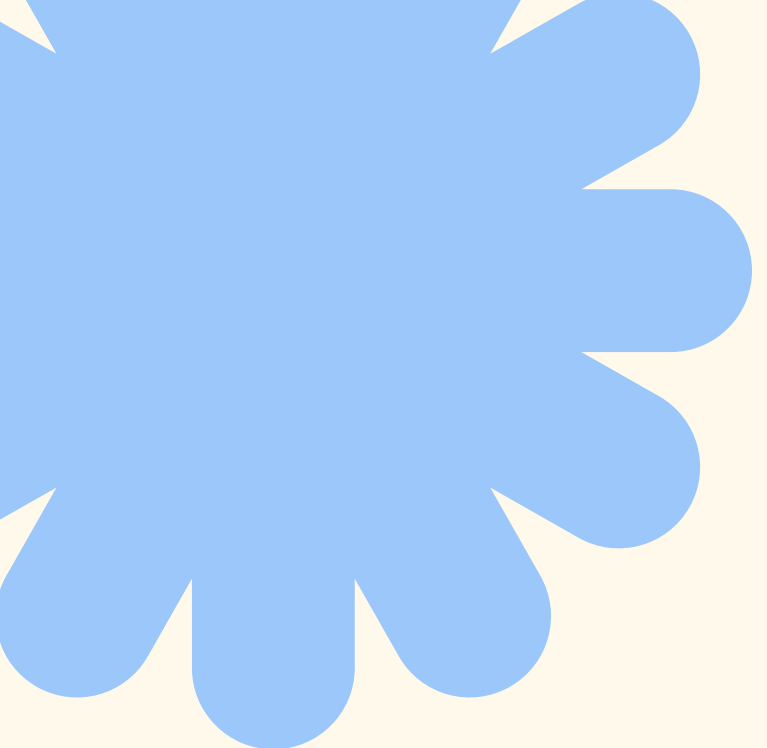
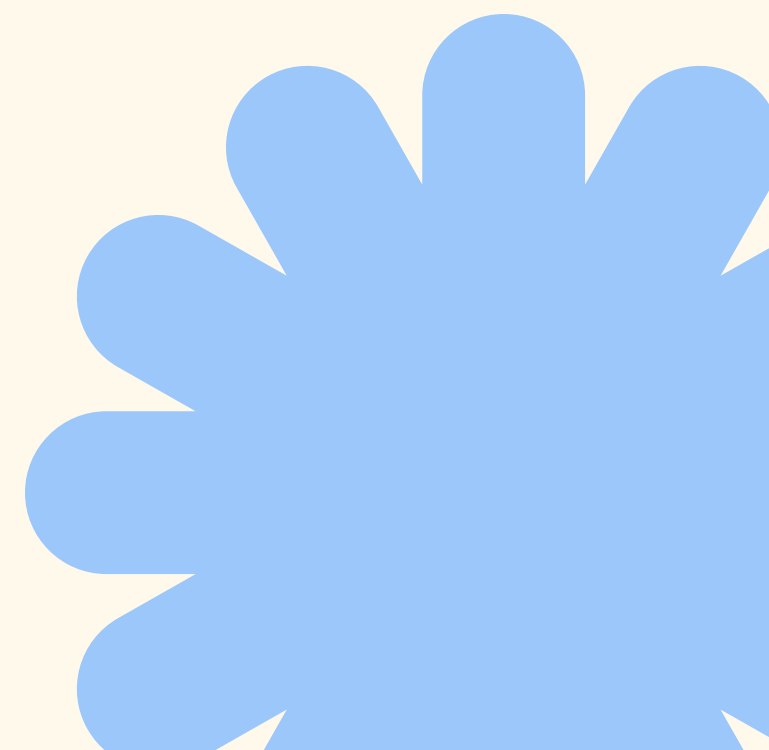




Case Study #1

Yumpal.



Improving meal-planning through a streamlined and intuitive process.

MY ROLE

Product Designer

Researcher

DURATION

March – June 2022

TOOLS USED

- Figma
- Notability
- Adobe Colors
- Google Forms
- Mealime
- Cooklist

Project Summary

This conceptual project presents Yumpal: an efficient and easy to use meal-planning application created for a wide range of audiences. The app uses a friendly, bubbly, and straightforward interface while maintaining handy organizational tools that can aid anyone— health gurus, 9–5ers, parents, and more— with planning meals for their busy schedules.

From personalized agendas to accessible user-uploaded recipes, the app turns a usually daunting task like meal-planning into an enjoyable and seamless activity.

The Challenge

The busy lifestyle of the average American person often leaves them limited on time for simple everyday tasks like cooking and grocery shopping. Research analyzed for this project demonstrates:

- **meal-planning can already be hectic for people's schedules**
- **apps on the market lack necessary features such as:**
 - **recipe organizers**
 - **editable food shopping lists**
 - **preference options that would make meal-planning a more user-friendly option for many**

The Challenge (continued)

Users of other apps specified these key pain points in their reviews:

- **meal-planning apps were often lackluster and inefficient in the recipe-finding process**
- **inefficient filtering systems in search function led to even more limitations for user with food restrictions**
- **lack of recipe variety and diversity**
- **overwhelming amounts of recipes, when combined with a lack of adequate filtering systems, made it difficult choose recipes**

The Solution

To develop a solution-oriented application, research was needed to ideate the product's foundation. A **competitive analysis** of two meal-planning applications, Mealime and Cooklist, was developed using a **SWOT analysis**. The findings visualized demonstrate the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that would eventually influence Yumpal's various meal-planning features.

The Solution: Competitive SWOT Analysis





The Solution: User Reviews

User reviews were also analyzed for each application, allowing extra insight into user feelings toward the interface experience and features each application had to offer.

Because this project was informal and conceptual, reviews were used in lieu of interviews, but were still able to give an accurate portrayal (shown aside) of necessary feedback for each application.

Mealime

"What's for dinner? Mealime!"



1y ago

My friend recommended that I start using Mealime for meal planning, and I've never looked back! There's so many good things about this app- tasty recipes and the grocery list make life so much easier. We used to struggle with figuring out what to make for dinner, but not anymore! Now we always have the groceries on hand that we need for our recipes. We bought the pro version because we love it so much. We also have 3 kids and they approve of a lot of these recipes. My 6 year old son likes to help us pick the meals. Some improvements I can think of are having slow cooker or instant pot recipes. A lot of the recipes have lots of steps and I have gotten a little weary of making "fancy" meals. It may just be the meals that I pick, but I've only found a few truly easy meals. And after we bought the pro version I was expecting to be able to modify a meal plan whenever I wanted without having the grocery list reset- I would love it if this could be a feature. Sometimes I don't want to redo the whole meal plan- I just want to add another meal to my already delicious plan! More allergy free recipes would be nice- one of my friends has a son with multiple allergies and when she put all of those in to avoid it left her with very few options. I've recommended this to many friends and will continue to do so! Thank you for making our life so much easier."

Mealime

"Great app- reduce food waste"



2y ago

Loved the app because you choose recipes for the week, and it will auto compose a grocery list- yay! Even better was after you purchased the grocery item or if you already had that item in your cupboard you could mark it off the list and it would disappear- easy peasy. Loved the concept of reducing food waste too! Going to be candid about the part I was disappointed with- not a big fan of the recipes. Maybe I chose not great recipes? I felt there was limited selection of different types of recipes - The 4 recipes I've done so far are wordy, lengthy, more info than necessary, plus it's kinda hard to follow because there is a lot of unnecessary prep and lots of dishes to use- which means extra cleaning afterward... the recipes are a little over complicated. A good dish doesn't need to be overloaded with spice or ingredients. I have a family, last thing I want to do is use a ton of extra pots/pans/bowls and kitchen items, stove/ oven/ and 5 different mixing bowls plus something else all just for one meal. I don't need the fanciest dinner in the world, just something healthy, straightforward, easy. If I had all the time in the world would be fine, but I'm a busy mom and if some recipes could be a little easier and more simplified than I don't mind doing a few other recipes that are more involved. A better selection of recipes, include options for crockpot recipes, would make me want to use this app weekly."



The Solution: User Reviews (continued)

Mealime

“Not what I expected



Apr 25

I had high hopes reading the info about Mealime – I could add my own recipes! I liked the recipes I saw but have many favorites of my own and was happy to be able to incorporate them into my plans. However,after subscribing to premium and attempting to add recipes I found out 1) you can only add recipes from certain other websites, 2) I would have to have a MAC to download the extension to add recipes from my computer. I have and HP laptop and an iPad. This program won’t allow me to do that.
PLEASE! I think you have something great here. Even just adding the ability to type in your own recipes would be a huge improvement. And make the the extension available to NON MAC users.
I will be canceling my membership. ”

Mealime

“Like five recipes



Sep 16

Very few recipes after you check your preferences and they are all a little too similar to one another. If I wanted that, I would call my mother... also plenty of salad and pasta dishes that are not revolutionary either. The misconception that if you don’t eat beef or whatever you need to only eat salads and soups is annoying and unprofessional when we are talking about apps that provide what you can't think yourself, recipes of good nutritional value, variety, taste and unexpected combinations. Of course, for a couple (literally) more options you need to upgrade.. ”

Cooklist

“Obsessed!



1y ago

I am obsessed with this app! I have a horrible time keeping track of what I have and when things are going to expire. With this I have been able to keep my food costs lower and expand my tastes. The different filters are incrediblvy convenient for whatever type of food you’re in the mood for. I love the fact that there is an option for when vou freeze food and that it makes a grocery list for you to use and updates the pantry. The feature of having it also help you remember to take those items from the pantry is just amazing. I hear about this app from a budget planner who has helped me with so many things but this app is a gold mine. There are so many recipes to pick from and if you don't have an ingredient it will try to come up with substitutions you can use. Planning meals and staying on budget has never been easier for me and my family. Thank you Cooklist for existing. The chat rooms that offer help are excellent as well. They've cleared up every issue I've had so far with ease. I LOVE this app. ”

Cooklist

“Great grocery shopping experience



2y ago

Cooklist has helped me to organize my grocery list based on my meal plan. It lets me track pantry items and will even load pantry items ordered online from other stores I shop at. The tool has a searchable recipe base of healthy meal suggestions to add to my weekly meal plan. it can filter recipes based on the main ingredients in my pantry, and identify missing pantry items to add to my grocery list.
Cooklist saves time by finding available local store items based on my entered grocery list. I can compare prices and selections across available stores in my area, and then search the individual stores to make any necessary selection changes based on item availability.
On checkout, it has been easy to find an available delivery or pickup window within a reasonable timeframe. The Cooklist support team has been very helpful throughout the ordering and delivery process from confirming both receipt of my order and when it has been placed with the store, allowing me to add additional items to my order prior to delivery, notifying me of expected delivery time on the day of delivery and following up with me to check on my satisfaction with the overall delivery experience.
Overall, I've had a great experience using both the tool and the service to order for grocery planning, ordering and delivery and plan to use it for future orders. ”

“Cooklist

Want to love it, but very glitchy for me



1y ago

I absolutely love the concept of Cooklist, but setting it up has been difficult and time consuming as the app moves very slow and can be glitchy at times. When adding items to my pantry it isn’t uncommon for the app to freeze, quit, or not recognize an item that I had added previously and it had an entry for. I also have trouble with products being added to wrong categories (spice blend being labeled as a sauce, etc) which wouldn’t be a huge deal if I could fix it quickly but the app can be rather slow to load and process new data inputs. I have a rather large inventory of spices and pantry staples so it isn’t quite efficient for me.
I’ll continue to use in hopes that new updates come out that fix these issues, I really think it could be huge help to me in the kitchen and I’d love to use it optimallv. I would love to see it get a little smarter and have the ability to indicate how much of something we have to that we can know when we're running low; particularly spices or things that come multiple to a pack.
Overall, I think it’s a cool tool for home cooks, but just be mindful of be time commitment that it may take on the front end if you have lots to add! ”

The Solution: User Reviews (continued)

Findings in Mealime's reviews reflected that:

