

Ethnic cooking journey

A workbook about preserving culinary heritage

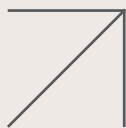
Wan-Ting Huang
Wishaya Piyasirisin

Start the
Journey



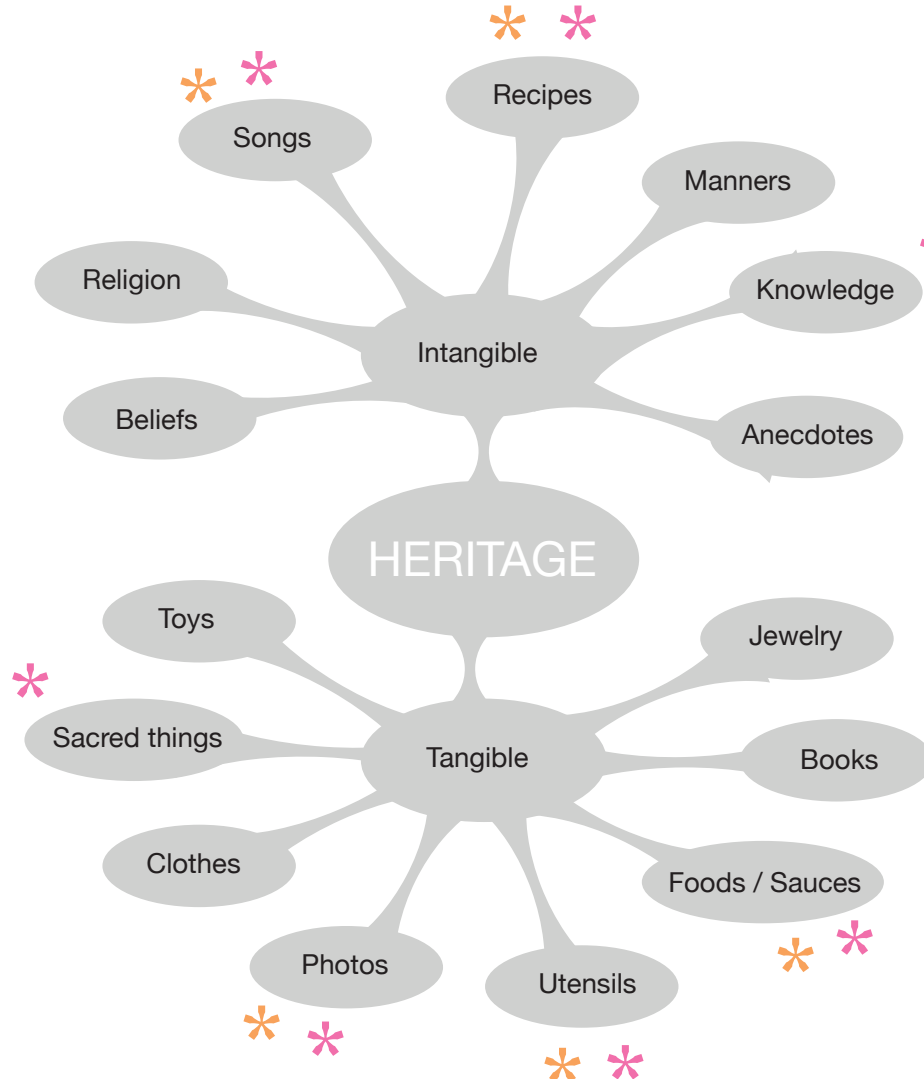
1 What to eat?

Problem reframing



Mindmap

- ✧ Wan-Ting's interests
- ✧ Wishaya's interests



To approach the design challenge, we created a mindmap to clarify the problem space and our personal interests. After brainstorming, both of us were interested in topics related to culinary heritage, such as “recipes,” “utensils,” and “foods / sauces.” We took culinary heritage as our primary focusbase to move to the next stage.

Observations

Eating practices are rooted in every culture, including food choices, shopping preferences, utensils, recipes, etc. Even in multicultural countries, people within different subcultures will try to keep their own styles of eating.

