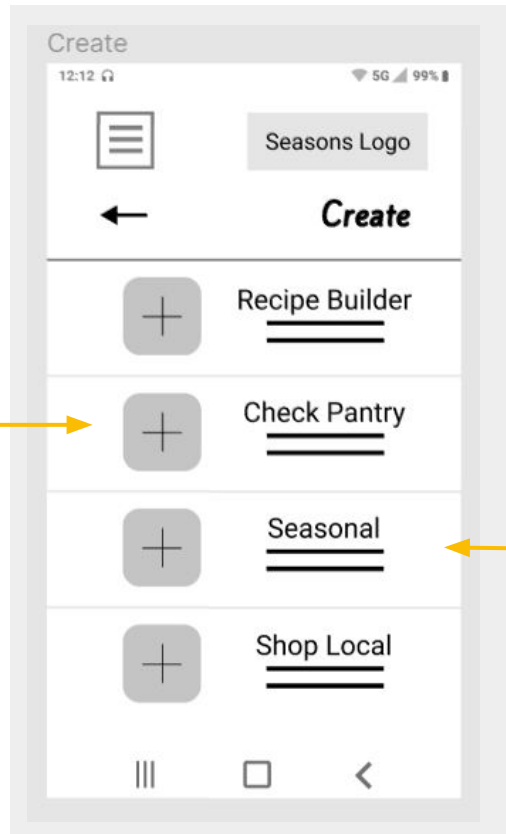
The first opportunity for the user to review seasonal items is on the Main Screen.

The first opportunity for the user to review what is on hand is on the Main Screen.

Digital wireframes

This is a wireframe for the create screen, where the user would navigate to when beginning the process of planning out a recipe. I wanted options for the user to review desired information before going forward.

There is an option for the user to check their pantry before moving on creating a recipe.

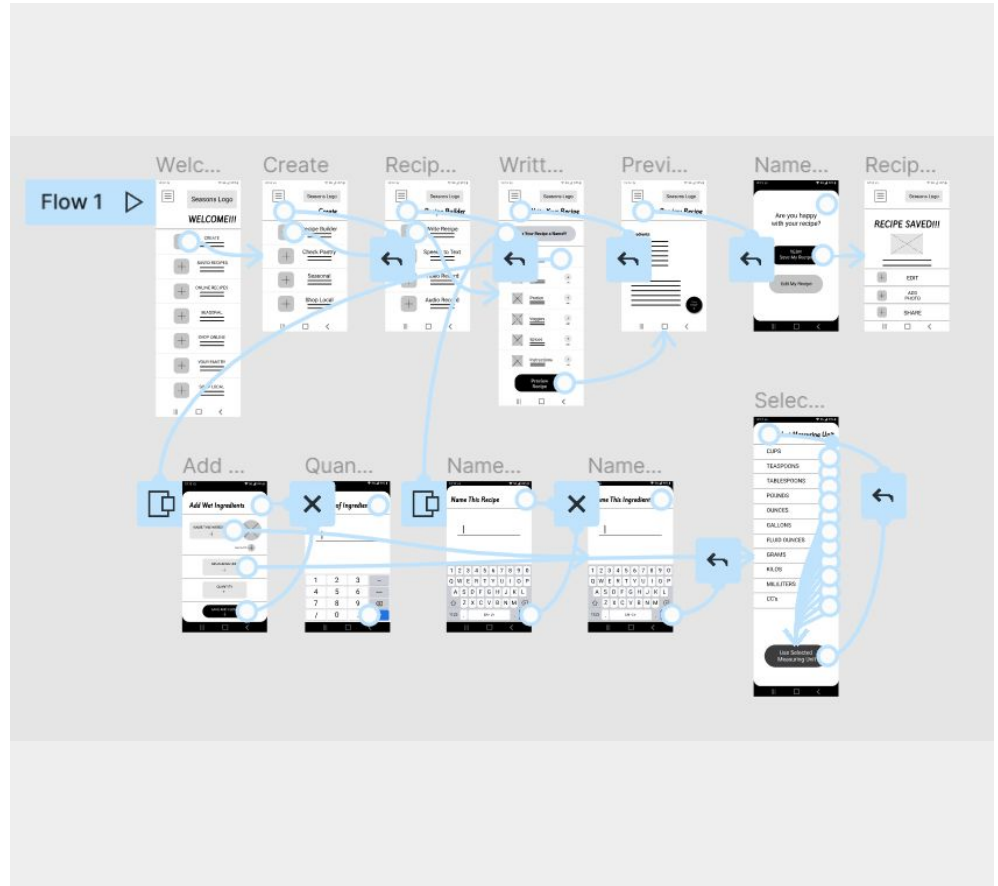


This option will take the user to information related to seasonal ingredients.