- **users generally enjoyed the application, especially the recipes shown from users' food preferences**
- **users liked the app's ease of use**
- **some users were drawn back by a limitation in recipe variation, as well as a lack of calendar view for the actual meal-planning**

The Solution: User Reviews (continued)

Findings in Cooklist's reviews reflected that:

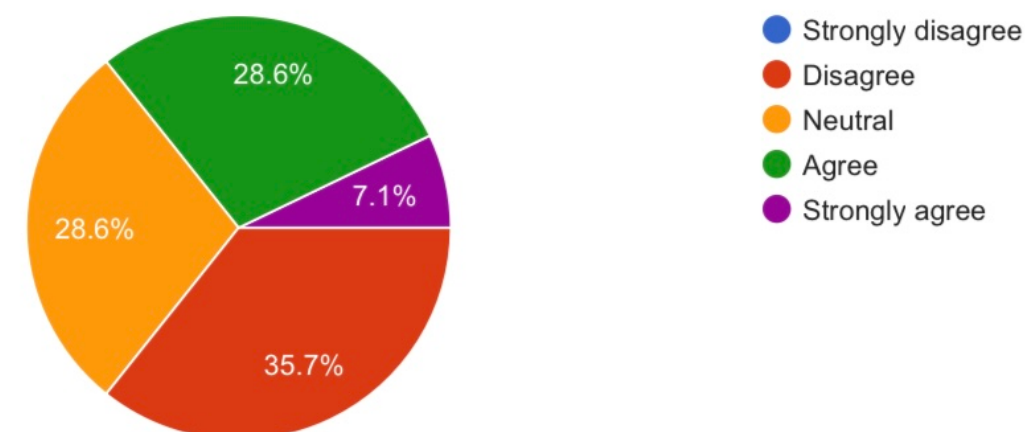
- **users loved the app's pantry feature allowing users to scan and upload ingredients straight to the shopping list**
- **the grocery list's expiration date organization feature is highly efficient**
- **users were dismayed with application's loading times, making it difficult to readily gather their recipes and groceries**
- **people in need of large serving sizes were upset with lack of editing for produce quantity and servings**
- **some users also felt overwhelmed by the number of recipes there, which lacked diversity, even still with the large number present**

🌸 The Solution: Surveying

The review and SWOT analyses for the apps were useful in conceptualizing what it is that people prefer in a meal-planning application. To understand what features I would be incorporating and prioritizing in my application, I decided to perform a quick **survey** on Google Forms that asked **questions about people's meal-planning habits, grocery habits, and food preferences**, as shown aside. Participants volunteered through a link I posted on my Instagram story.

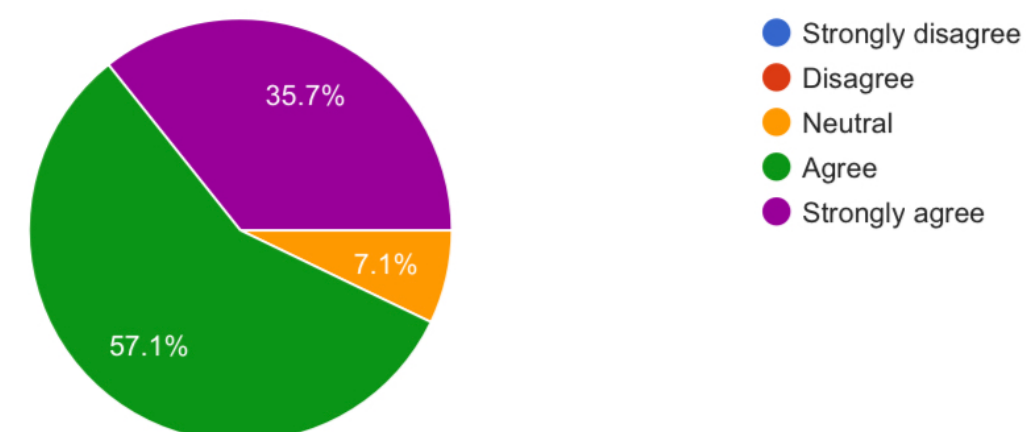
I cook for many people in a week

14 responses



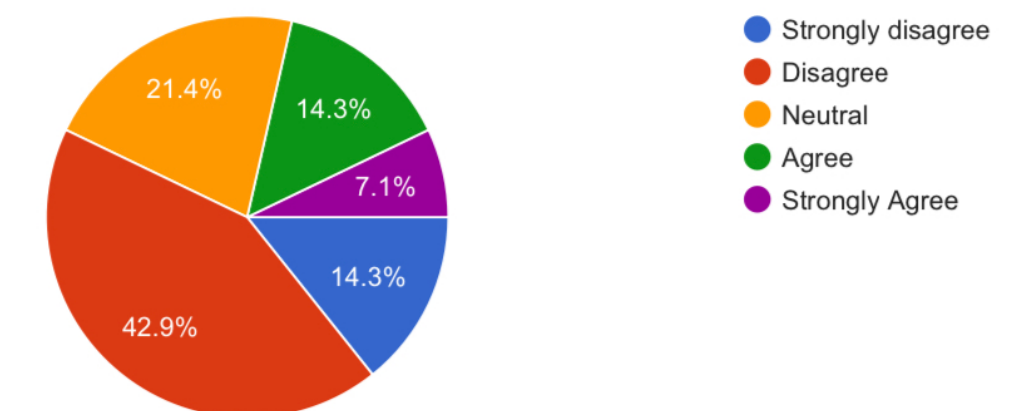
I prefer to plan my meals ahead of time

14 responses



My (or someone else's) dietary needs make it difficult to find recipes

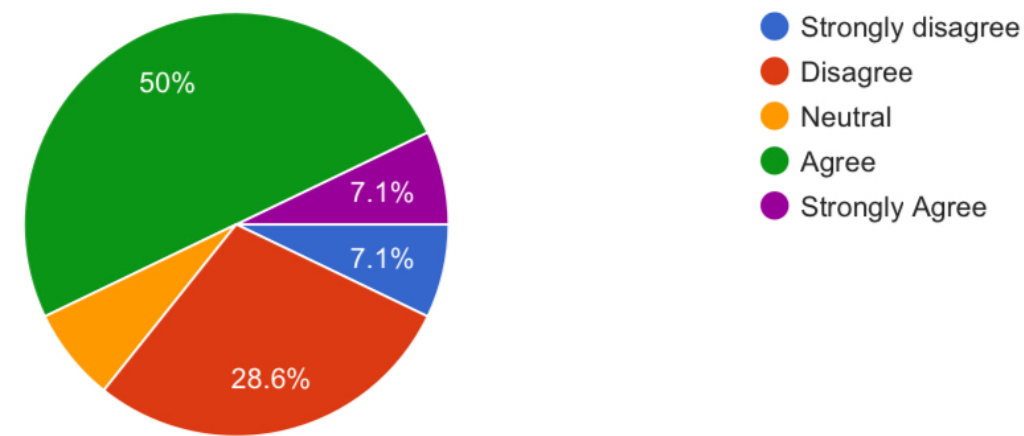
14 responses



The Solution: Surveying (continued)

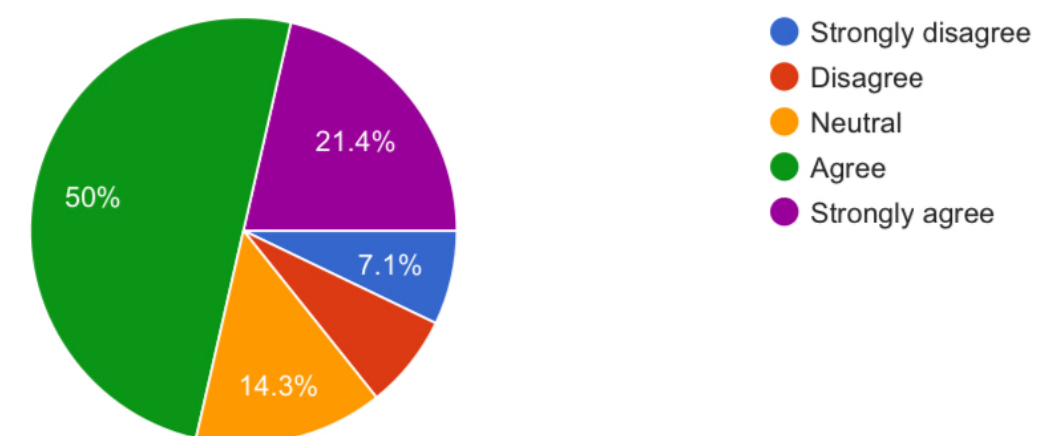
I have specific dietary guidelines I follow in my meals

14 responses



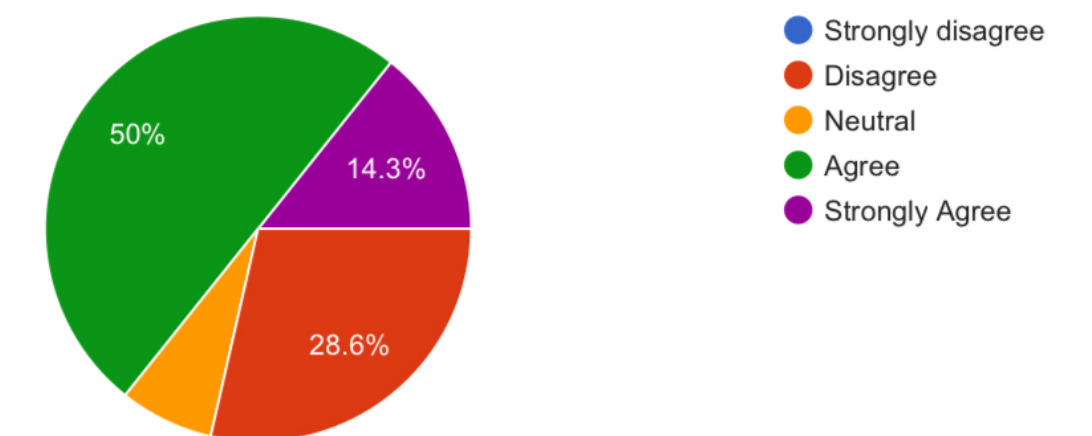
Meal planning tends to become hectic with my schedule

14 responses



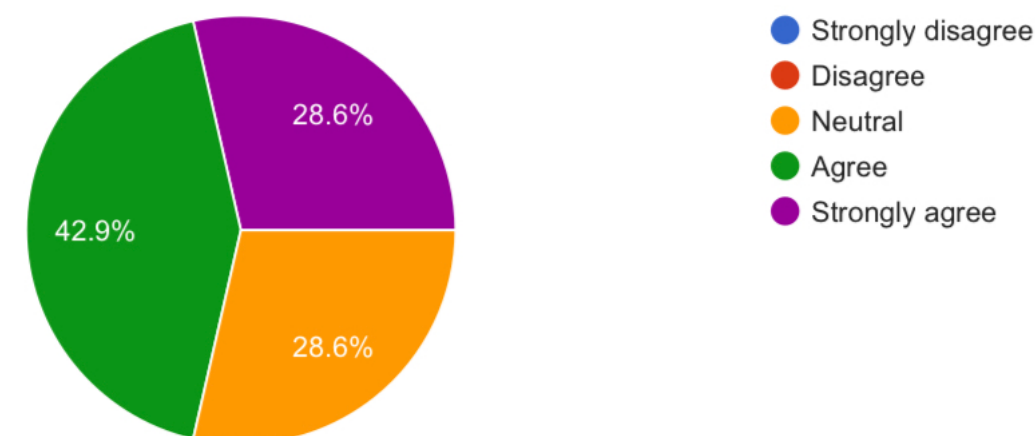
My food shopping habits tend to be unorganized

