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Canada's food guide

Renovation of Canada's food guide kitchen Web design: bringing the food guide to life
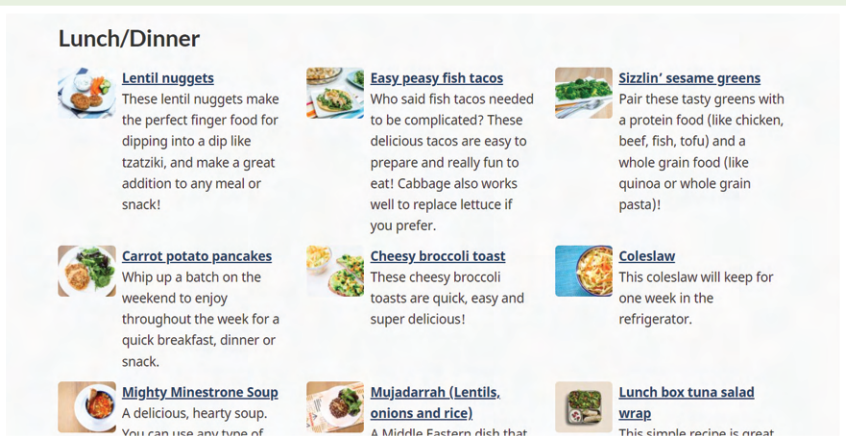
Background

Canada's food guide website:

- promotes healthy eating and overall nutritional well-being
- houses recipes, videos, and actionable advice
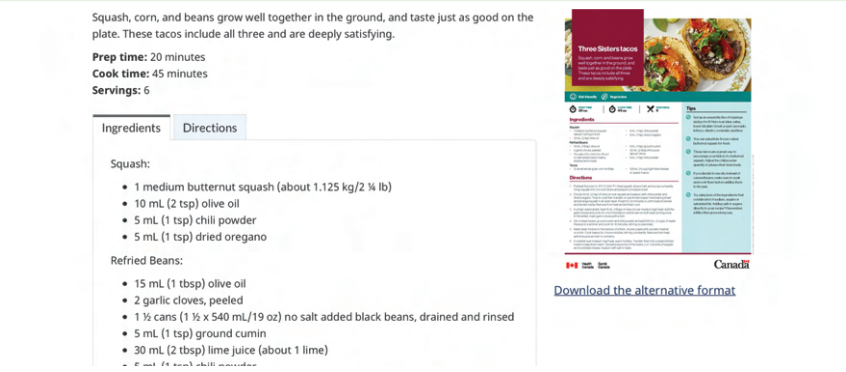- helps Canadians apply dietary guidance in their daily lives

However, prior to this project, the interface:

- prevented users from easily finding recipes as it was a list of recipes with no search function

The "old" landing page

- did not integrate the food guide's dietary guidance with the recipes

The "old" recipe page

It was important to solve this issue as recipes:

- have the highest engagement rates online compared to other food guide products
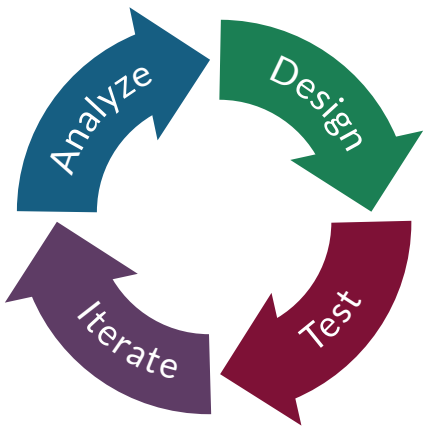- help users develop food skills, make healthier food choices, and improve their health

Objective

- reinforce dietary guidance by linking recipes to Canada's food guide to create a cohesive and immersive user experience
- offer a user-friendly experience that is competitive with leading recipe websites

Method and design process

Analyze leading recipe websites to determine expected features.

Design an interactive prototype to achieve our project objective.

Iterate by using participant feedback to improve the design.

Test for successful task completion in the new design with 24 participants.

