



COOKIE JAM BLAST: A MATCH3 TEARDOWN

TED LIM

04/04/19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Relevance

- In a saturated market, Match 3 titles must have quality gameplay and an innovative selling point to break into the top grossing lists. This teardown aims to understand where Cookie Jam Blast succeeds and where it can improve as it brings with it beautiful 3D graphics, additional Match3 mechanics and a revised meta-system.

Gameplay

- A visually pleasing sweets-themed Match3 game with tons of puzzles and levels to work through.

History

- Its predecessor Cookie Jam peaked as a top 5 grossing game on the Google Play store.
- Cookie Jam Blast peaked at top 100 grossing on the Google Play store.
- Current top 200 grossing game on both Google Play and iOS stores.

AGENDA

Gameplay

Main Loop

Rewards & Retention

Monetization

TAKEAWAYS

STRENGTHS

- **Quality Gameplay**
 - With fun puzzles, visually satisfying graphics, and interesting mechanics, Cookie Jam Blast expertly introduces the many different game modes it has to offer with constant aids and reminders so that players can quickly build their understanding of the unique quirks in this Match 3 title.
- **Solid Retention Systems**
 - For players seeking a constant sense of progression and stream of puzzles to solve, Cookie Jam Blast ensures this experience by frequently providing helpful boosts and incentives for players to return and continue solving puzzles.
- **Easy Access Purchases**
 - Single-tap small premium currency purchases for extra moves, boosts, and speedups work hand in hand with Streak-related features and make players susceptible to loss aversions, encouraging spending to avoid losing Streak rewards.

TAKEAWAYS

WEAKNESSES

- Airships
 - As a unique selling point, Airship engagement frequency feels rather low due to long cooldown times on Airship abilities and slow Airship progression.
 - Removing a layer of abstraction in Recipes and having Airships be obtained and upgraded directly through Ingredients could improve the meaningfulness of collecting Ingredients and could also improve clarity on Ingredient Bag utility, encouraging more purchases of premium Ingredient Bags.
- Store
 - Cookie Jam Blast does not have a dedicated Store button on the home screen like most games. The only Store access points on the home screen are the “+” currency options with other access points scattered throughout the game. Each Store access point offers different bundle items, making specific bundles hard to find and compare with others.
 - Including a Main Store button on the home screen that consolidates all the purchasable items could yield some benefits.

GAMEPLAY



GAMEPLAY: THE BASICS

- Players swap pieces to create matches with 3+ of the same color pieces to complete objectives.
- If players fail to complete the level objective(s) within the move limit, they lose a life.
 - Players may use extra moves to complete a level during “Overtime” by paying premium currency, Gold Coins, per extra move.
- Otherwise, if a player wins, remaining moves are converted to Line Breakers and increase a player’s score.
- Players can have a maximum of 5 lives at a time and recover lives in ~10 minute intervals.



GAMEPLAY: UI

#	Name	Description
1	Remaining Moves	Available move left for player to complete level
2	Stage Level	Current stage level
3	Level Objective	Current remaining level objectives
4	Star Rank	# of Stars based on level performance (max. 3)
5	Score + Score Multiplier	Score based on level performance and additional modifiers
6	Info Button	Gives level information and tips
7	Game Board	The play area where players make matches
8	Boost Item Tray	Displays player's usable boosts
9	Settings	Contains game settings and exit options

GAMEPLAY: GAME MODES*

Icon	Game Mode	Description
	Collect the Waffles!	Clear all the Waffles to win!
	Get the Popplers!	Free all the Popplers from the Yumble Pies!
	Reveal the Yumsicles!	Match 3 of a kind to reveal the Yumsicles!
	Collect the Energy!	Collect Energy from Energy pieces to help Scoops to the end of the path!
	Get the Topplers!	Topplers can run across Graham Crackers. Help a Toppler to the ground to collect it!
	Reveal the Yummy Worms!	Yummy Worms travel under ice! Fully reveal a Yummy Worm to collect it!
	Collect all the Animal Crackers!	Collect Animal Crackers by feeding them the number of objects they need!