However, it's not easy to keep one's culinary heritage the same within another culture. Some compromises must be made when there is a lack of essential tools or groceries. On the one hand, people may find easily-accessible substitutes for traditional utensils or ingredients. On the other hand, people may give up strict adherence to traditional recipes, and instead acclimate to local customs.

Evidence

- “ Whilst all people have to eat to live, what they eat is largely determined by their cultural influences. [1] ”
- “ In America, Japanese shoppers look for signals of quality in packaging and branding, and shop at specialty stores to obtain what they want. [2] ”

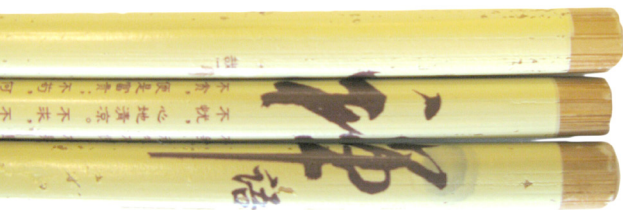


Problem Space

Helping non-American people living in America (e.g. Chinese, Taiwanese, Thai, Korean, Indian...) to keep their culinary heritages by leveraging digital technology.



2 Preparation
Research Methods



HOW WE COLLECTED THE DATA

RESEARCH METHODS

We started by recruiting a Thai student and a Chinese student to participate in our interview. We planned to conduct on-site interviews to observe their ways of cooking in their natural environments.

Our research consists of two face-to-face interviews, one observation session, and one online survey. Since we previously knew our interview participants, we contacted them by phone and visited them at their homes. We conducted a semi-structured interview with the first interviewee by asking her open-ended questions. Then we visited her kitchen and asked more questions on-the-spot. We used a photo elicitation technique with the second interviewee by presenting her with eight cooking-related photos to help her recall some of her cooking habits or ethnic utensils. Then we asked her to select and use a cooking-related heirloom she had to generate dialogue about that object.

Other research we conducted included the observation of a cooking class in the Asian Culture Center. In the session, we observed how a chef cooked a Filipino dish and took part in the discussion of different cross-cultural perspectives on culinary practices.

Finally, we created an online survey and broadcasted it on Facebook.

From problem to research

Interview - Gain deeper understanding of specific users

Observation - Gain insights from a complete cooking process

Survey - Identify most frequent problems



1 | The first interviewee's kitchen room. There was a heated pot with Thai curry inside and other cooking utensils on the left side.

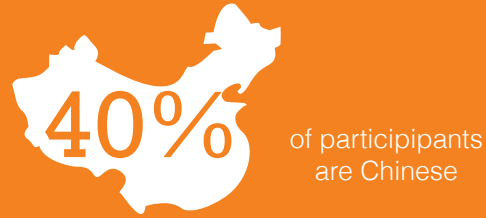
2 | The eight cooking-related photos presented to the second interviewee.

3 | A cooking class in the Asian Culture Center. The chef was cooking "Adobo", a national dish of Phillipines.

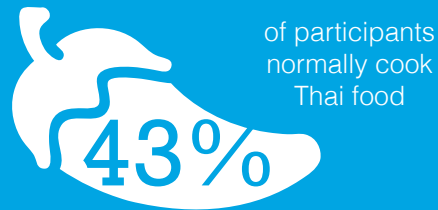
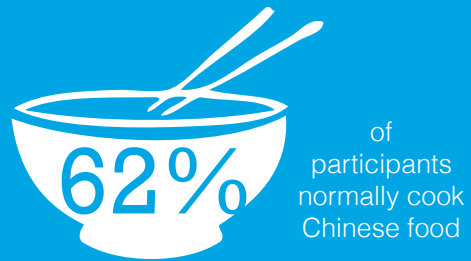
Online Survey

24 responses

Participants



Food Types



Length of Stay

14 months
Average of time participants stayed in U.S.

