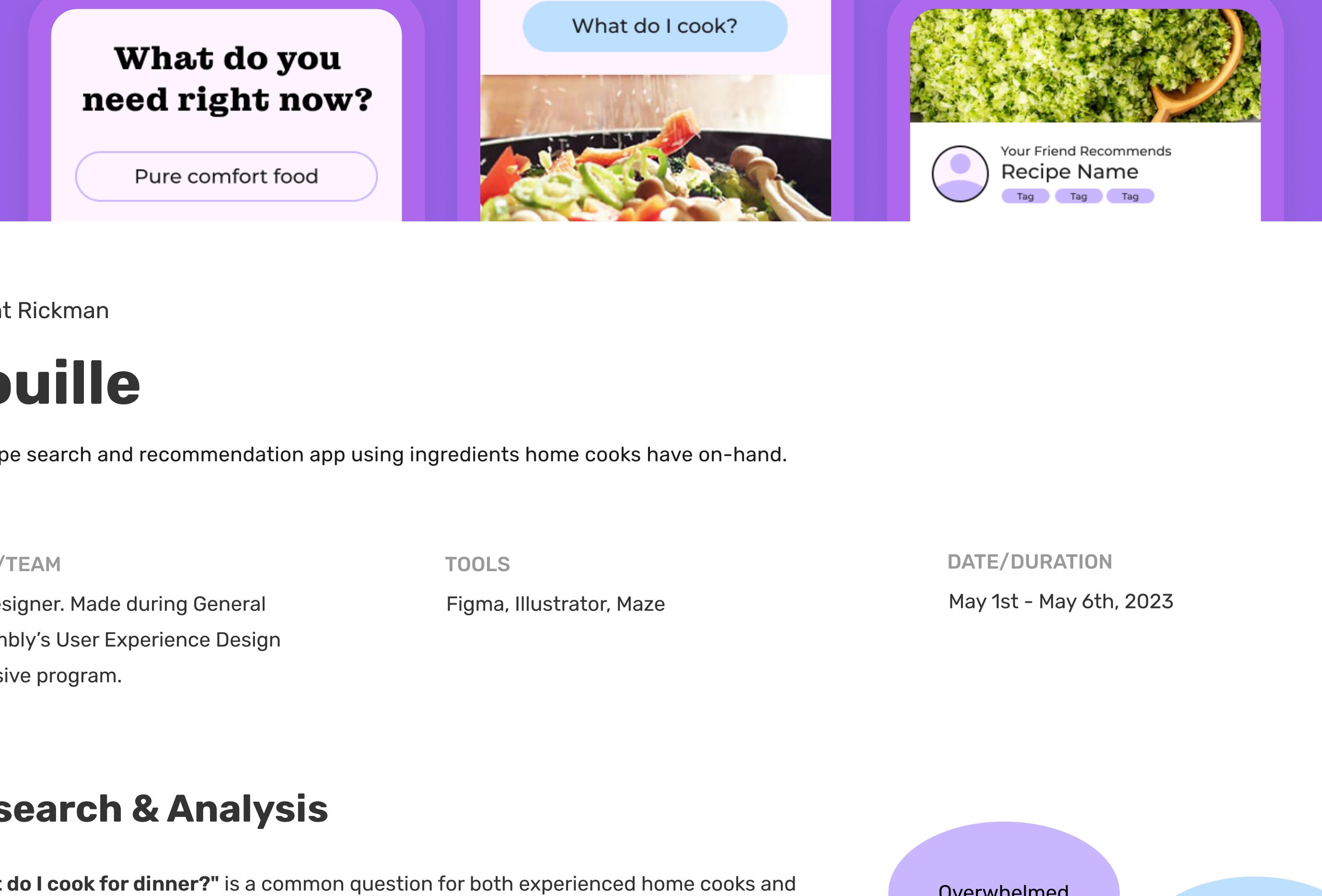


# Touille: UX Case Study



Wright Rickman

## Touille

A recipe search and recommendation app using ingredients home cooks have on-hand.

### ROLE/TEAM

UX Designer. Made during General Assembly's User Experience Design Intensive program.

### TOOLS

Figma, Illustrator, Maze

### DATE/DURATION

May 1st - May 6th, 2023

## Research & Analysis

"What do I cook for dinner?" is a common question for both experienced home cooks and dedicated meal preppers alike. To discover the challenges faced by these individuals, I conducted interviews with home cooks in their own kitchens.