GAMEPLAY: MAIN SPECIALS

Icon	Name	How to Obtain	What it does
	Line Breaker	Match 4 of the same color piece.	Removes all pieces in a line across the board.
	X Breaker	Make a T-shaped match.	Removes all pieces in an “X” across the board.
	Ice Cream Bomb	Make an L-shaped match.	Removes all pieces in a diamond shape around the piece.
	Bee	Make a Square shaped match.	Autonomously targets important pieces.
	Rainbow Cake	Match 5 of the same color piece.	Swap with any color to clear that color from the board.
-	Super Combos	-	Swap 2 special pieces to get a BIG effect.

GAMEPLAY: BREAKABLE OBSTACLES*

Icons	Name	Description
	Chocolates, Doughnuts, Crackers, Cookies	Match next to these pieces to break them. May have multiple layers to break.
	Yumble Pies	Match near pies to break them. Breaking pies with Popplers free them.
	Pretzels	Match near a Pretzel to remove it. Objects can fall through pretzels.
	Cage	Pieces in Cages are stuck. Match with the piece inside to break the cage.
	Ice	Match pieces on Ice to break it.

GAMEPLAY: OTHER PIECES AND FEATURES*

Icons	Name	Description
	Energy	Match with Energy pieces to collect Energy.
	Liquid Fill	Match with pieces of the same color to raise the water level
	Portal	Pieces that fall into the portal will exit at a portal of the same color.
	Spinner	Rotates position of pieces on it every turn.
	Teleporter	Swaps pieces on teleporters to other teleporter locations every turn.
	Conveyor Belt	Moves all pieces on it every turn.
	Lava Cake	Match 4 times next to it for it to spit out special pieces.
-	Water	Reverses gravity for how pieces fall onto the board.

GAMEPLAY: PRE-LEVEL BOOST ITEMS

Icon	Name	What it does
	Bonus Bees	Turns a piece into a Bee.
	Bomb Breakers	Turns a piece into an Ice Cream Bomb.
	Rainbow Cakes	Turns a piece into a Rainbow Cake.
	Extra Moves	Grants 5 extra moves to complete a level.

- Players use these boosts before the level starts to help clear levels.
 - Can be purchased with Gold Coins.

