

Salt & Silver

Game Design Concept and Prototype
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Salt & Silver, where every meal is magic, and every potion a recipe.

I. CONCEPT STATEMENT

The player is a cook and alchemist hired to assassinate certain customers without getting caught.

II. GENRE(S)

Narrative, Cooking Simulation, and Alchemy Simulation.

III. TARGET AUDIENCE

The player is motivated to complete challenges and experiment with new ingredients and recipes to complete the quest. Players who like cooking or alchemy sims, strategy, and morally gray themes are targeted. The age range is primarily 18 to 35 in all genders. The ESRB rating is M, Mature 18+.

IV. UNIQUE SELLING POINTS

The game is not only a cooking sim or an alchemy sim; it combines both, where the player experiments with different ingredients to make differently effective potions to use in their cooking to assassinate their targets, without getting caught. It is where suspense, culinary art, and lethal alchemy intersect.

V. PLAYER EXPERIENCE AND GAME POV

The player is a skilled cook and secret alchemist, managing their restaurant and secret lab. It is a dark fantasy world with a bustling city featuring a restaurant, a secret alchemy lab, the market, and forest. The game inspires the thrill of crafting and experimenting with recipes and potions to both delight customers and eliminate targets. The player can feel curious and intrigued with discovering new recipes, the satisfaction from successful cooking and potion crafting, and the thrill of nearly getting caught. Managing the restaurant, gathering ingredients, and solving quests will keep the player engaged. As well as the constant challenge of optimizing recipes and potions.

VI. VISUAL AND AUDIO STYLE

Realistic 3D art with relaxing colors for the restaurant and grim and dark colors for the alchemy lab and forest. Some alchemy illustrations for User Interface (UI) and potion design inspirations are referenced. This style supports immersion in a fantasy world that is both inviting, the restaurant, and foreboding, the quests.

VII. GAME WORLD FICTION

A fantasy city with different districts, a market, a restaurant, a forest, and a secret alchemy lab. The characters are the player, a cook and alchemist, the restaurant staff, the waiters and cashier, the mysterious clients, who send their assassination quests in riddles, the targets, whom the player assassinates using their potions without getting caught, and other city Non-Player Characters (NPCs), like shoppers, and restaurant customers.

VIII. MONETIZATION

The game adopts a free-to-play (F2P) model, and monetization is integrated to support player engagement while avoiding pay-to-win mechanics. Key monetization points include early access to rare elements, tools, ingredients, and recipes, where the player can purchase them ahead of normal progression. They can also purchase visual customizations for the restaurant, character outfits, and UI themes that do not impact gameplay. As well as the ability to purchase optional quests that offer exclusive rewards. In addition to time-saving consumables that accelerate potion crafting or reduce cooldowns.

IX. PLATFORM, TECHNOLOGY, AND SCOPE

PCs will be the initial platform, due to the complex UI and detailed graphics, then potentially tablet and mobile for portability. Realistic 3D art with relaxing vibes is used for the restaurant, and grim dark colors for the lab. Unity Engine is used for its robustness for simulation. The first playable will take 6 to 9 months. The full game will take 18 to 24 months. Our team is a small one, consisting of 8 members: a designer, 3 programmers, 2 artists, a writer, and a sound designer. The major risks are balancing 2 gameplay styles, alchemy and cooking, maintaining player engagement across shifts, cooking to potion making and assassination, and clarity of recipes and ingredients usage.

X. CORE LOOPS

The player feels constant progress and meaningful impact with the experimentation and restaurant management balance, achieved by the following actions:

- 1) Cook and manage the restaurant.
- 2) Earn money.
- 3) Buy or collect ingredients and tools.
- 4) Use different ingredients to craft potions.
- 5) Complete the assassination quests.
- 6) Gain reputation and rewards.
- 7) Unlock new tools, recipes, ingredients, and quests.

The player is expected to complete the quests within the time limit without getting caught by anyone, the other staff, customers, or police, all while cooking and managing the restaurant to earn money. They can also purchase rare ingredients or time-saving consumables to complete quests faster.

XI. OBJECTIVES AND PROGRESSION

The player moves between the restaurant, alchemy lab, and city locations, the market, and the forest. The tutorials introduce the player to the restaurant, alchemy lab, and ingredients collection locations. As well as cooking and potion-making basics. Early quests introduce assassination mechanics and how not to get caught. At first, the player is given several potions to use, then they are introduced to the lab and the potion recipes with the given ingredients. After that, they are to buy and collect ingredients for the recipes. Later, the difficulty is increased with complex potion recipes and cooking challenges.

XII. GAME SYSTEMS

The game consists of multiple systems: the restaurant management system, the alchemy crafting system, the quests system, the dialogue and narrative system, the character progression system, and the UI system. The restaurant management system consists of the inventory, the cooking, and the customer satisfaction. The alchemy crafting system consists of the inventory and the potion creation. The quest system consists of receiving, tracking, and solving the quests. The character progression system refers to how the player evolves and grows in power and skill over time. The UI system is tailored for the cooking and alchemy workflows.

XIII. INTERACTIVITY

The player interacts with the inventory to use the cooking and alchemy ingredients, tools, and recipes they collected. They can cook dishes, craft potions, and complete quests, with visual and audio feedback and success or failure states. They develop long-term strategies like optimal recipes, ingredient sourcing, and assassination planning. Most of the time, the player is cooking dishes under pressure during the day, managing restaurant logistics, preparing ingredients, assigning staff, and ensuring customer satisfaction. They also explore the city for new ingredients and recipes, complete quests discreetly, and upgrade tools, recipes, and prepare for the next cycle. The quests come in terms of riddled messages, where the player has to solve them to know their target and the best potion to use. The player can navigate between different locations like the restaurant, the forest, and the city market. They can click, drag, or navigate the UI to gather ingredients, manage tools, or talk to NPCs. The game day is divided into day and night. The daytime is for the restaurant management, and the nighttime is for alchemy experimentation and potion making for the quests. Physics is limited to animations and effects like potion brewing, cooking tools. There is no direct combat as all assassinations happen via stealth, deduction, and alchemy. If the wrong potion is used or the timer expires, quests may fail and affect the player's reputation.

XIV. LINKS

Demo Video and GitHub Repository links.