Low-fidelity prototype

The user flow shown here is adding an ingredient and proceeding to save a recipe. The flow starts at the Main Screen and ends with a confirmation of a saved recipe. The link to the prototype will allow for more navigation within the app's prototype.

<https://www.figma.com/proto/ffCihGRL0qUJwgV8MKChmf/LoFi-Seasons-App-Project?node-id=1%3A80&scaling=min-zoom&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=1%3A80>



Usability study: findings

Two separate usability studies were performed in a combination of in person and remote sessions, where the users were asked to write out the same predetermined recipe using the app's "written recipe" creator. The key performance indicators that were considered were time on task, conversion rate, and system usability score.

Round 1 findings

- 1 Save buttons need to look the same and located in common places within the app.
- 2 Clear and universal languaging is needed to guide users on the main flow.
- 3 Clear indication is needed to allow the user to exit the keyboard function

Round 2 findings

- 1 Recipe recommendations based on what the user has in their pantry could be helpful.
- 2 Recipe recommendations based on what is in season and available locally could be helpful.

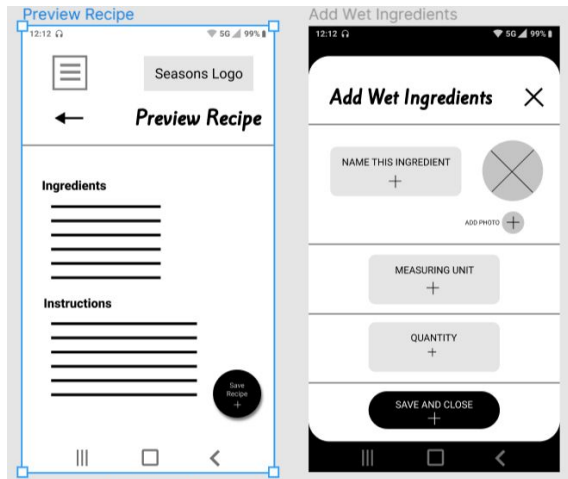
Refining the design

- Mockups
- High-fidelity prototype
- Accessibility

Mockups

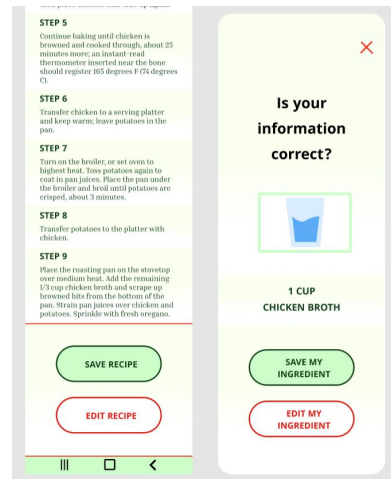
The examples shown here illustrate the difference before and after my usability study. The wireframe on the left has a floating save button that is not aligned with save button on the next wireframe screen.

Before usability study



Two different screens that require the user to press the save button to advance the flow.

After usability study

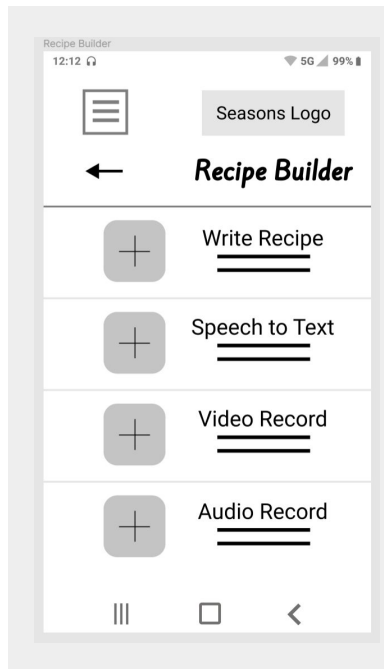


Two similar screens that require the user to press the save button to advance the flow.

Mockups

When asking users to find the “write recipe” button during the usability test, some users were unsure if that verbally meant “right” or “write”. Languageing was changed for that button to help eliminate possible confusion when speaking the button’s name.

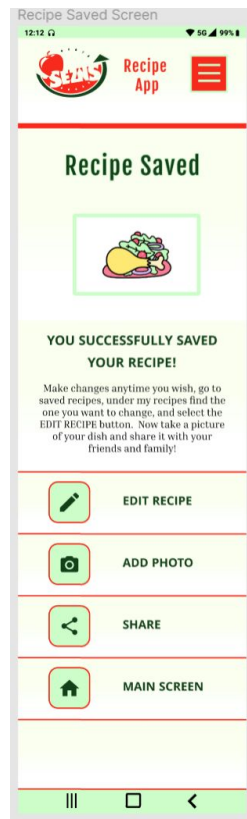
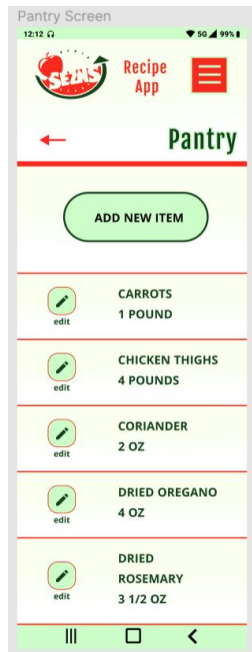
Before usability study