Some key improvements include:

Making labels clearer

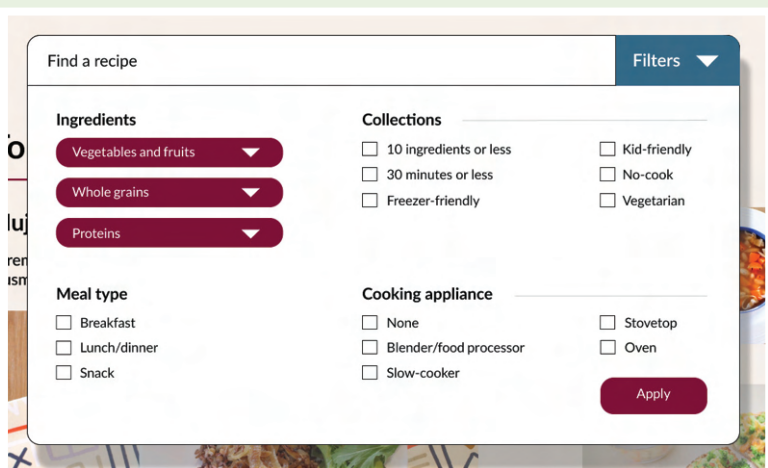There were too many button choices and not all the labels were clear.

We combined the buttons for "Food choices", "Eating habits", and "Tips" into "Tips for healthy eating" and created a new "The kitchen" label for the recipe site.

The labels after testing

Optimizing the mobile design

Participants noted that the text size was too small, and the layout was crowded which made it difficult to read.

The new layout has bigger text and images, more spacing, and no horizontal scrolling.

Before testing   **After testing**

Improving search

When searching for recipes, many missed the filter options as they were hidden in a dropdown. We changed the location to be a noticeable left-hand navigation.
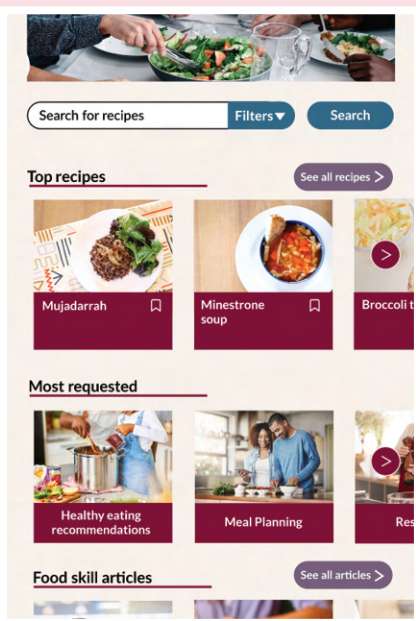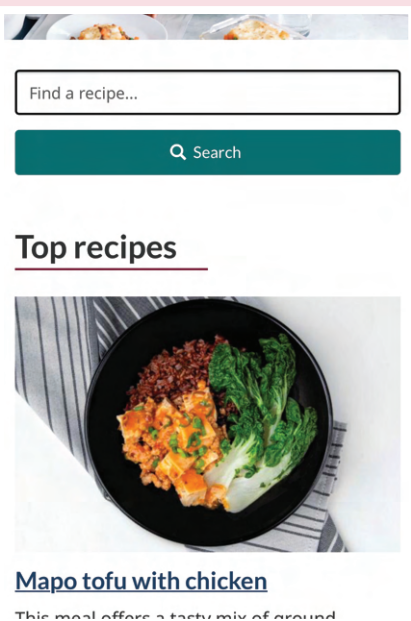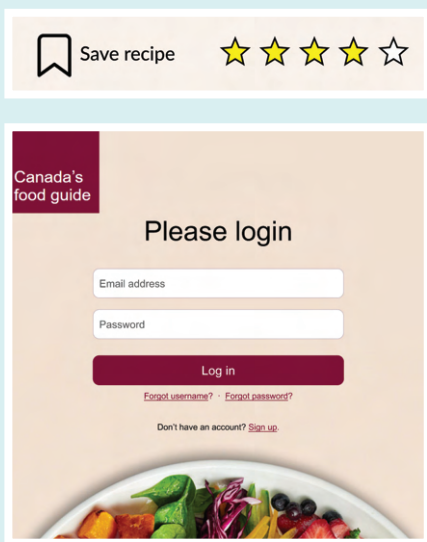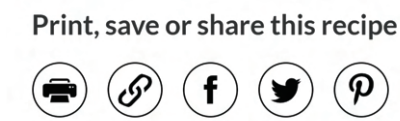

The filter design before testing

Changing the save feature

When saving a recipe, many expressed reluctance to create an account to save it.

They would prefer to print the recipe to save it, so we removed the account feature and added a print button instead.