The interviews quickly revealed a pattern – Every participant interviewed used the words "overwhelmed", "exhausted", and "paralysis".

"...candy and pickle chips."

"...a big handful of cheese."

"Let me order food this time and I'll sort it out later."

Overwhelmed

Exhausted

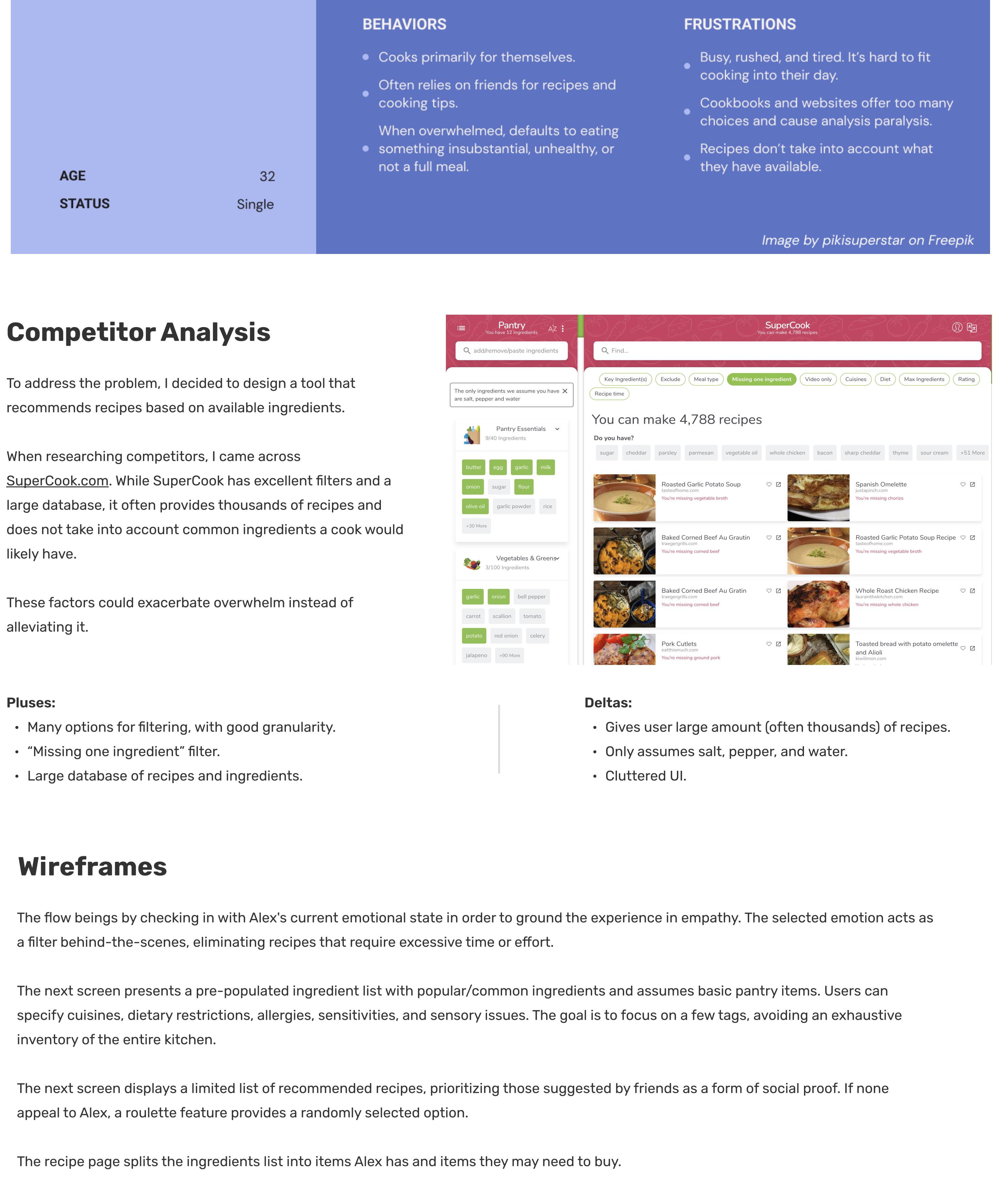
Paralysis

All of the participants are experienced cooks, love cooking, and have ingredients they would like to use in their kitchens. However, due to busy schedules, decision fatigue, and too many options, they ended up choosing what was nearby – often something unhealthy and unsatisfying.