14 responses



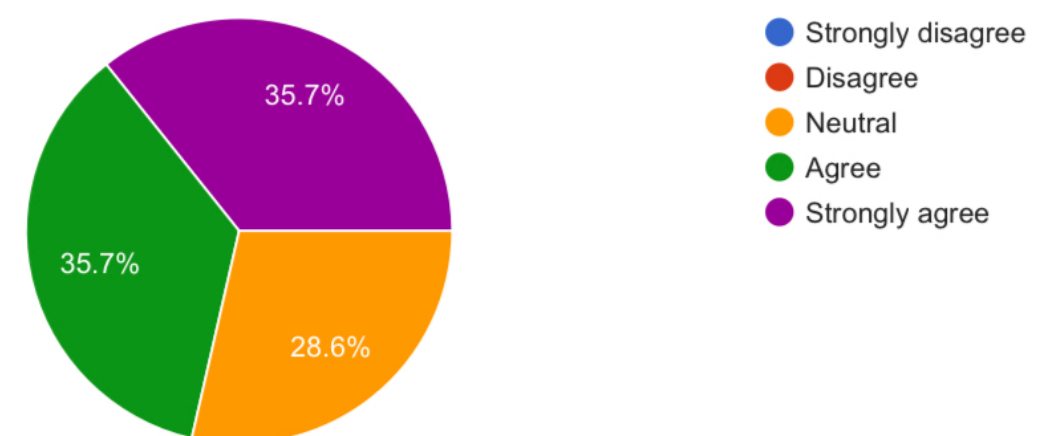
It is important to portion meals for myself, and/or my family

14 responses



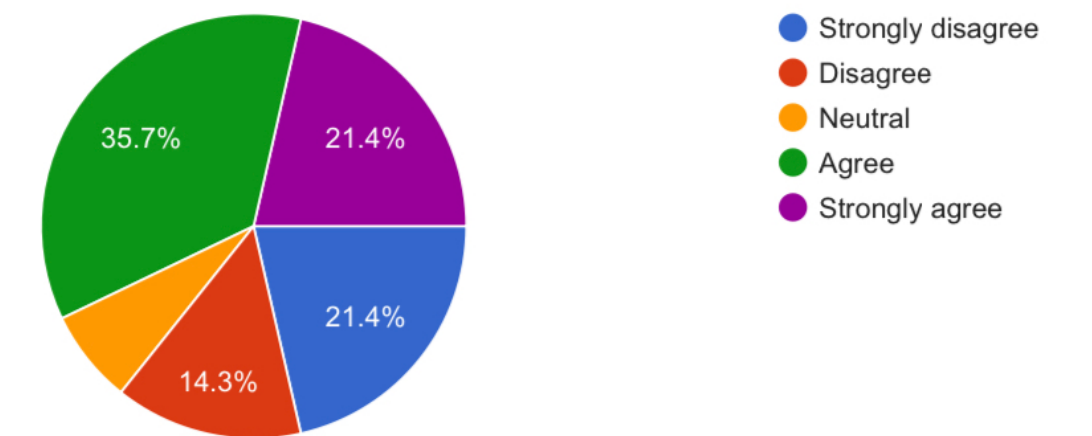
I like or would like to know specific quantities of ingredients I need when I shop

14 responses



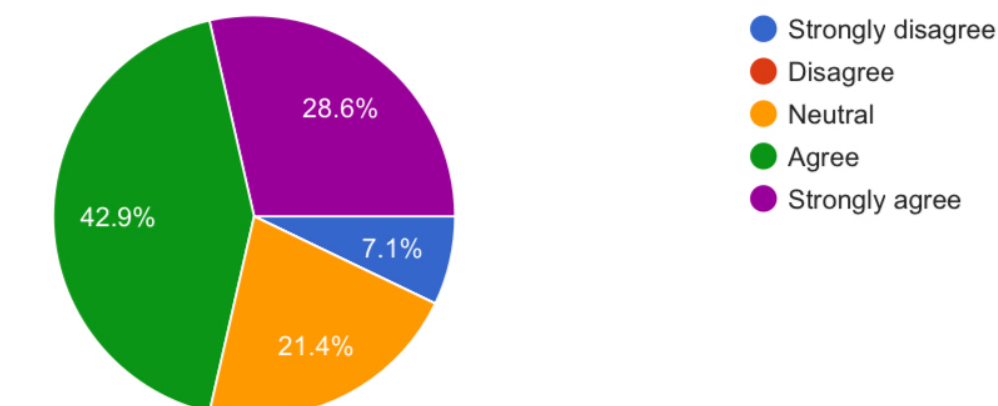
Finding meals to cook is often difficult or time consuming

14 responses



I prefer to cook a wide range of culturally diverse meals and meals from my own cultural background

14 responses



The Solution: Surveying (continued)

The results above led me to the decision that the app would have the following prioritized features:

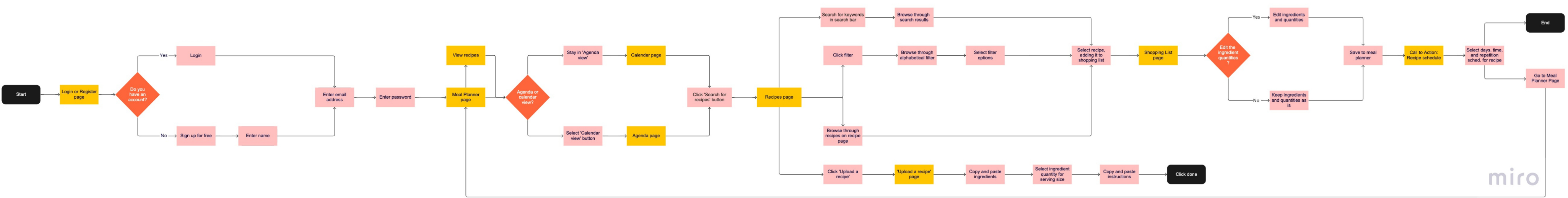
- **heavily planning-based; including an agenda and calendar system**
- **recipes would be community-uploaded, leaving more room for diverse meals**
- **filtering system would accommodate those with food preferences or limitations**
- **recipe feedback system which would allow transparency for recipe quality**
- **shopping list editing which would allow for serving size adjustability**

🌸 The Solution: User Journey Map and User Flow Map

To bring these ideas to a tangible form, I developed a **user journey map** and a **user flow map** (shown next). The user journey map highlights the different emotions users would potentially feel throughout the different steps in meal-planning with Yumpal, and the flow map narrows these steps further into an actual step-by-step process occurring through the eyes of a vegan user.

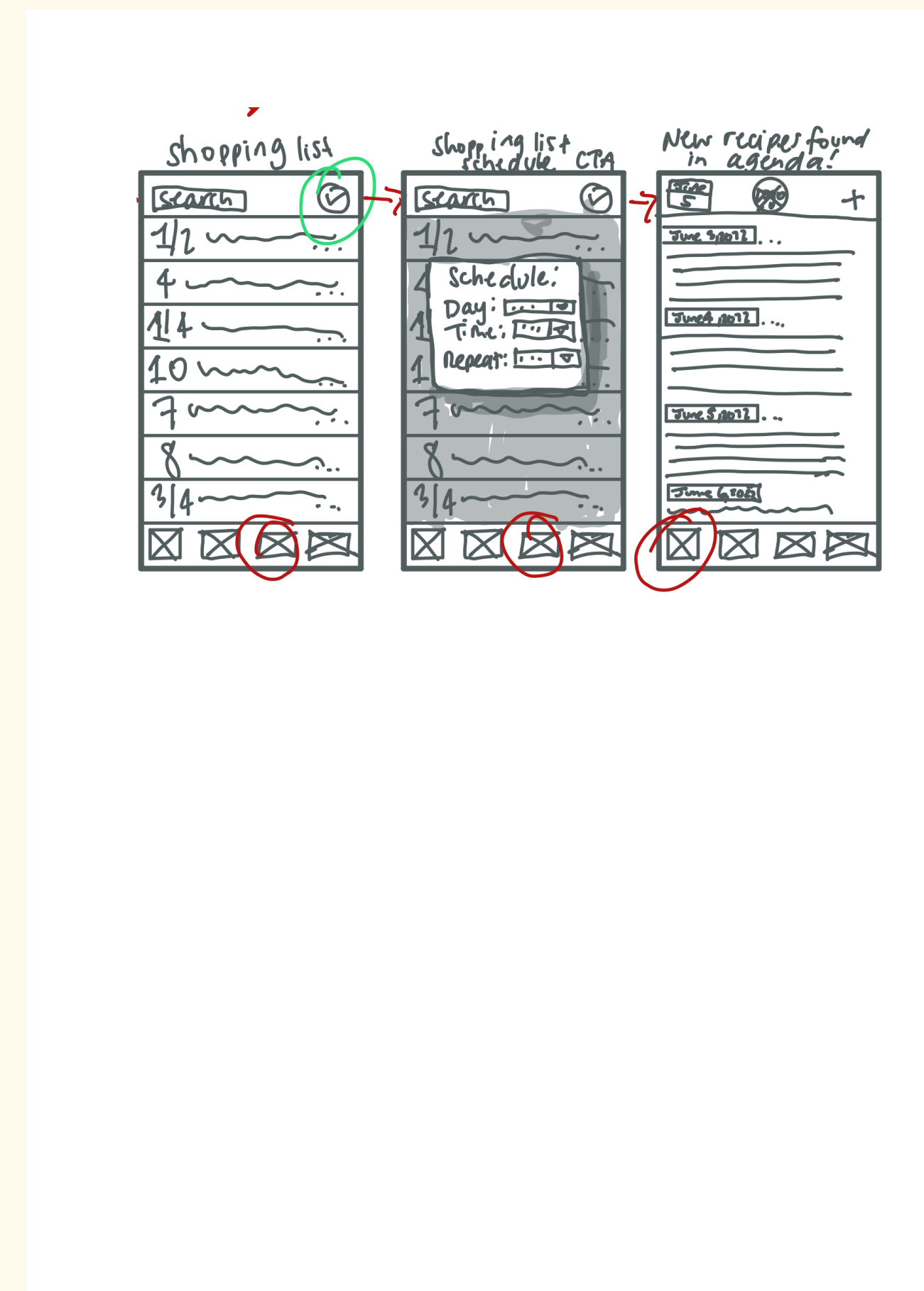
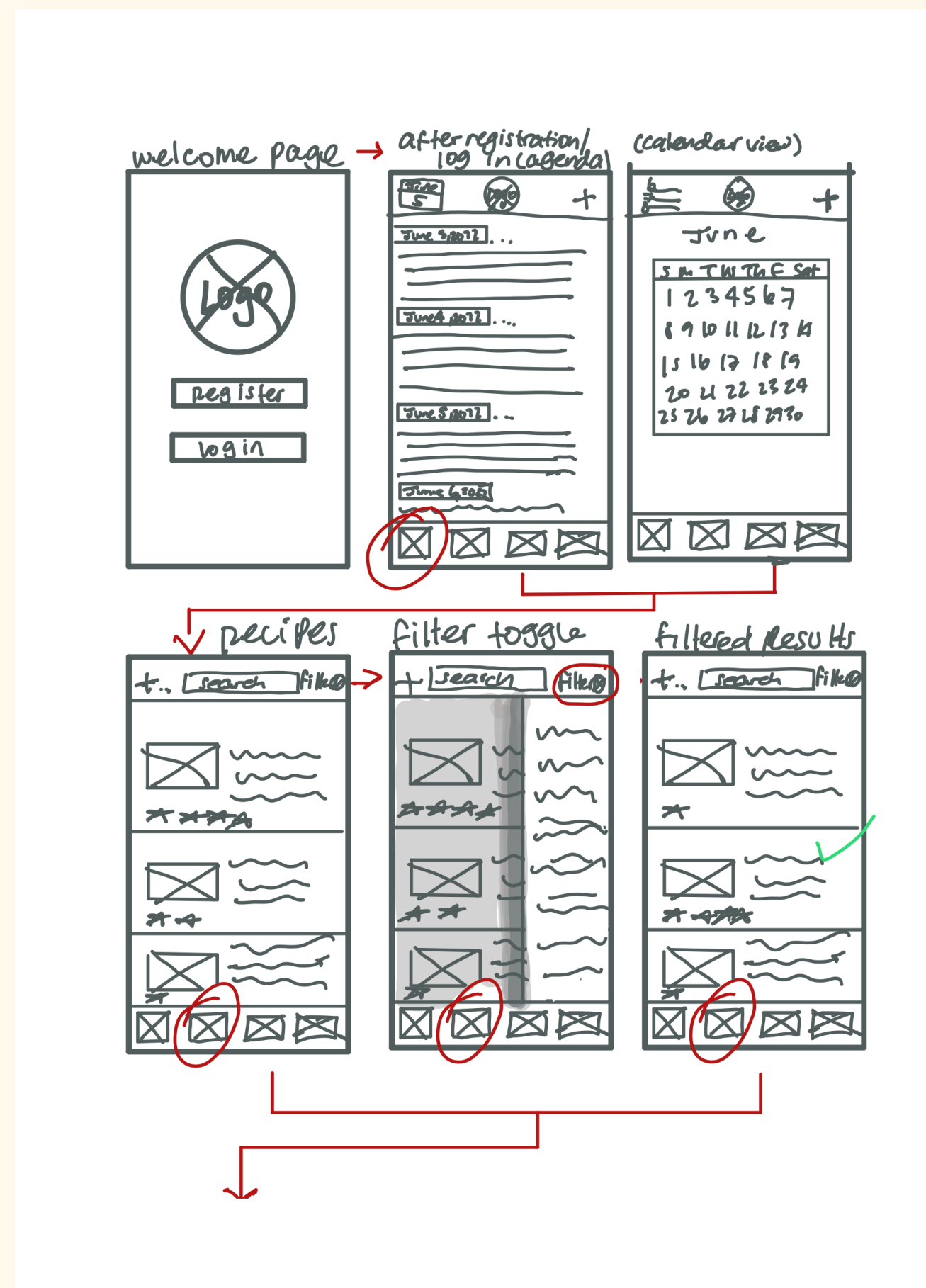
🌸 The Solution: User Journey Map and User Flow Map (continued)