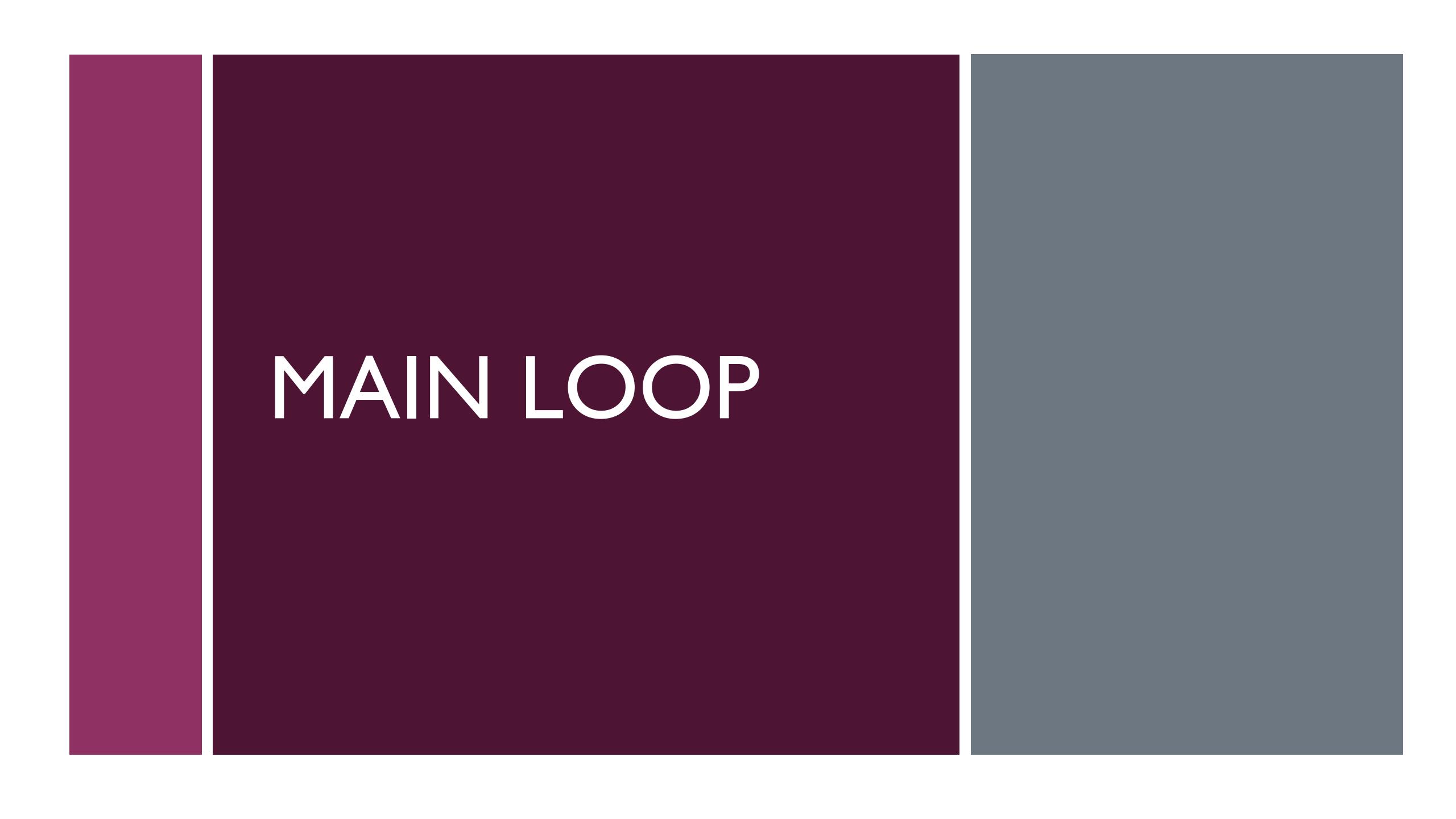
GAMEPLAY: IN-GAME BOOST ITEMS

Icon	Name	What it does
	Airship Power	Additional powerups to beat levels
	Spoon	Crunches any piece of a player's choice.
	Rolling Pin	Clears a whole row of pieces.
	Pastry Bag	Clears a whole column of pieces.
	Oven Mitts	Swaps any two pieces on the board.
	Buddy Bees	Sends out a swarm of 5 Buddy Bees to capture objectives.

- Players use these boosts in-game to help clear levels.
- Boosts can be purchased with Gold Coins.
 - Buddy Bees are obtained via friend invites.

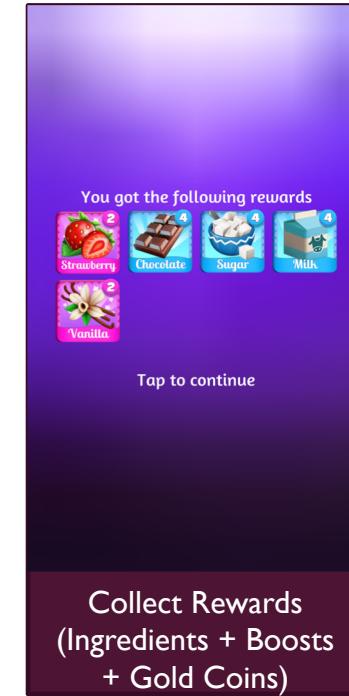
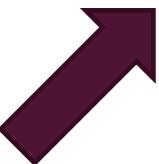
GAMEPLAY: OVERVIEW

- Introductory levels introduce special pieces one level at a time and introduce a game mode every 5 levels.
 - The introduction of new game mechanics gradually slows after the game modes are taught to allow players to get accustomed to the variety of mechanics.
 - Helpful aids are always present if players get stuck on a level via the Info button, visual tips during transition screens, or opt-in ads for free boosts.
- Diverse level objectives keep the game interesting and great visuals make breaking pieces feel satisfying.
- Overall, the gameplay feels solid and offers a generous amount of aid to allow players to continually progress.



MAIN LOOP

MAIN GAMEPLAY LOOP: SIMPLE AND CLEAN



REWARDS & RETENTION

REWARDS

Boost Items

(Detailed in 'Gameplay')

Timed Boosts

Ingredients

Gold Coins

(Detailed in 'Monetization')

REWARDS: TIMED BOOSTS

- These are timed 30+ minute boosts that are used as rewards for different retention systems.
- They aim to help players clear levels and extend the player's session length to encourage additional spending.
 - Unlimited Lives
 - E.g. 
 - Special Pieces at the beginning of a level
 - E.g. 
 - Score Multipliers
 - E.g. 