After usability study



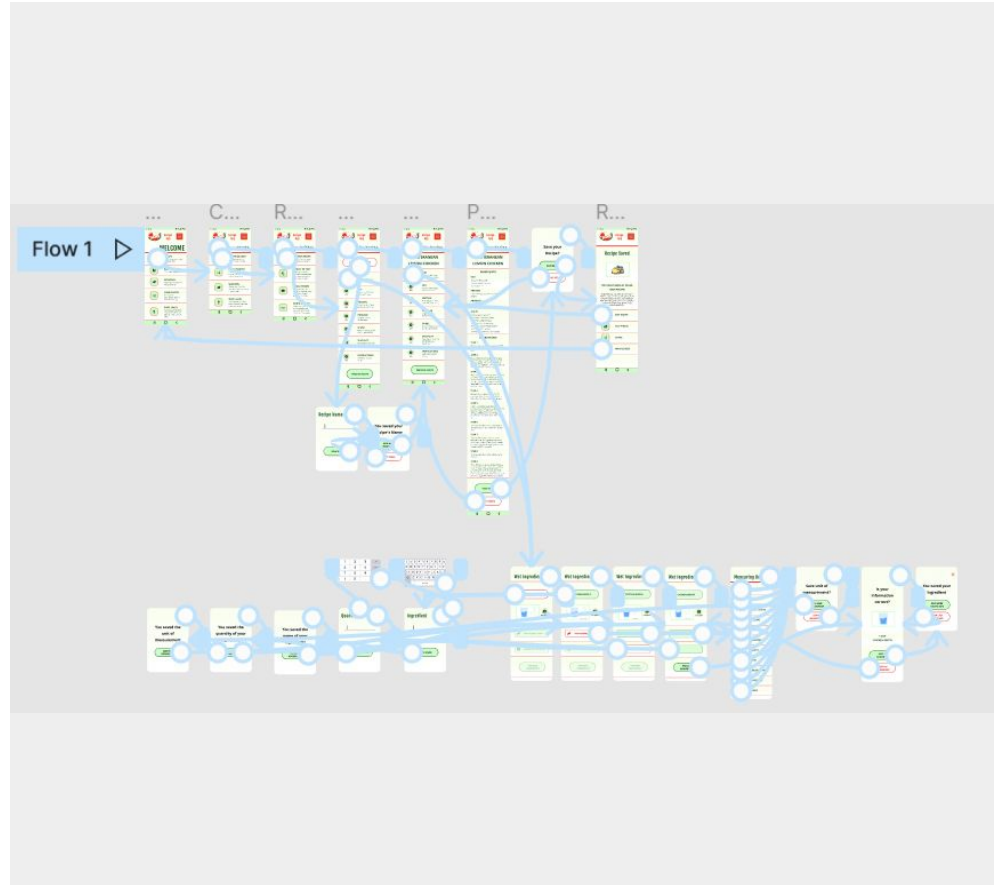
Key Mockups



High-fidelity prototype

The user flow shown here is adding chicken broth as an ingredient and proceeding to save the recipe. The flow starts at the Main Screen and ends with a confirmation of a saved recipe. The link to the prototype will allow for further navigation within the app..

<https://www.figma.com/proto/ffCihGRL0qUJwgV8MKChmf/LoFi-Seasons-App-Project?node-id=628%3A7640&scaling=min-zoom&page-id=603%3A5336&starting-point-node-id=628%3A7613>



Accessibility considerations

1

Default colors have been chosen based on high contrast values, and default font sizes have been set to align with readability standards.

2

Speech to text is available as a core function for recipe creation.

3

The settings menu has options for languages, additional color adjustment, additional font sizes, sound effects, and vibration feedback.

Going forward

- Takeaways
- Next steps

Takeaways



Impact:

The SEZNS app removes barriers, and addresses pain points that professional and home cooks have experienced when planning recipes which helps save time and money.

One quote from feedback:

"This was really easy to use", "I would definitely use this for cooking"



What I learned:

There are so many unknowns when starting the process of creating an app. Executing ideas into real solutions for the user can be complicated, even when the end user goals are clearly understood.

Next steps

1

After insights were gained during the 2nd usability study, a recipe generator feature may be useful for cooks to gain recipe insights using their app pantry inventory.

2

After insights were gained during the 2nd usability study, a feature that makes “in app” recipe recommendations based on in season ingredients.

3

Conduct usability study after adding new features to existing app.

Let's connect!



Thank you for taking time to review my work on the SEZNS recipe planning app.

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