Phase of journey	Stage 1			Stage 2						Stage 3	
Actions What does the customer do?	I open the app	I reach the homepage	I open the recipe page	I open the filter section	I toggle the filters	I choose a vegan taco recipe	I add the recipe to my shopping list	I adjust the quantities		I'll use this recipe weekly	I want to do a complete meal plan
Touchpoint What part of the service do they interact with?	registration and login page	meal plan agenda and calendar page	recipe finder page	recipe filter on recipe finder page	vegan and Mexican food filters	selected recipe page	add to shopping list	quantity adjuster in shopping list		add to meal plan agenda	recipe finder page
Customer Thought What is the customer thinking?	registration and login process is easy	there's no recipes here	oh wow! here they are	there's many options; where is the vegan and Mexican filter?	there's so many options!	this meal looks good and easy!	I have four kids! where can I adjust quantites?	the ingredient quantities were updated! yay!		I can use this recipe every week for Taco Fridays!	time to repeat the process.. it's easy!
Customer Feeling What is the customer feeling?											
Opportunities		swipe tutorial showing meal plan development process		alphabetize filters in list	filters could be organized by category		include call to action asking about quantity amounts				show recommendations based on personalized filters



🌸 The Solution: Low-Fidelity Wireframes

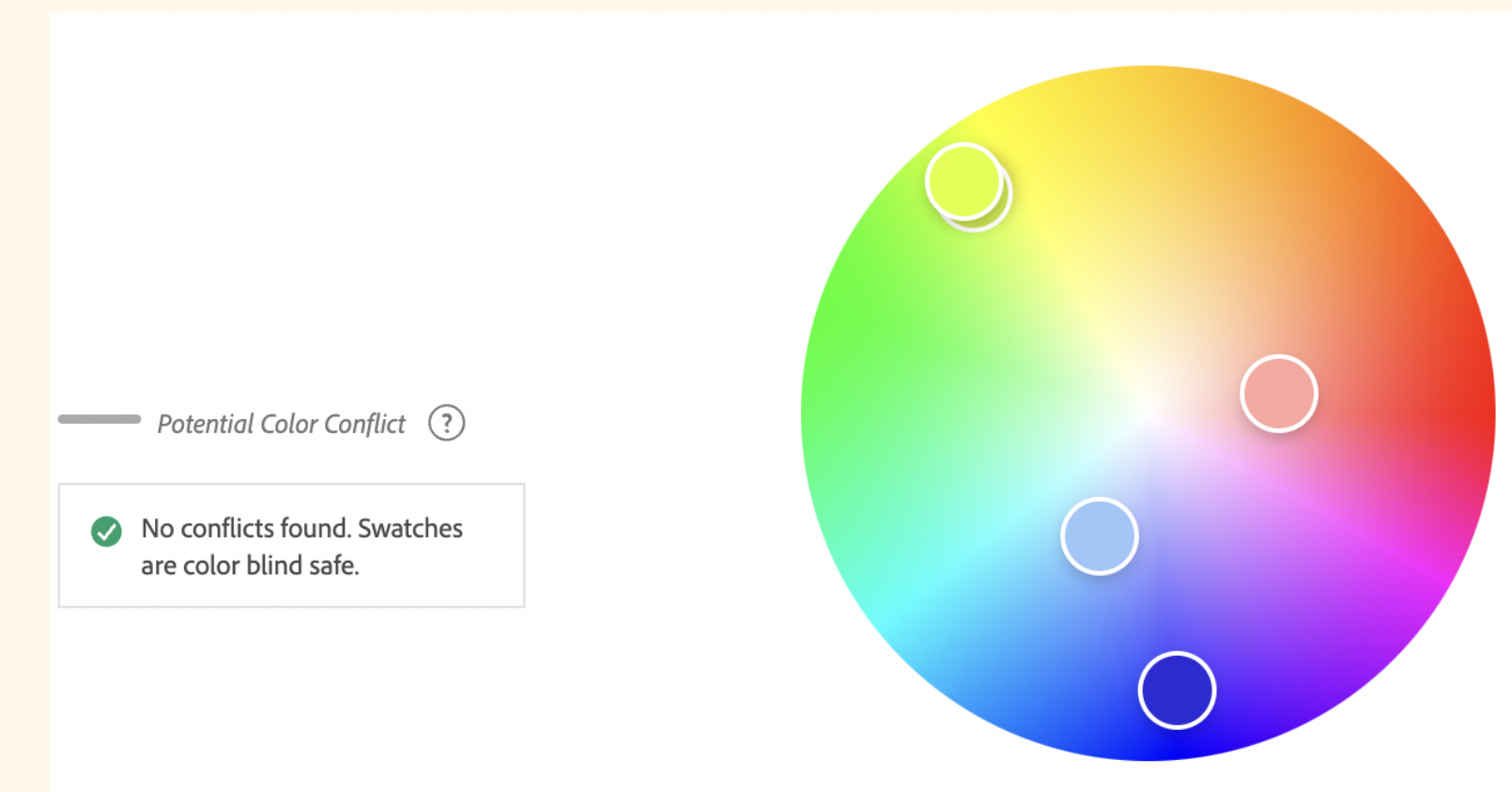
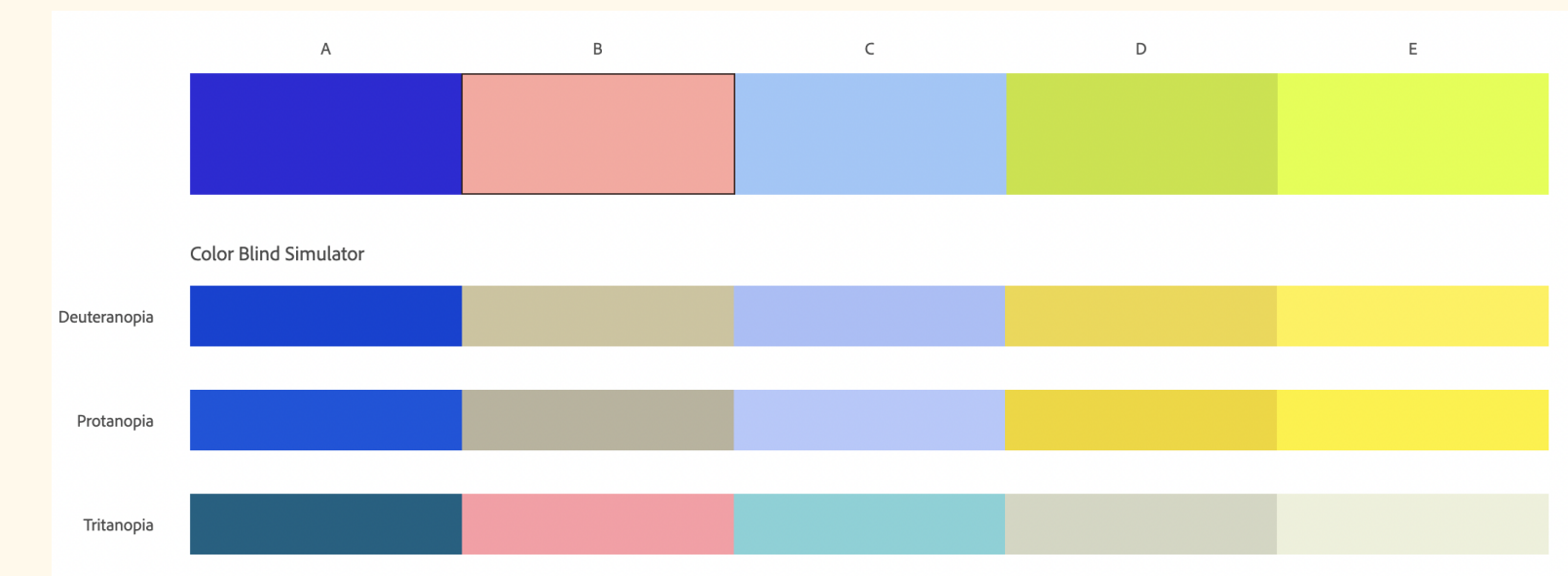
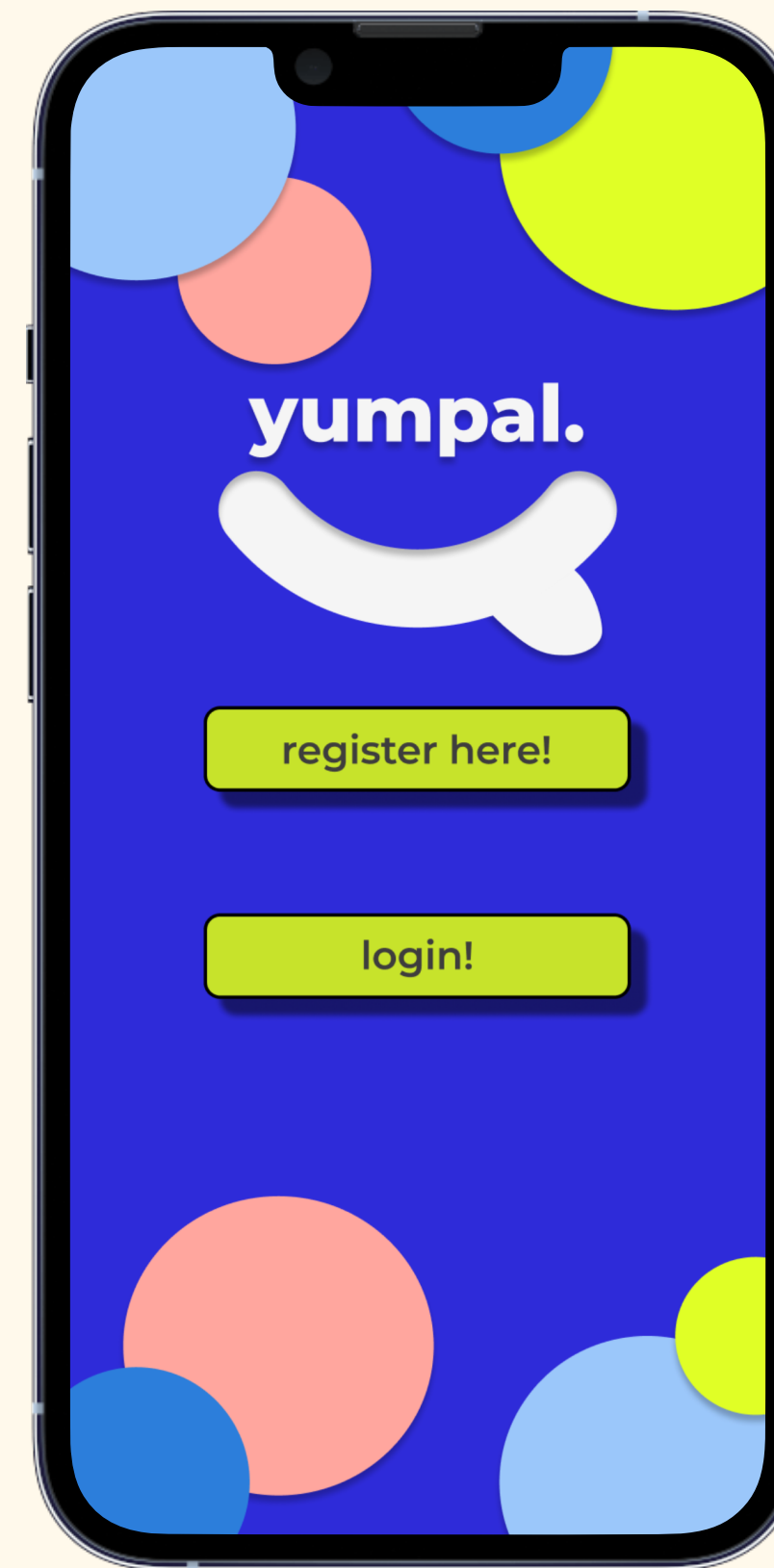
I then used the processes shown in my maps and flows to sketch out **low-fidelity wireframes** pictured below showing the meal-planning process in Yumpal.