Cooking Frequency

>50% of participants cook at home at least 5-6 times a week

Ethnic ingredients and utensils

81%

of participants find them from looking around in stores

62%

of participants ask friends how to find them

Problems

71% of participants cannot find seasoning or ingredients needed

62%

of participants do not know how to call things they need in English

57%

of participants cannot find ethnic tools or utensils needed

Finding or Ignoring Substitutes

62% of participants find substitutes if they cannot find original ethnic one

52%

of participants simply ignore the lack of needed ingredients/utensils

Context Influence

50%

Half of participants agree that living in America changes their ways of ethnic cooking

Comments

“ ...I sometimes try out new recipes from the Internet to compensate for spices or ingredients... ”

“ ...Now I've learned to cook with local vegetables and fruits instead of always cooking “authentic” Chinese food... ”

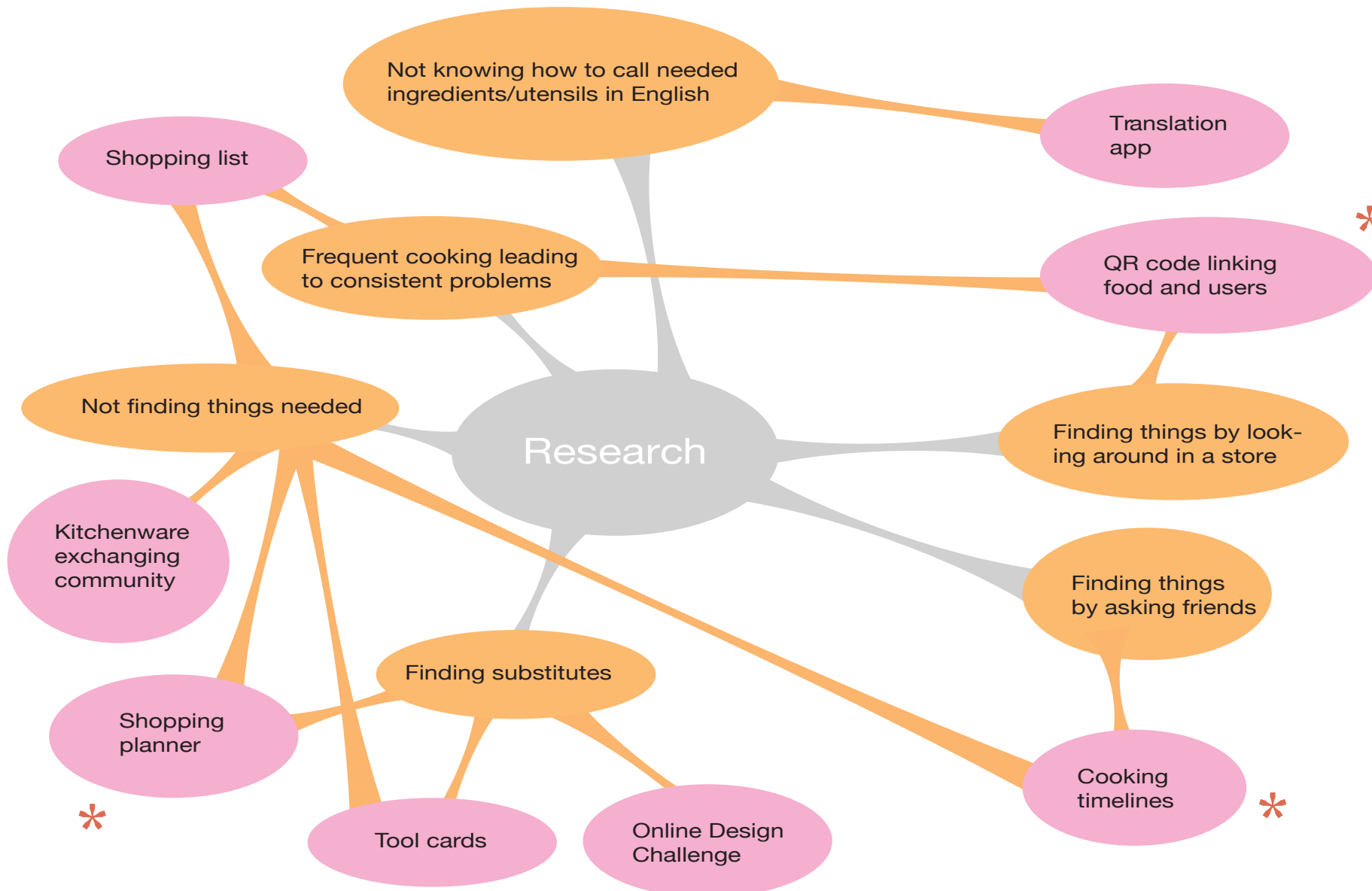
3 Cooking

From insights to concepts



Map of Relationships

- Insights from research
- Concepts
- ✱ Final concepts presented



According to the results from our survey, being unable to find things needed (including ingredients, seasoning and utensils) is a common problem when it comes to ethnic cooking. To solve the problem, one group tries to find substitutes or asks friends where to find things, while the other group tends to find things by themselves in stores.