REWARDS: INGREDIENTS

Regular Ingredients	Name
	Batter
	Butter
	Chocolate
	Dough
	Milk
	Sugar

Featured Ingredients	Name
	Caramel
	Strawberry
	Vanilla
	Apple
	Marshmallow
	Sprinkles

- Clearing levels grants Stars, which are used to obtain Ingredients from Ingredient Bags.
 - Ingredient Bags act like Loot Crates and yield random Ingredients.
- Ingredients are then used to make Recipes, which are used to obtain and upgrade Airships.

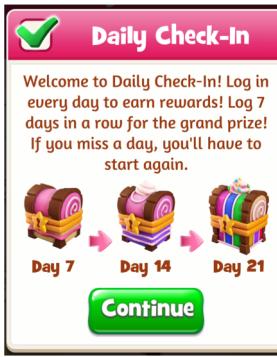
RETENTION: AIRSHIPS

Name	Strawberry Blimp	Nilla Wafter	Caramel Cruiser	Strawberry Skiff	Marshmallow Flyer	Aero Apple	Sprinkle Skyliner
Icon							
Ability	Collects all pieces of one color with a big boost.	Get Nilla-Breakers by making matches and X-breakers.	Collects the outer two rows of the entire board.	Creates a big blast that knocks pieces off the board.	Drops a chest with special pieces.	Gives 1 free Bomb Bee and turns Jelly Bees into Bomb Bees!	Creates a HUGE blast.

- The Airships feature is long-term engagement content that helps players clear levels.
 - Each Airship has a unique ability with cooldown times depending on its upgrade rank.
 - Airships have a max upgrade rank of 5 and ability cooldown starting at 5 days and decreasing to 1 day.
 - Each upgrade scales in Ingredient resource costs.
 - Airships are obtained and upgraded by completing recipes found in the Bakery.

RETENTION: REWARD SYSTEMS

1.



2.



3.



4.



1. Daily Check-in

- Login Rewards that increase as a player's Login Streak increases.
 - Rewards are boosts and Gold Coins.
 - Reward value resets when a streak is broken.

2. Lucky Spin

- Daily spin where the reward is often a boost but can sometimes be Ingredients or Gold Coins.

3. Win Streak Bonus

- Pass levels without losing lives to receive increasing amounts of boosts.
 - Boost rewards reset when a streak is broken.

4. Star Bags (Ingredient Bags)

- Use Stars from passing levels and to gain Ingredients from Star Bags.

RETENTION: REWARD SYSTEMS (CONTINUED)

5.



6.



5. Level Rewards

- Rewards for clearing ~5 levels in a certain time period.
- Rewards are usually boosts and sometimes include Gold Coins.

6. Chef Ranks

- Complete Recipes to increase Chef Ranks.
 - Ranks give boosts and on rare occasions, Ingredients.

7. Daily Specials

7.



8.



8. League Rewards

- League Rankings are based on Competitive Event placements.
 - Event placement is generally an estimate of how many levels players have completed in a period of time.
 - Players can receive Ingredients, boosts, and Gold Coins.