🌸 The Solution: Branding and UI Elements

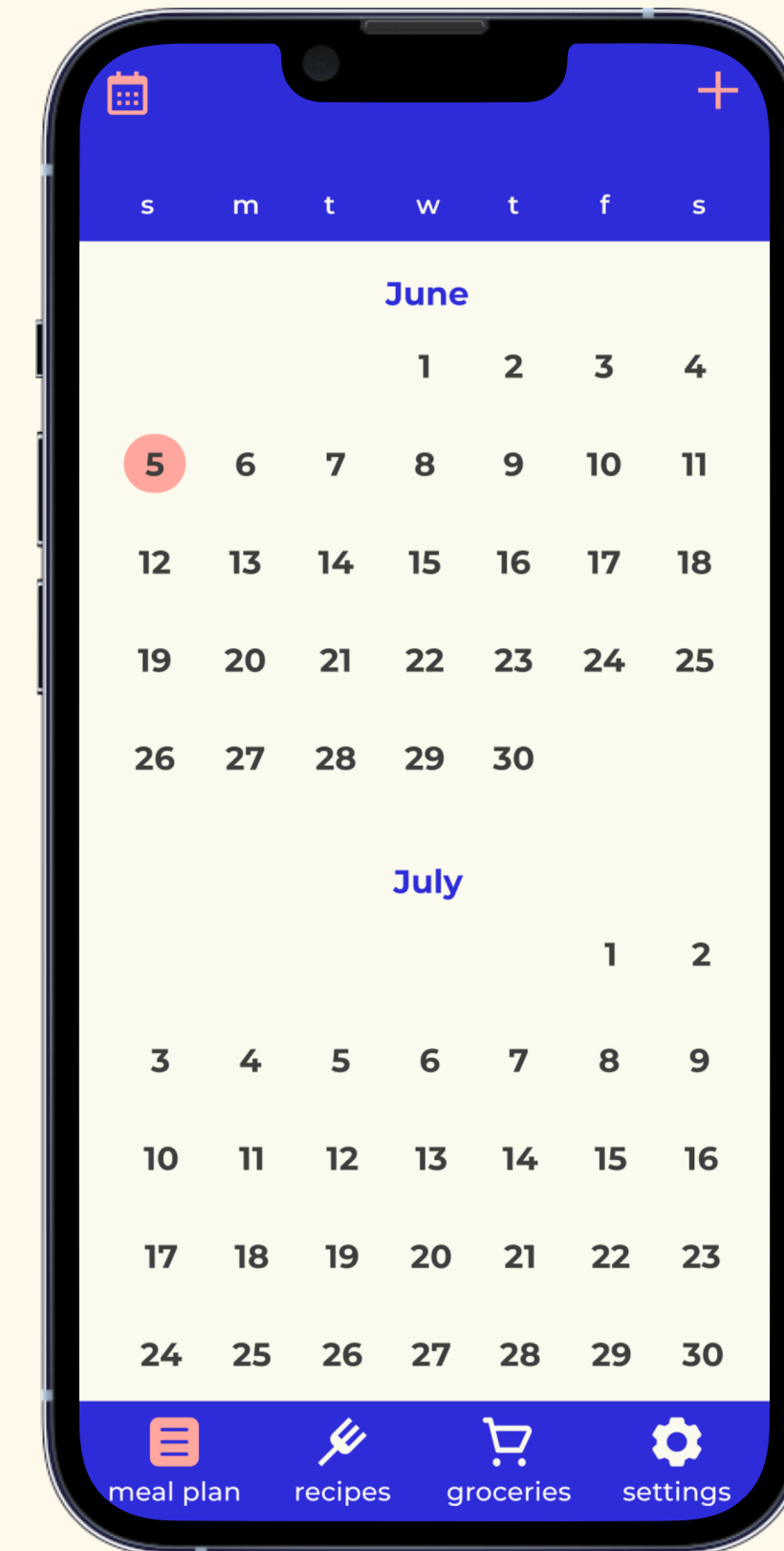
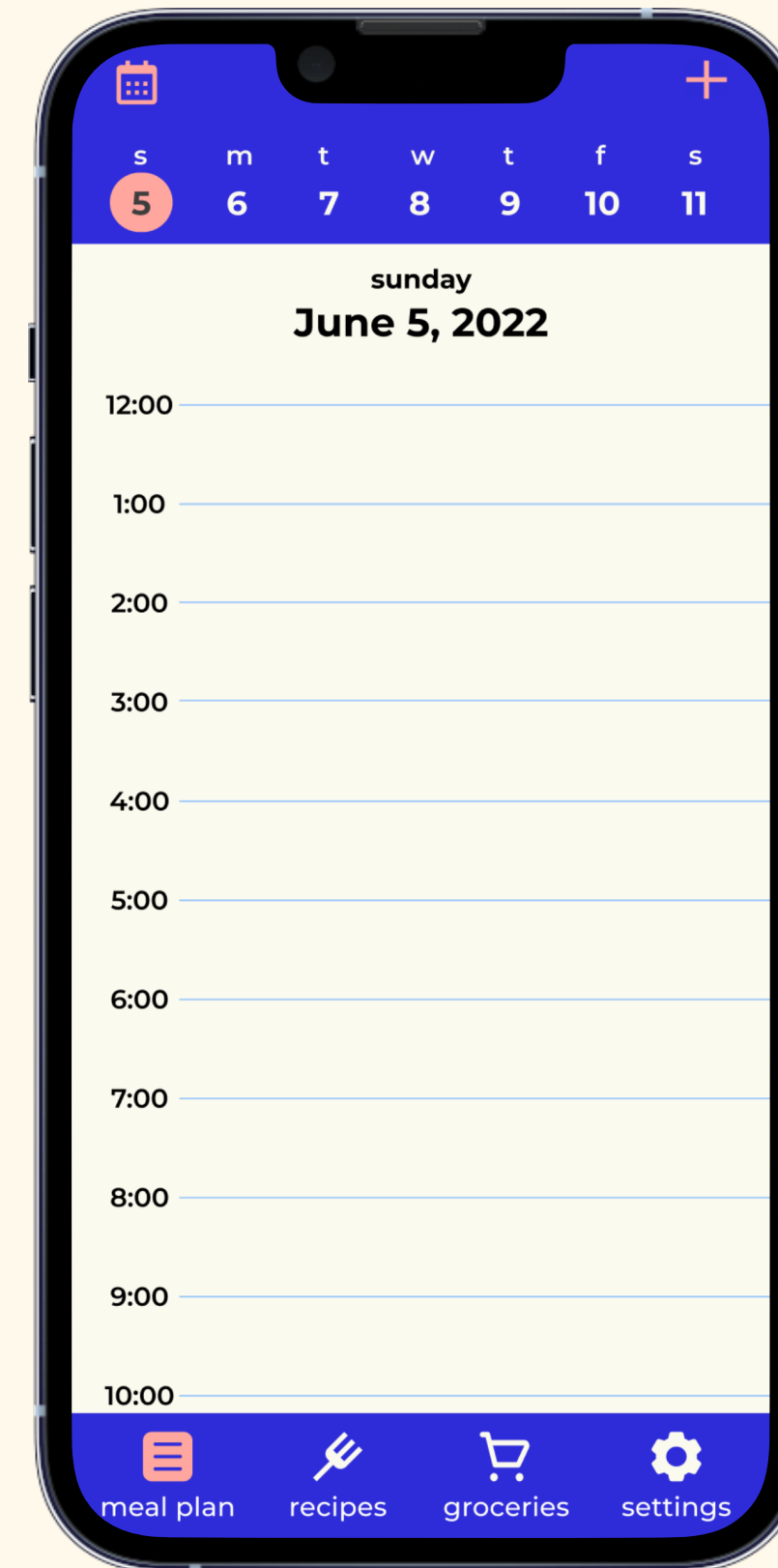
The end solution was an app that is not only very user-friendly, but maintains the structure necessary for an organizational tool.

The final high-fidelity mockups shown demonstrate the branding process I took, in which I created a logo of a smile licking its lips, and chose color-blind accessible colors that would give the application its energetic and outgoing mood. Text color and background color contrast interaction was also tested to ensure users' eyes would be comfortable when reading, especially when having bright, fun colors in the UI.