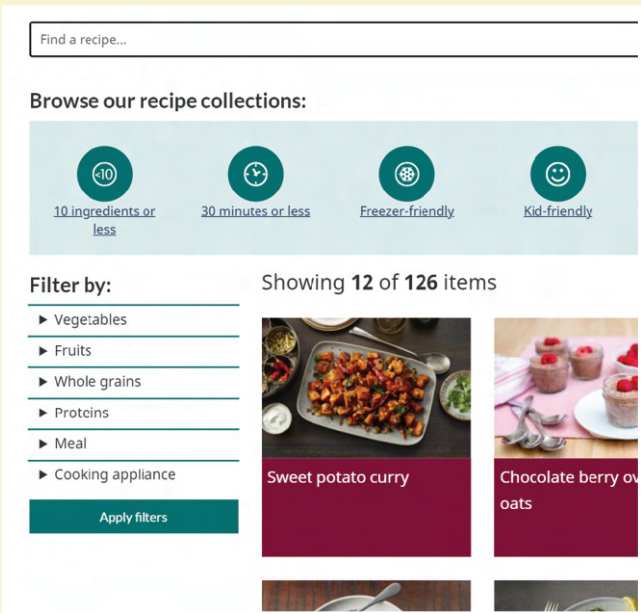**Before testing: login to save**   **After testing: print to save**

Results

The new kitchen landing page design highlights:

- top recipes
- food skills articles
- recipe collections

When finding recipes, users are now able to search recipes by keywords or filter by meal type, cooking appliance, and food groups.

The "new" food guide kitchen landing page

Recipes now include visual instructions or a video and links to relevant Healthy Eating Recommendations. This creates more engagement and an immersive experience.

The filter design after testing

Improving the design resulted in a significant increase for page views:

57% for total page views
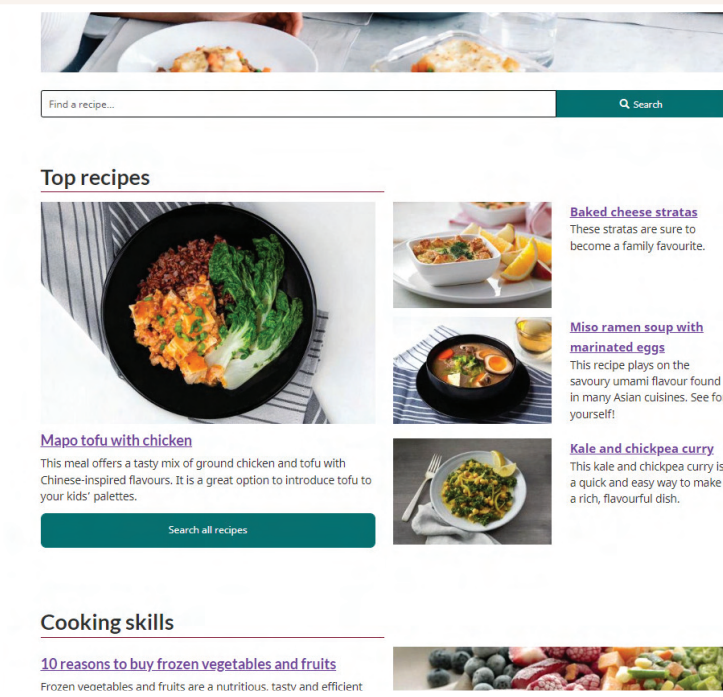
19% for page views per visit

38% for page views of Healthy Eating Recommendations

The "new" recipe page design with visual instructions in a carousel

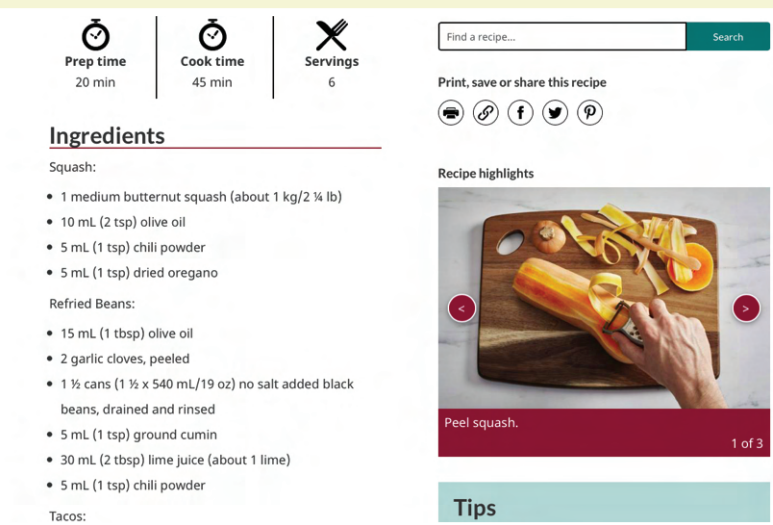Links to a related recipe and relevant Healthy Eating Recommendations

Conclusion

This project improved the recipe website's usability and increased traffic to other food guide pages, which supports increased use of Health Canada's dietary guidance.

Conducting usability testing can help Health Canada improve its service delivery to Canadians to better support their health.