The results corresponded to our findings from the two interviews and one observation. We found that our subjects turned to technological solutions when they met similar problems, such as looking for substitutes online. Also, the observation at the Asian Culture Center showed that the chef collected ingredients needed from different stores located apart from each other.

Those insights led us to our three final concepts, by which we intend to provide users better shopping experiences as well as a platform to let them share their ethnic cooking tips with friends.

Exemplars

Websites

- 1 | Ethnic Cooking and Culture
Features: recipes, articles from magazine
- 2 | Ethnic Recipes
Features: recipes
- 3 | Cultural Cuisines
Features: recipes, online groceries, kitchen supplies, table settings, music, glossary
- 4 | Getting started with healthy eating
Features: recipes, online stores

Blogs

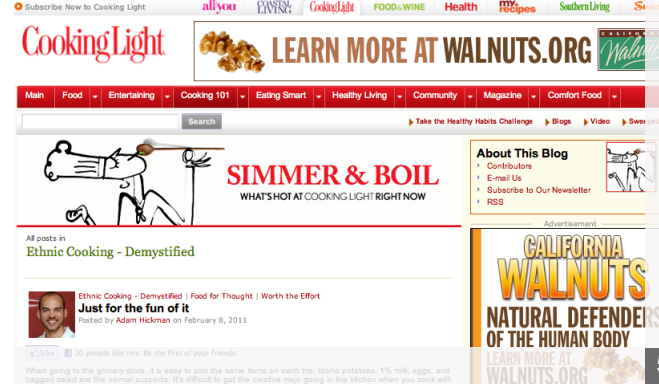
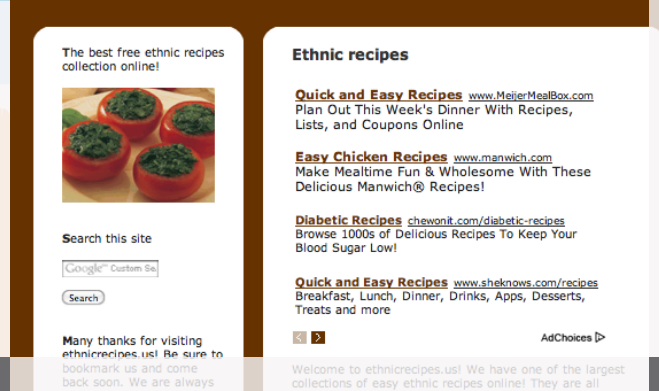
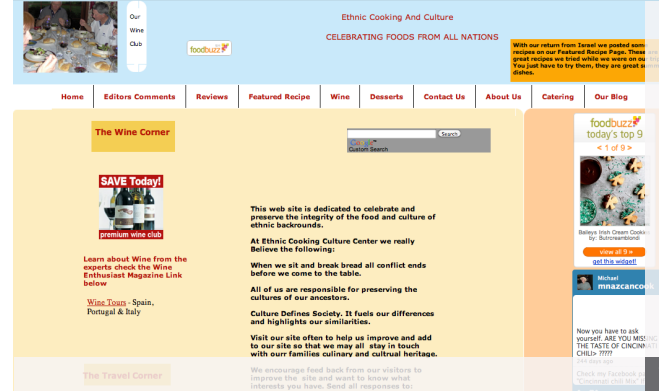
- All of them provided random topics about ethnic cooking:
- 5 | http://simmerandboil.cookinglight.com/ethnic_cooking_demystified/
- 6 | <http://niftynoshing.blogspot.com/search/label/Chinese>