🌸 The Solution: High-Fidelity Mockups

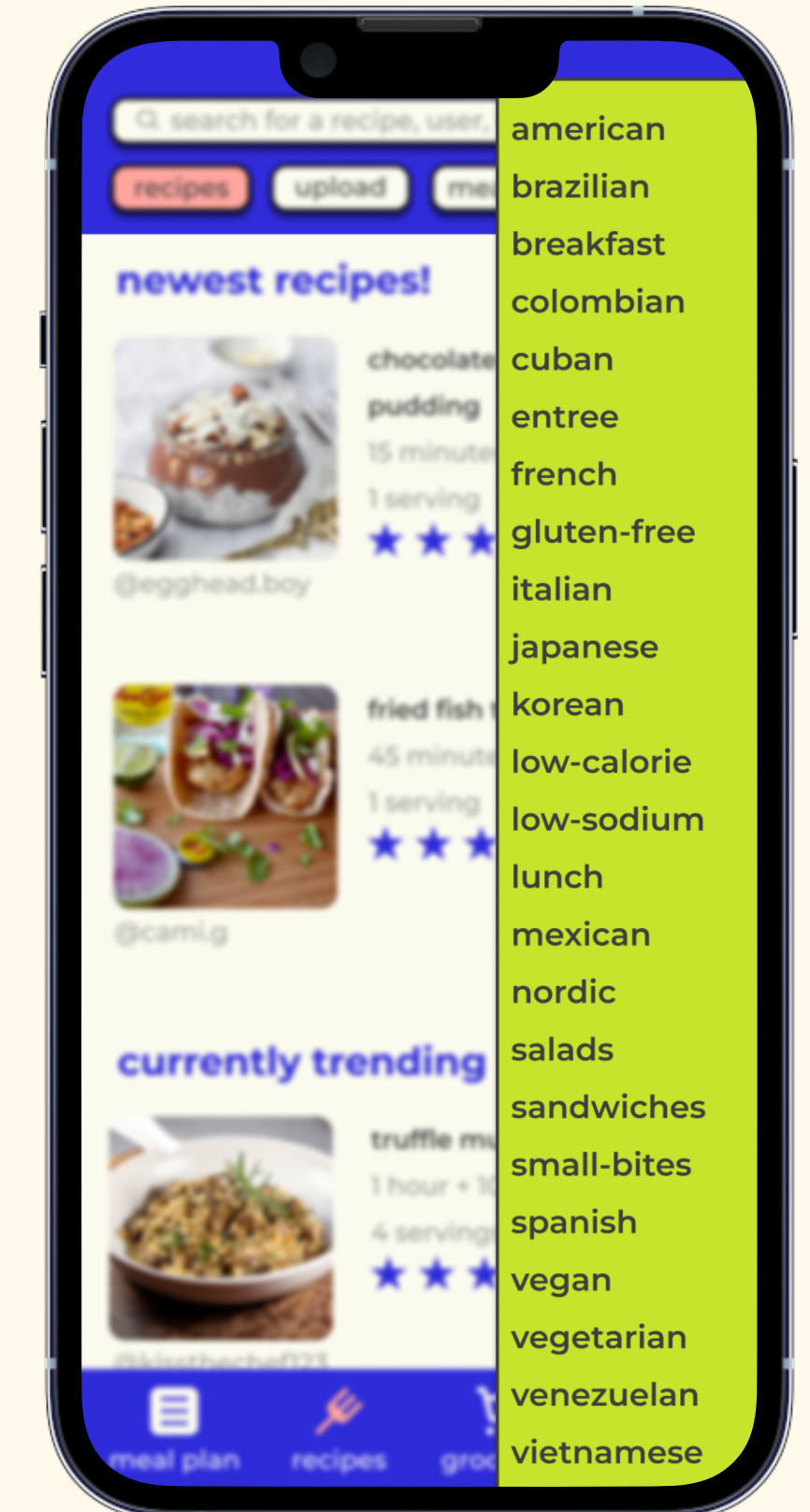
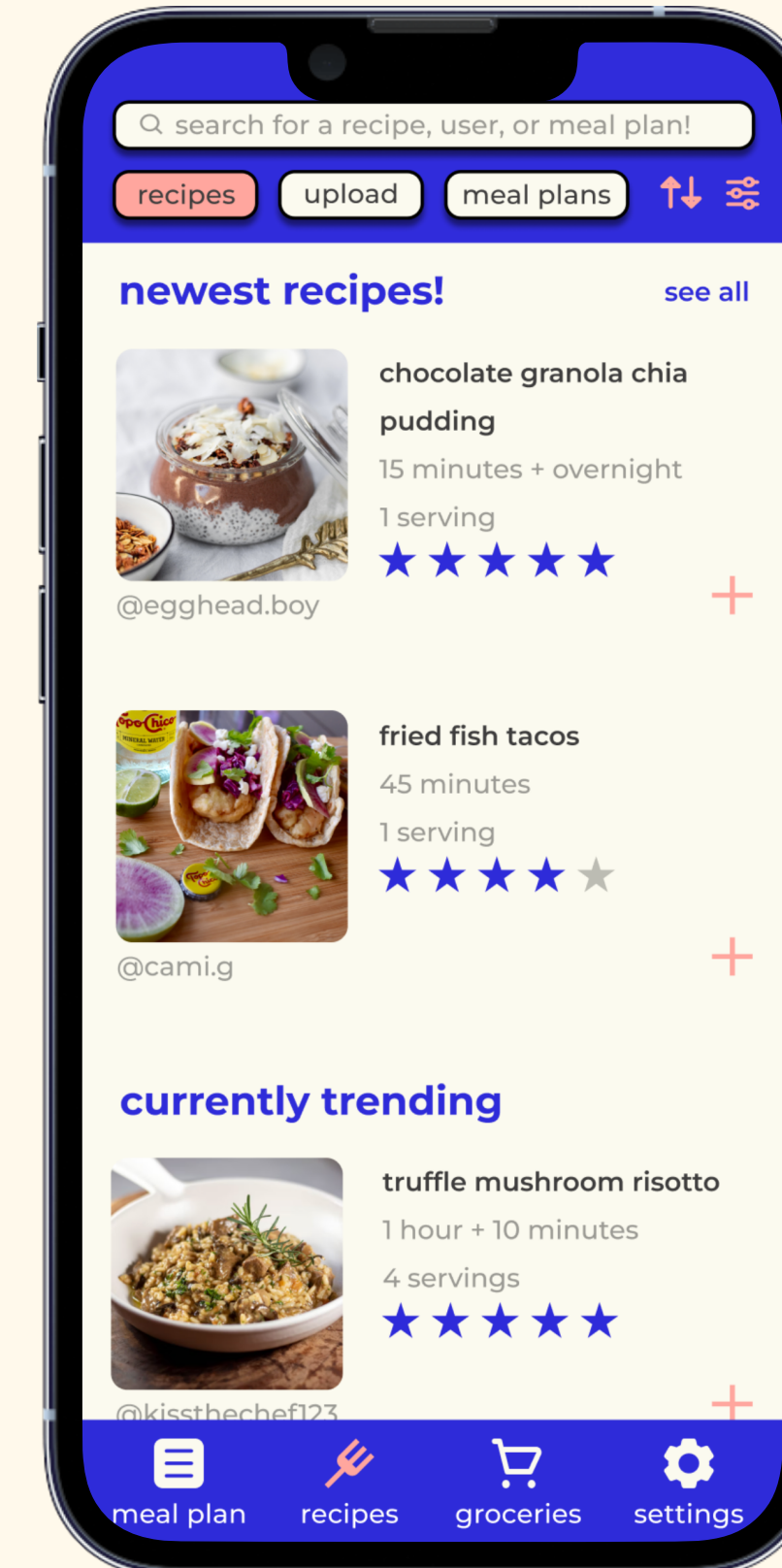
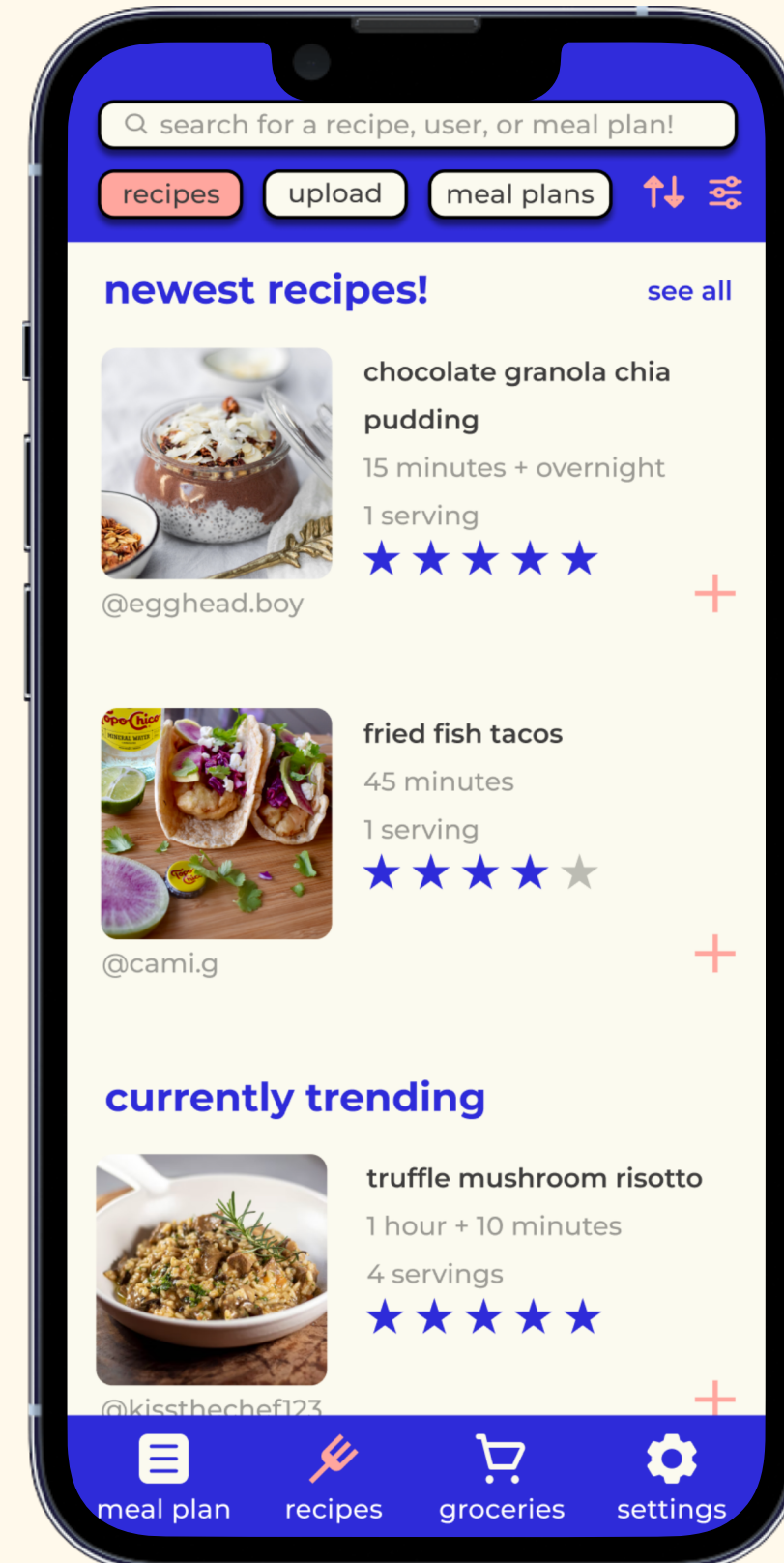
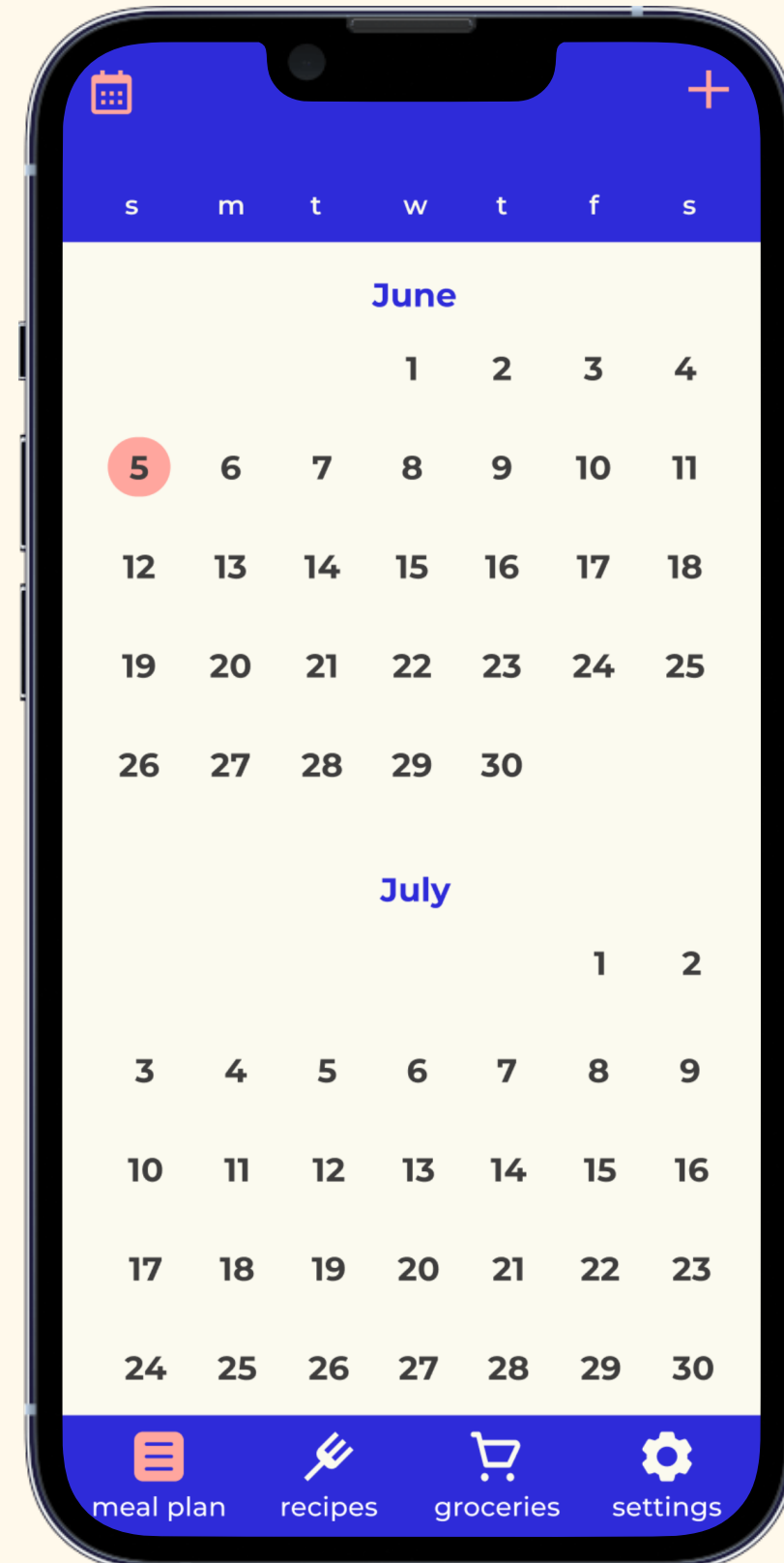
The following mockups demonstrate the branding and creative strategies I used, while also showing the main process where a user starts out from the agenda view and switches to calendar view by clicking the calendar icon (which can be switched back to the agenda page by clicking the circled date; intuitive to the iOS calendar UI).