1 2 RETENTION & REWARDS: OVERVIEW



1. Retention Reward Loop

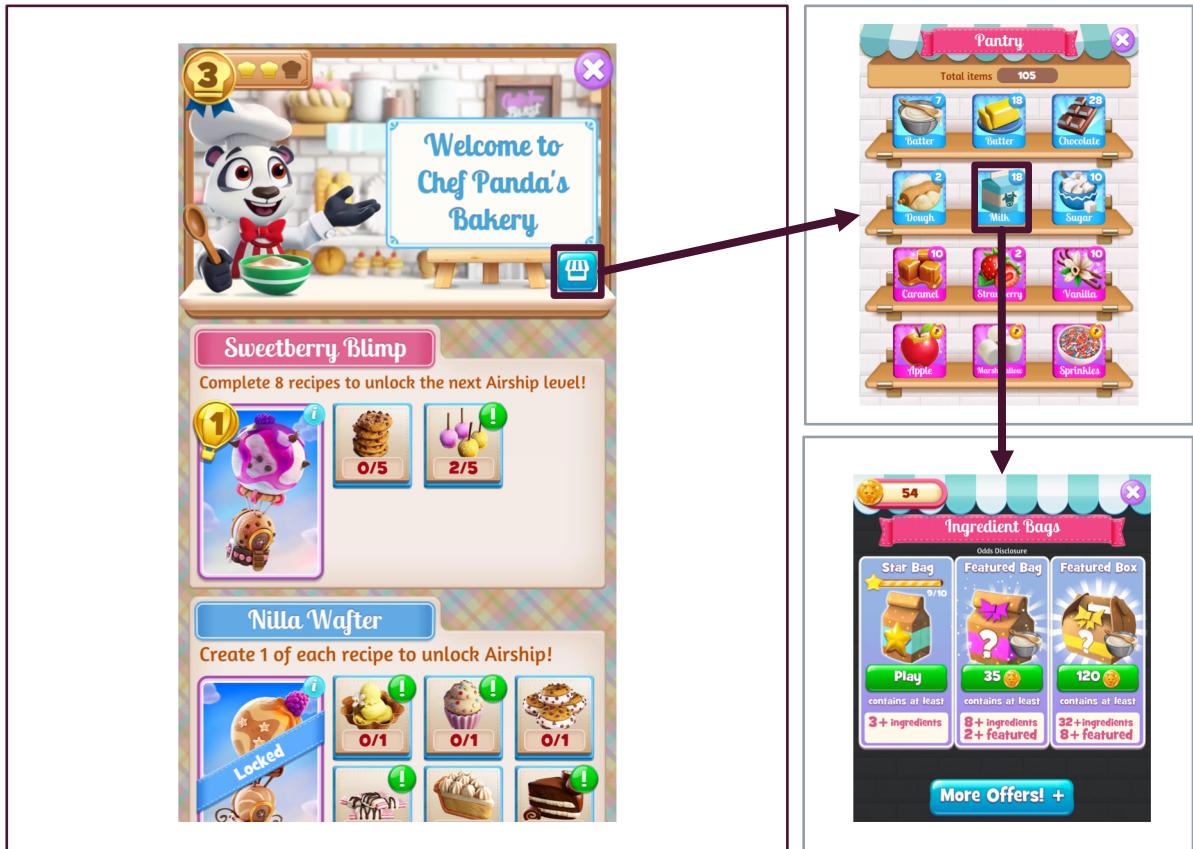
- There are many reward systems that provide boosts to players as long as they continue to login and play puzzles.
 - Provides strong motivation for players who are focused on level completion to return.

2. Metagame Reward Loop

- Compared to boosts, the value of Ingredients is experienced less frequently.
 - Ingredients are used for Recipes but quickly forgotten unless an Airship upgrade is available, which is not often.
 - The infrequency of meaningful Ingredient usage for Airship upgrades may deemphasize Airships as a unique selling point of the game.

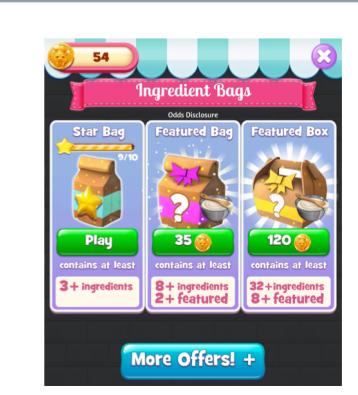
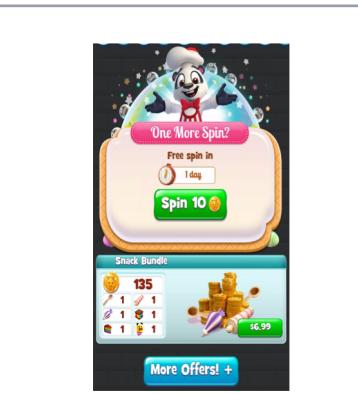
MONETIZATION