Apps

- 7 | Asian Ingredients 101
Features: detailed introduction of Asian ingredients
- 8 | Cook Chinese
Features: list of recipes and corresponding shopping list

What is lacking?

- Only static recipes are provided. No interaction between users and recipes.
- Grocery shopping lists don't take users' physical location into consideration.
- Articles on blogs or websites are too random. Not related to users' interests and social networks



Dish 1

IS THIS RIGHT?

Introducing QR codes that can help you ensure that what you see is the same as what you are looking for

From insights to concept

From our insights, most foreigners prefer to find food and utensils from looking around in a store by themselves. Sometimes some are not sure whether what they bought is the same as what they are looking for. Because the foods that they are familiar with in their native country might be different from food in the U.S., we decided to come up with this concept to help them select the right foods for their ethnic meal.



Our design is to place a QR code along with the food's price tag. Customers can use their mobile phone to scan this QR code while they are shopping. After they scan the QR code, they will see information related to their profile and personal preferences. For example, if the customer is Thai, the application will translate the information in Thai and compare the equivalents of that food in Thailand and the U.S. Thus, the customer will know the differences and know whether these foods are the same as what they are looking for or not.

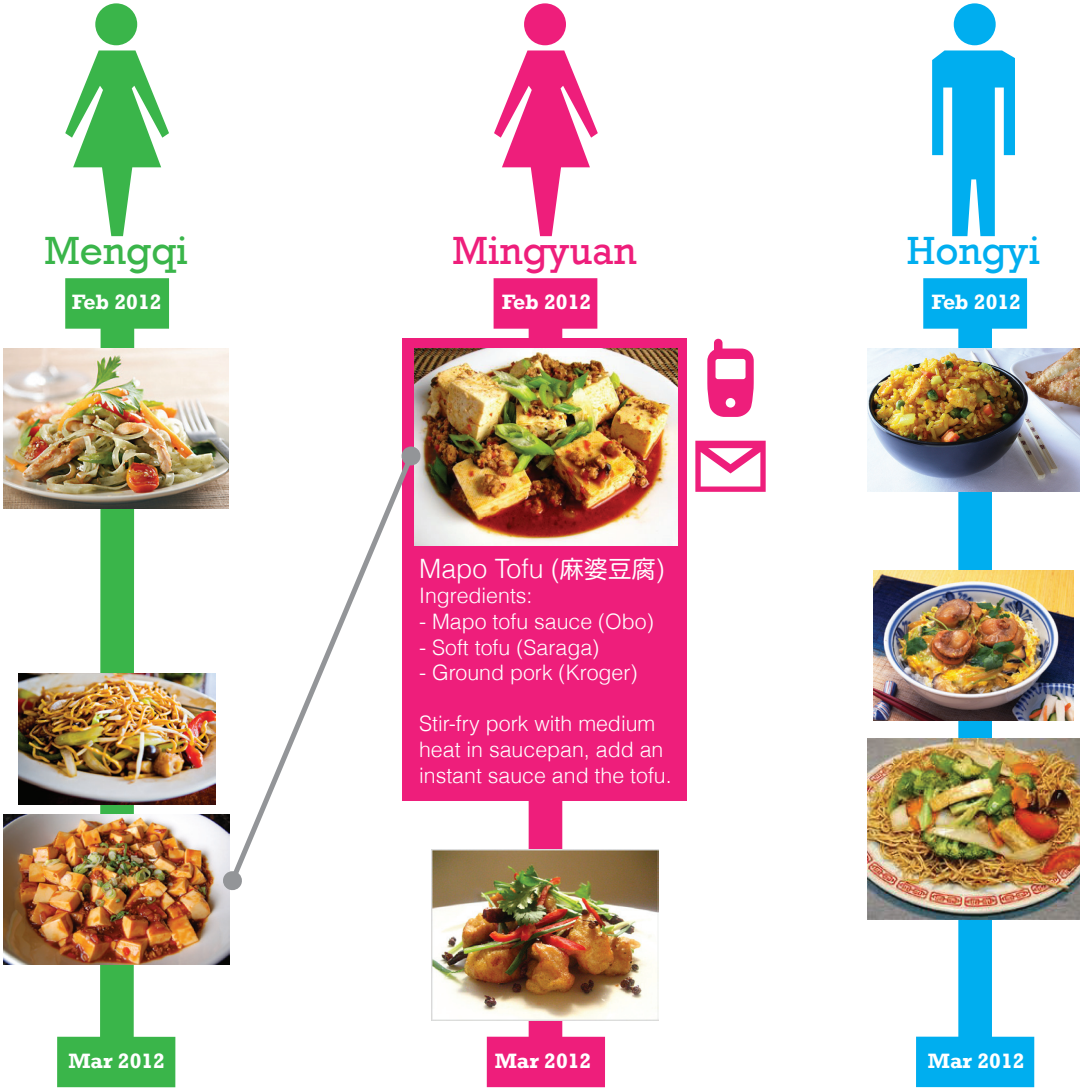
Dish 2

COOKING TIMELINES

People like to post their food photos -- why not use them to get more ideas for your own cooking? This is a concept to help you find interesting dishes, know how to cook, and know where to buy things by learning from your friends.

From insights to concept

Based on our insights, people like to ask their friends if they cannot find materials they need. *Cooking Timelines* will help these people to get deep information about where to buy each ingredient. Moreover, they can contact their friends more easily if they need more information about the food.



Cooking Timelines is a web application that presents your friends' meals and recipes in timeline form. The data will be retrieved from the social network that the users use and be ordered by the time it was posted. The data might include food images, recipes, and your friend's contact information. If the users are interested in any foods, they can click the food images to see its recipe. The recipes will also include the

local places where your friends bought ingredients from. If your friends didn't post any details about their food or if the users have questions, the users can contact them to ask for more information by clicking the phone or email icons. Finally, the application will group similar dishes together (see a gray line in the figure above) to help the users compare different recipes and may give ideas for creating new meals.