🌸 The Solution: High-Fidelity Mockups (continued)

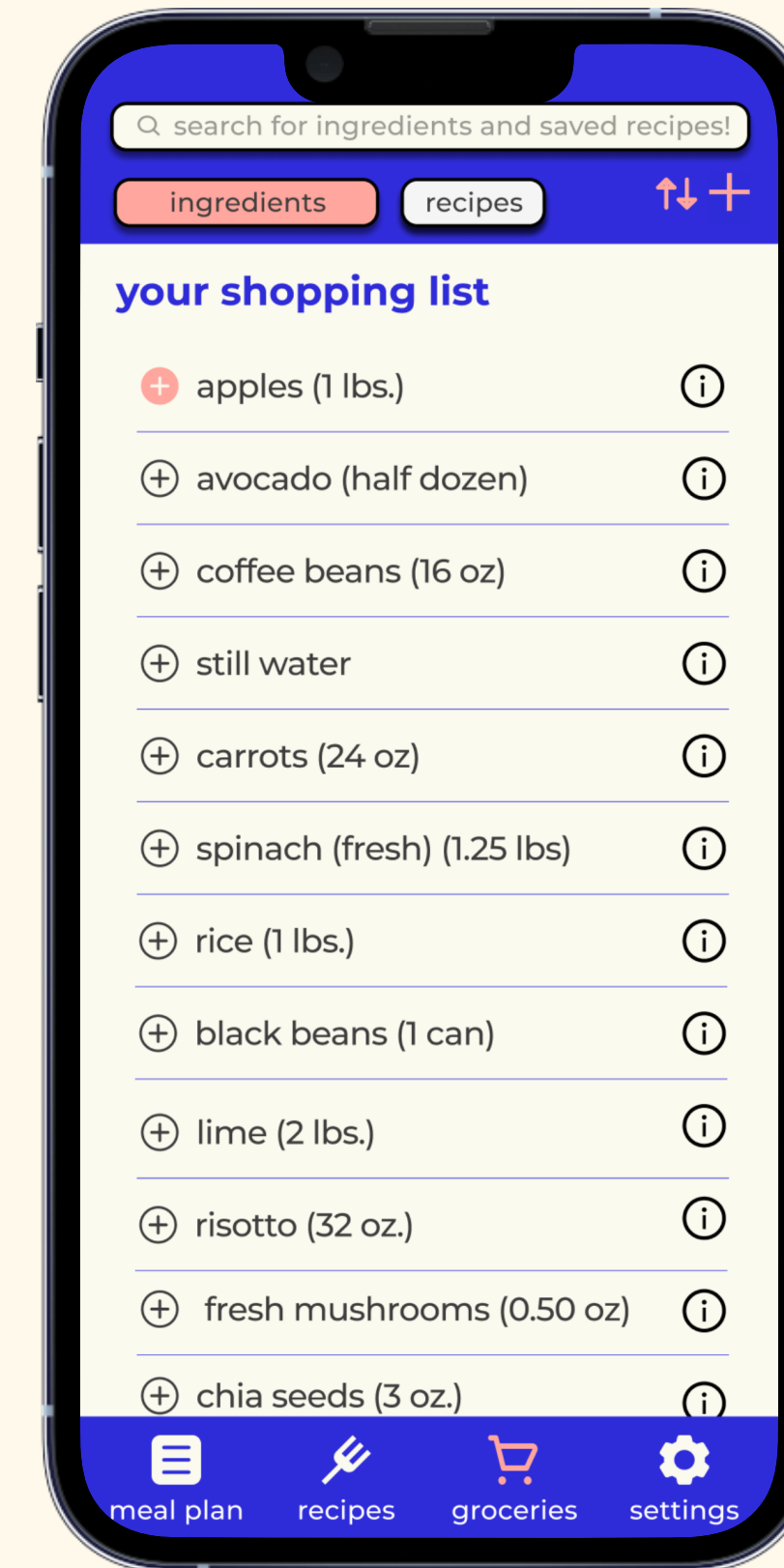
The user then navigates to the recipe page with the icon below or the + button at the top right...

... and can use the filter to choose their preferences.