[View Interview Questions]

## Affinity Map

While the majority of interview questions were about food and cooking, the participants spent more time talking about their feelings.



## Problem Statement

Users need quick recipes that use the ingredients they have on-hand since having too many choices can be overwhelming and the quick options are often unhealthy/insubstantial.

## User Persona

Alex is a young professional who typically cooks for themselves. They enjoy the act of cooking and seek substantial and healthy meals that fit into their busy schedule.

Alex needs a solution that offers easy, substantial recipes that consider the ingredients they have, reducing analysis paralysis and decision fatigue during meal preparation.

How might we reduce the overwhelm and decision fatigue Alex feels when it's time to cook?

AGE 32  
STATUS Single

Image by pikisuperstar on Freepik

## Competitor Analysis

To address the problem, I decided to design a tool that recommends recipes based on available ingredients.

When researching competitors, I came across SuperCook.com. While SuperCook has excellent filters and a large database, it often provides thousands of recipes and does not take into account common ingredients a cook would likely have.

These factors could exacerbate overwhelm instead of alleviating it.

Pluses:

- Many options for filtering, with good granularity.
- "Missing one ingredient" filter.
- Large database of recipes and ingredients.

### Deltas:

- Gives user large amount (often thousands) of recipes.
- Only assumes salt, pepper, and water.
- Cluttered UI.

## Wireframes

The flow begins by checking in with Alex's current emotional state in order to ground the experience in empathy. The selected emotion acts as a filter behind-the-scenes, eliminating recipes that require excessive time or effort.

The next screen presents a pre-populated ingredient list with popular/common ingredients and assumes basic pantry items. Users can specify cuisines, dietary restrictions, allergies, sensitivities, and sensory issues. The goal is to focus on a few tags, avoiding an exhaustive inventory of the entire kitchen.

The next screen displays a limited list of recommended recipes, prioritizing those suggested by friends as a form of social proof. If none appeal to Alex, a roulette feature provides a randomly selected option.

The recipe page splits the ingredients list into items Alex has and items they may need to buy.

[View Interactive Prototype]

## Test: Validation, Usability, Feedback

Before testing, I was fairly confident that the emoji screen was the strongest, including characterizing it as the main selling point in discussions.

However, after observing several users navigate through the flow to find a recipe, it turned out that the emoji was the most challenging screen for the users. The recipe list, which I felt was the weakest design, was, through this round of testing, the screen that needed the least iterating.

### Findings & Feedback:

- The emojis were subjective – "Does 😊 mean 'I need a quick recipe' or 'I need something to give me energy'?"
- Emojis were seen as off-topic, not being immediately related to food or cooking.
- "How are you feeling?" did not make participants feel empathized with in this context – "It sounds too much like a therapist."
- Mixing ingredients, cuisines, dietary restrictions, etc. together caused confusion.
- Search bar was easy to miss.
- Participants wanted to know before they selected a recipe if they had all the ingredients or needed to go shopping.

## Visual Design

Considering that users might arrive at the app feeling overwhelmed, the style guide aimed for a calming and friendly look and feel. Colors like lavender, sky blue, and pastel pink were used instead of colors that are normally associated with food and hunger, such as yellows, oranges, and reds.

#C8B6FF	#BDE0FE	#FEF4FF	#1C1C1C	#D9D9D9	#FFFFFF
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## High-Fidelity Prototype

In this second version, the question "How are you feeling?" was changed to "What do you need right now?", maintaining empathy while focusing more on offering solutions. Emojis were replaced with common cooking scenarios to reduce ambiguity and better demonstrate how Touille would fit into the user's life.

The ingredient list remained mostly unchanged, with the addition of a "pantry basics" tag, with the goal of adding clarity. Ingredients, cuisines, and dietary restrictions are also grouped together instead of jumbled up.

Lastly, on the recipe list screen, recipes are categorized as "I have everything I need" and "I'm missing one or two things" for quick assessment.

[View Interactive Prototype]

## Next Steps

- Continue usability testing to refine the second prototype.
- Further iterate on the recipe page design to include common features, such as cooking time, portion size adjustment, save, print, etc.
- Design, test, and iterate on social features:
  - Recipe sharing and uploading.
  - User profiles.
  - Ability to save favorite ingredients, cuisines, or recipes.
  - Ability to set dietary restrictions, allergies, sensitivities, and other food preferences.
  - Liking or following recipes, tags, and people.
- Develop a functional MVP for the web.

## Thank You for Reading

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