MONETIZATION: BAKERY/PANTRY



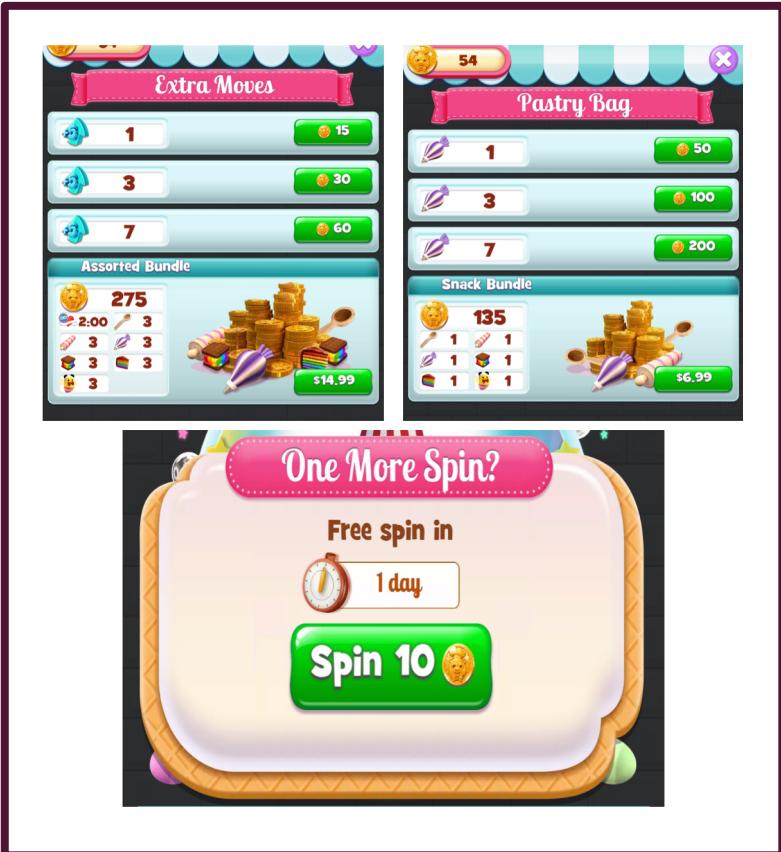
- Players obtain and upgrade Airships by making Recipes in the Bakery.
- Tapping the Pantry button will bring players to their Ingredient inventory.
- Tapping an Ingredient will show players purchase options for more Ingredients.

MONETIZATION: STORE



- Players can find a Store access point by tapping wherever they find a “More Offers +” Button.
- The main store offers discounts on the single premium currency of the game, Gold Coins as the price increases and other bundles.
 - Gold Coins can only be purchased with real money.
 - Gold Coins can be used to purchase Ingredients, Boost Items, and Speed ups.
 - Boosts, Ingredients and Gold Coins can be purchased together with real money in bundles.

MONETIZATION: POPUP STORES & SPEED UPS



- Players will also find Popup Stores that feature varying amounts of the desired item throughout the game.
 - Popup Stores will also have a related bundle pack that includes the desired item and a “More Offers +” button to give access to the Main Store.
- Speed up purchases for time related features are also available and easily accessible.

MONETIZATION: OVERVIEW

Strengths

- Popup Stores, 'Overtime' extra moves, and Speed ups purchases are strong monetization features that capitalize on impulse buying and loss aversion.
- Bundle Pricing of boosts and Gold Coins reduces friction of purchasing multiple items individually.

What could be improved

- Store access points are scattered throughout the game and each includes a different bundle offer.
 - A Main Store access point with all purchasable items on the home page could be included.
 - Creates an easily identifiable, accessible go-to location for players to look at latest bundles and do price comparisons.
 - Increasing the clarity in bundle value will help players find bundles appropriate for their needs, leading to more purchases.

SUMMARY

- Overall
 - Cookie Jam Blast shows a strong understanding of the Match 3 audience with its relaxing motif, improved gameplay and strong retention systems but appears to need a more compelling meta-game to accompany its core gameplay to become a Top Grossing hit as seen from competitors like Homescapes, Matchington Mansion, and others.
 - However, being a consistent mainstay as a Top 200 Grossing game on both iOS and Google Play mobile stores displays the baseline game quality a Match 3 game must have to retain an engaged audience.
 - With a deep understanding of their audience, developers may begin investing into more mainstream IPs that resonate with Match 3 players and incorporate them into the meta-game that accompanies the core Match 3 gameplay to win over the Match 3 audience.

FOOTNOTES

- * - These are features up to level 92 and not necessarily all-inclusive of everything in the game.