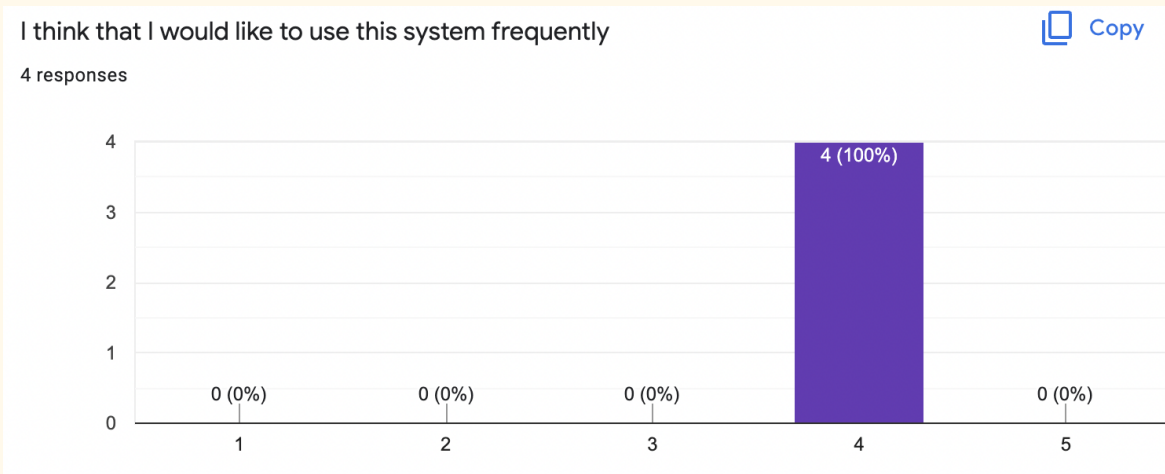
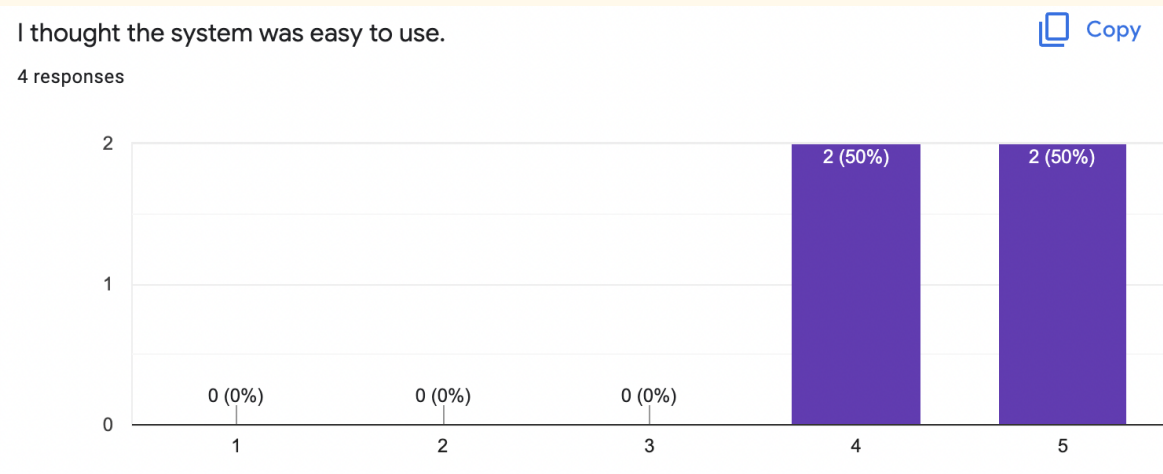
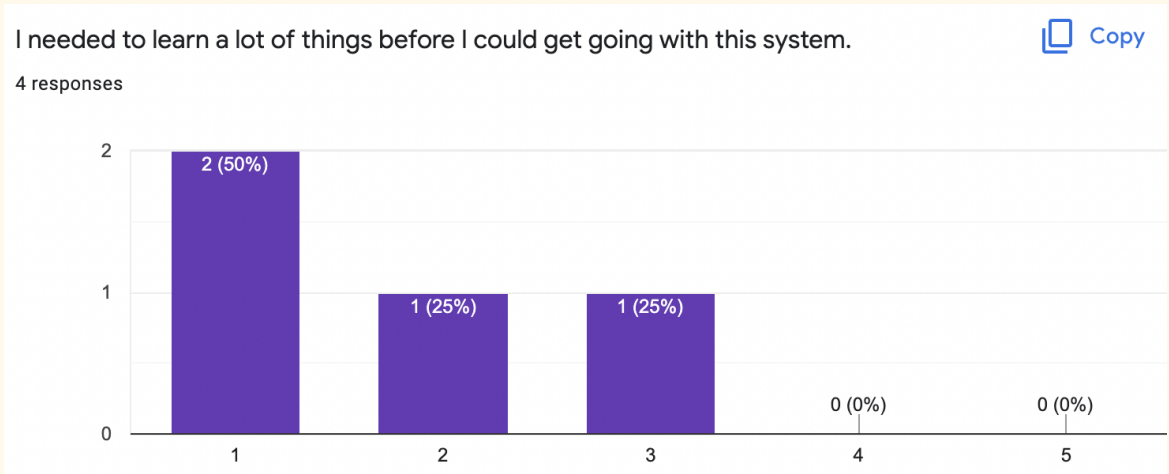
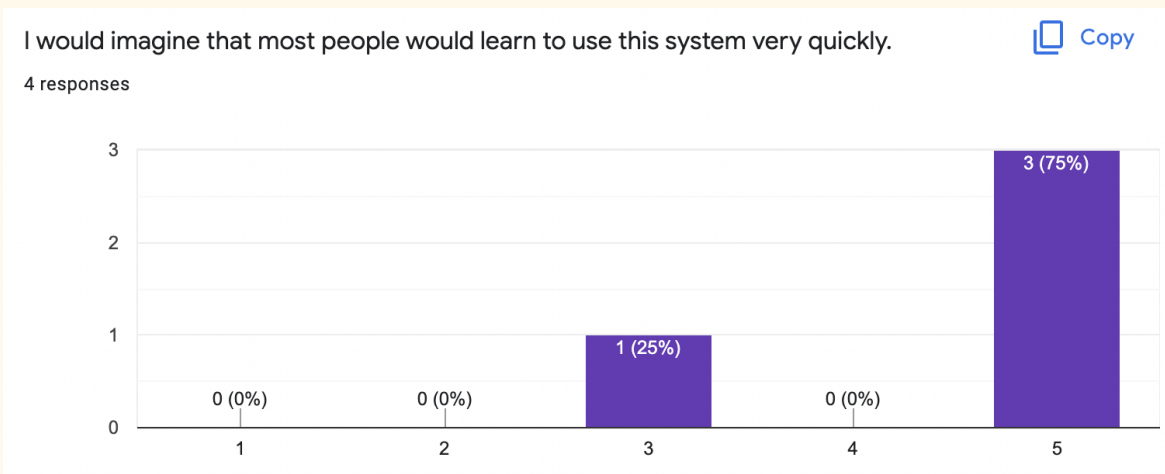
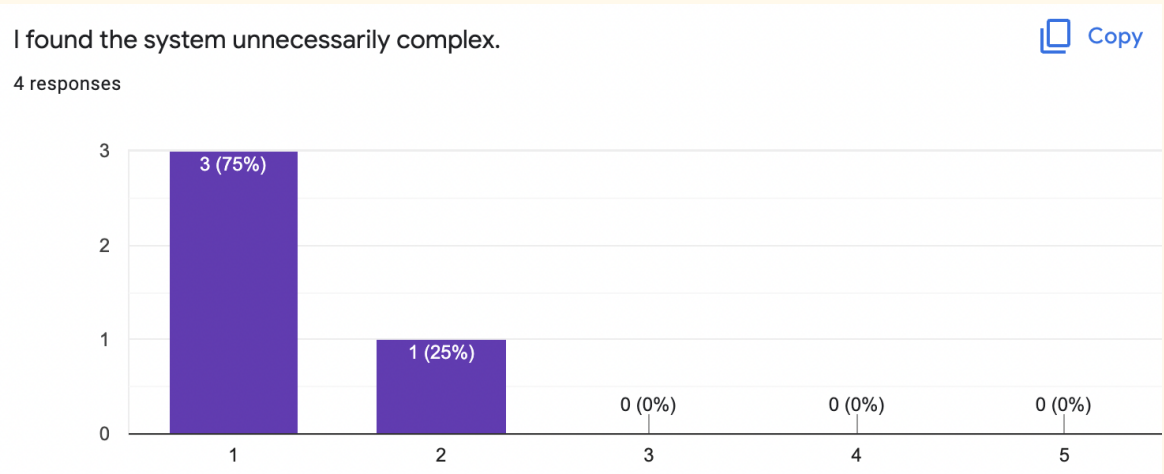
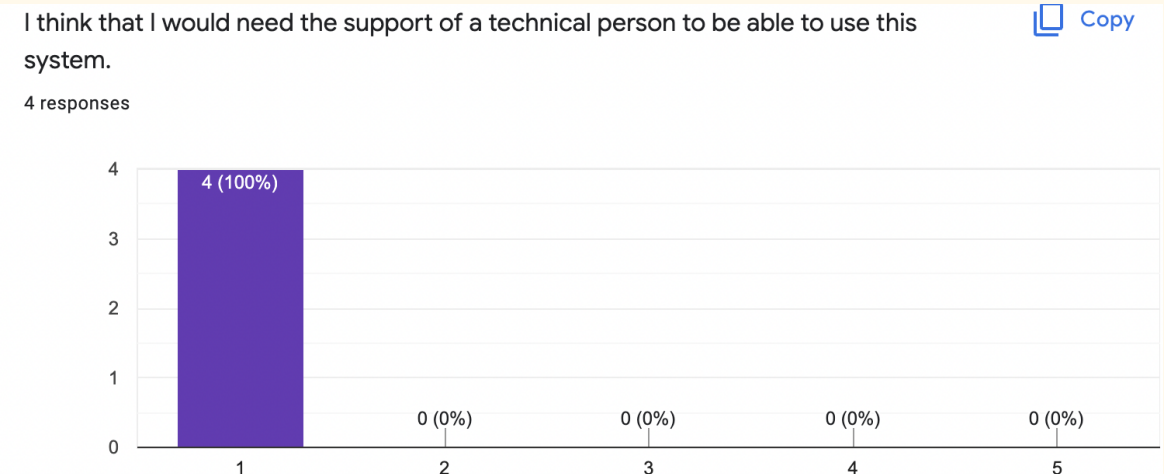
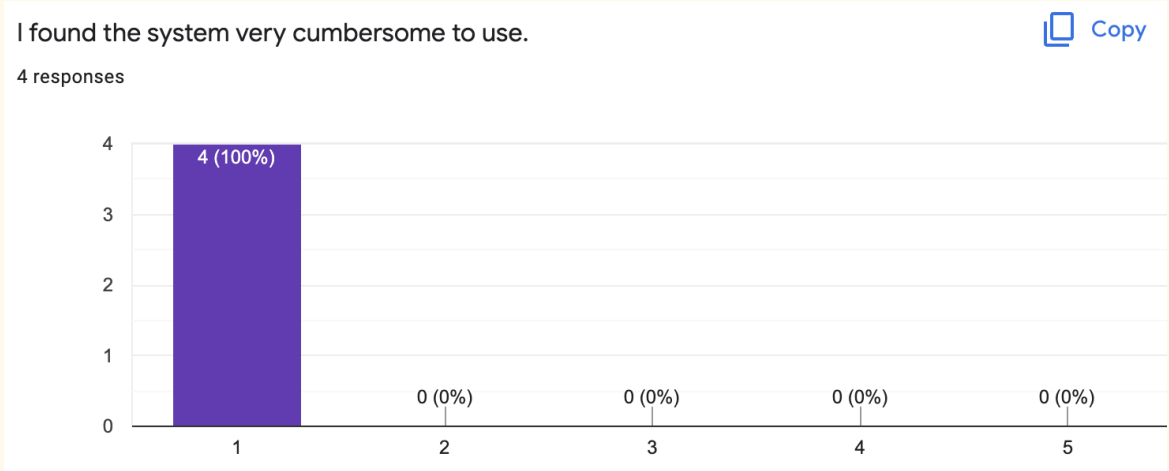
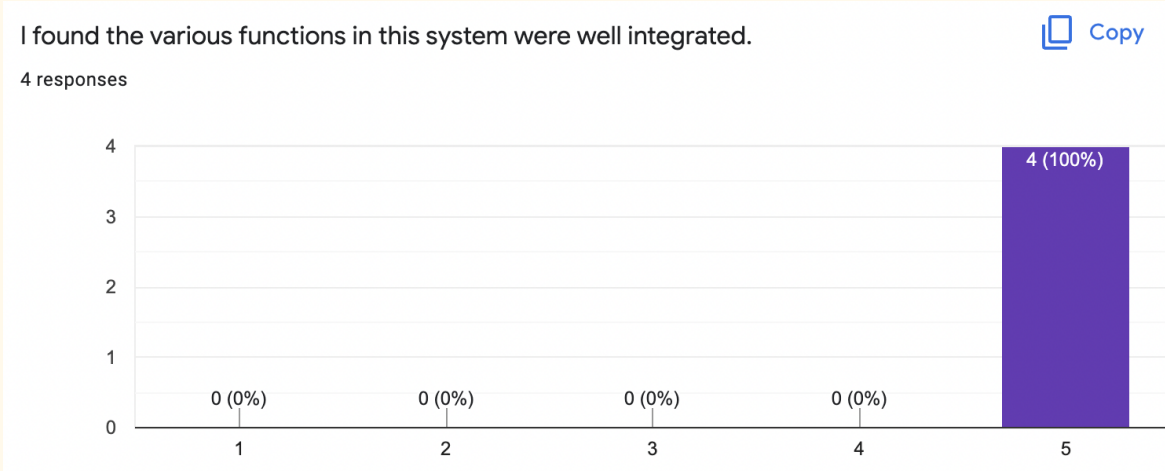
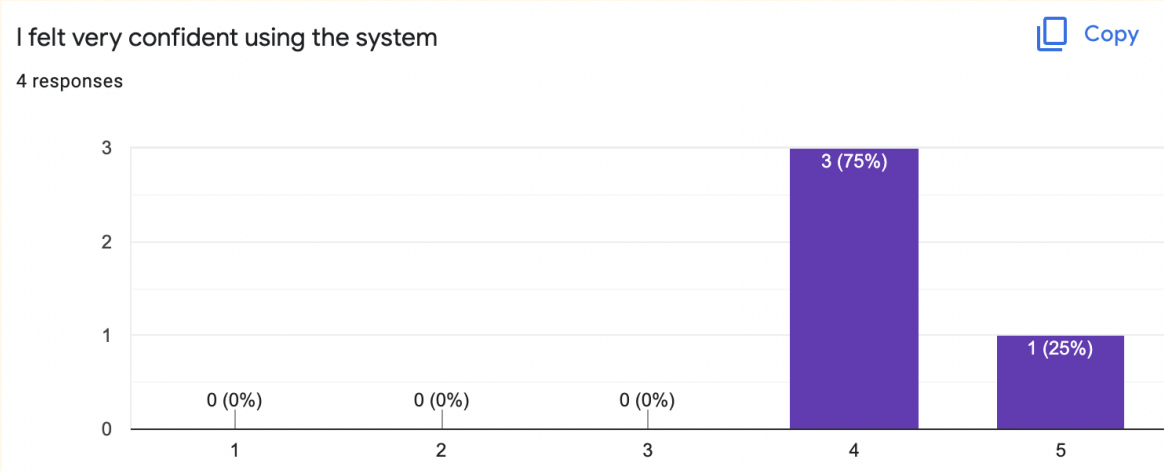
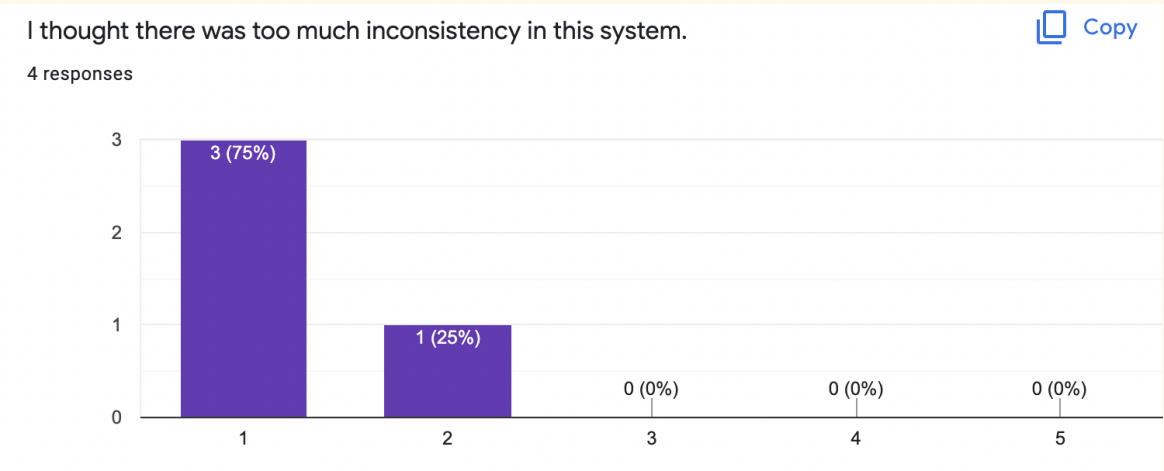
🌸 The Solution: High-Fidelity Mockups (continued)

After choosing a meal, the user is navigated to the shopping list, which not only shows the ingredients necessary for the chosen recipe but allows the user to edit these ingredient quantities to accommodate for large serving sizes.



The Results

For usability testing, I used an informal Systems Usability Scale with four participants in which they went through the prototype and navigated through different screens shown. I asked them to try and go through the meal-planning process, and had them answer 10 questions on a Likert scale. The results and questions are shown below.



The Results

For the most part, participants were generally pleased with the application; however, a few key things I would change to improve the quality of the application and my design process would be:

- **develop more prototypes and high-fidelity mockups to show the app's full capabilities, not just focusing on the meal-planning process**
- **develop more user tests**
- **try and introduce a business-centered goal to challenge myself with a more realistic product design setting**