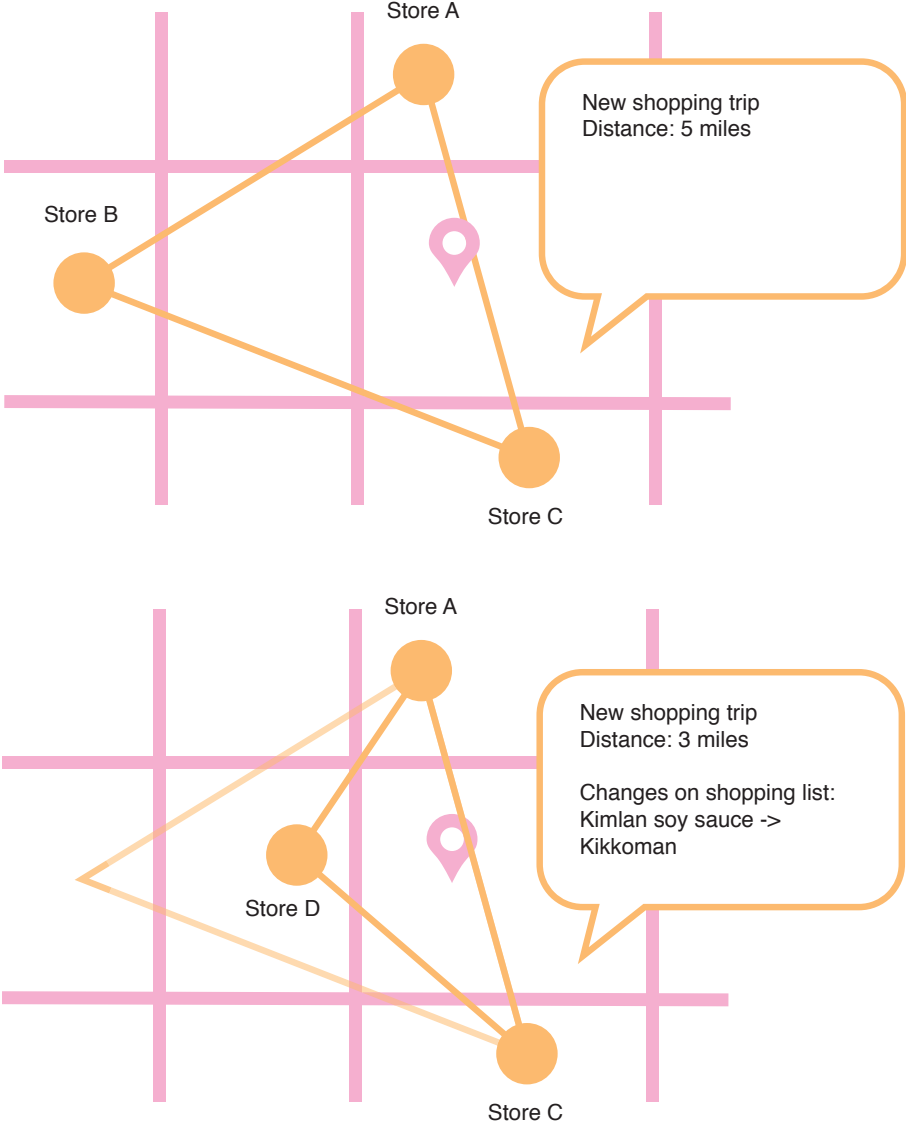
Dish 3

SHOPPING PLANNER

To collect authentic ethnic ingredients, people need to pass by different special grocery stores, but those stores sometimes spread in different locations. *Shopping Planner* could help you collect ethnic groceries more efficiently or find substitutes if you want to shop faster.

From insights to concept

Based on our insights, people find substitutes of ethnic groceries in nearby stores. Users' physical locations decide where to shop and what to buy. Also, existing shopping list applications only provide checking functions, which lack locational factors and suggestion of substitutes.



Shopping Planner is a mobile app which is intended to create an efficient shopping experience. First, the app will position users on the map, match users' shopping lists with the stocks of nearby stores, and then plan a shopping trip based on the results.

If users think the trip will take too long, the app will suggest users to substitute some items for their shopping lists and then re-plan a shorter shopping trip. With this app, users could make a tradeoff between shopping time and substitutions.



4 Saucing

References

Papers / Articles

- 1 - Paul Fieldhouse - Food and nutrition: customs and culture
<http://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/clc/1927150>
- 2 - Carol Kaufman-Scarborough - Asian-American consumers as a unique market segment: fact or fallacy?

Images

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fotoosvanrobin/5202061186/sizes/o/in/photostream/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fotoosvanrobin/5454775024/sizes/l/in/photostream/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/fotoosvanrobin/5454776008/sizes/l/in/photostream/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/contusion/3451318193/sizes/l/in/photostream/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/cheesehands/2227093037/sizes/l/in/photostream/>
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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/orcmid/4231748510/sizes/l/in/photostream/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nicktakespics/3748516440/sizes/l/in/photostream/>

Websites

Ethnic Cooking and Culture, Url: <http://www.ethniccookingandculture.com/about.html>
Ethnic Recipes, Url: <http://ethnicrecipes.us/>
Cultural Cuisines, Url: <http://www.culturalcuisines.com/index.html>
Getting started with healthy eating, Url: <http://www.getting-started-with-healthy-eating.com/index.html>



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Hope you enjoy our meal!

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