Pantry Planner

App Ideation

INTRODUCTION

As someone who enjoys cooking but struggles with eating the same meal repeatedly, I find there is one app that I wish existed. I wish there was an app that would be able to scan my fridge and pantry to see what I have in stock and then figure out what I should buy at the store to make meals for the week. The app would be called the *Pantry Planner.* This app would be better than the typical meal prep apps that exist because it would base my next few meals off of ingredients I already have at home. Not only would it create a meal plan for an entire week, but it also would accumulate a grocery list for me, saving me even more time.

Like similar mealtime apps, you would be able to tailor your dietary needs, for example if you were a vegetarian you could ask for meat free meals or if you had a food allergy, you would be able to exclude that specific food from all meals. Having the camera on a smart device recognize the brands and labels from pictures is key here since it could then add the same brand of products to the grocery list. While the app is creating your personalized meal plan it would also be able to connect to your local store of choice to scan for sale items, creating meals at a lower cost. A key feature that I haven't seen in other meal planning apps.

Since I already have a minimal amount of apps on my phone, I like the idea of having one app where I can take inventory of food at home, decide on meals for the week *and* create a grocery list all in one location. This app would save the typical user a lot of time since all they need to do is to take a few pictures of their fridge/freezer and any pantry items. The app does the rest!

IT'S PURPOSE

The main purpose of the app is to save users time in the kitchen. Geared towards all cooks and busy parents, the app is designed to solve the issue of *"what's for dinner?"* Users will no longer have to think about meal planning for themselves or a large family. The app can create three meals for seven days all based on your preferences and taste buds. The app also would be designed to save users money by using ingredients that they already have and in turn, prevent food from going to waste and expiring. With *Pantry Planer,* there is no excuse for overspending at the grocery store and no more time pondering on what to eat this week or what to do with those leftover tomatoes.

Instead of just having an app that only creates meals, *Pantry Planner* is helpful in more ways than one. It keeps you in budget, expands your recipe knowledge, creates your grocery list and helps prevent food waste!

The app itself would be easy to use with a step-by-step process where the grocery list can be added to and modified for the week. Overtime, the app would learn the user's taste and accommodate recipes as it sees fit. With the *Pantry Planner* users of all skill levels can save time, money and become a more resourceful chef.

IDEATION METHOD 1: MIND MAP

While there are many ideation methods, I chose to start out creating a mind map. This is a great method to start out with because it allowed me to connect my thoughts and get them down on paper. It also showed me how some ideas relate to one another. I expanded on each thought, allowing more ideas to flow freely. I came up with three categories for the map: key features, look and feel, and its purpose. For key features, I wrote down the typical process a user would have. From taking the photos, from approving the meal plan, to viewing the grocery list. It was when I was creating this list, that I also came up with the idea that the app could also link to the grocery store flyer, so that meals and ingredients could be picked based on what was on sale.

Then I moved on to thinking about the app's colors and deciding on navigation. Lastly, I created a list describing the app's purpose. Seeing my hierarchical of thoughts, I could see the beginnings of what felt like a great product.
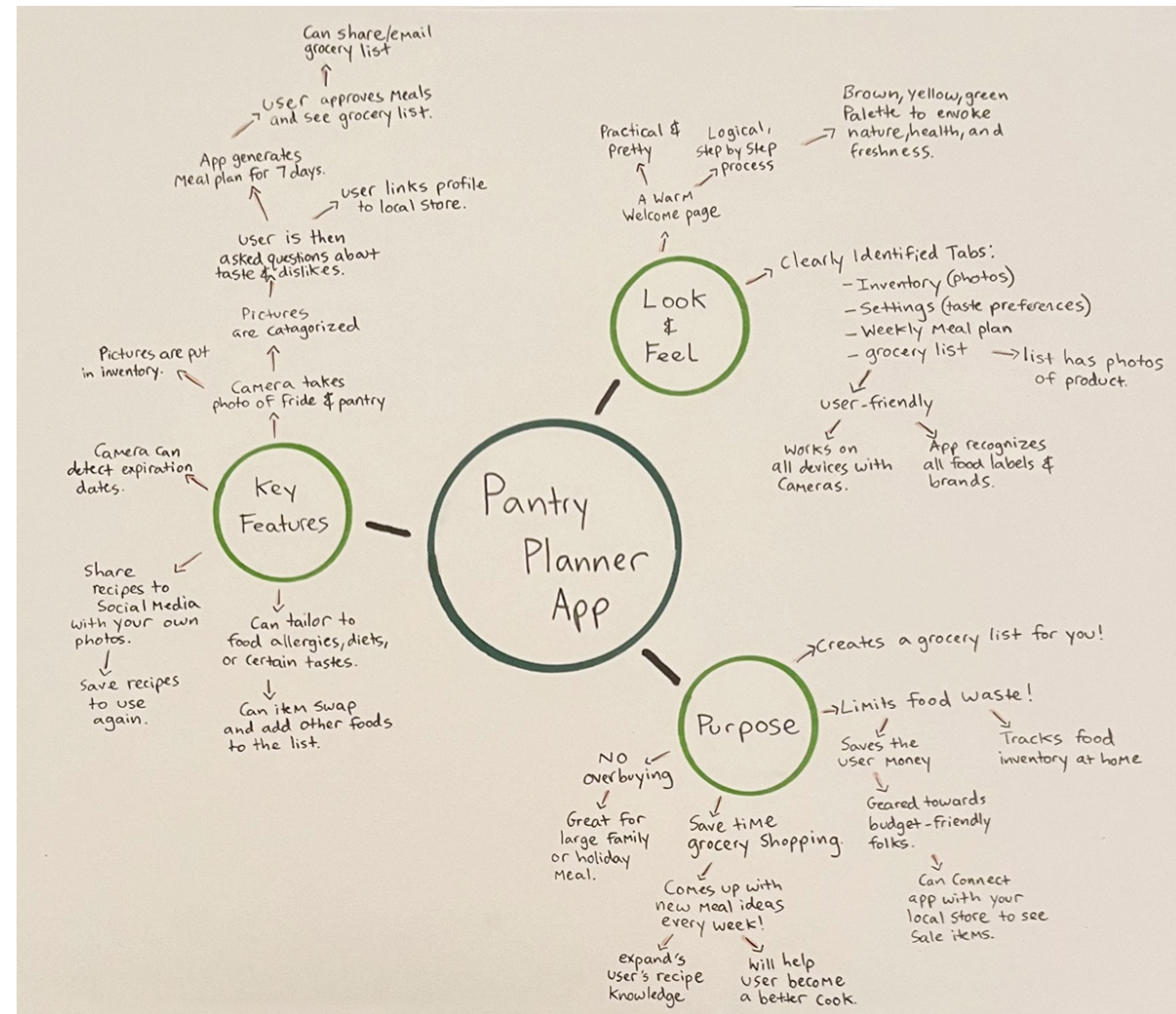
IDEATION METHOD 2: SKETCHSTORM

I then moved on to my second ideation method, the sketchstorm. Sketching has always been my favorite way to start a design project so I figured this should be no different. Using my ideas from the mind map I wanted to sketch out three main pages of the app. I chose the main homepage, the grocery list page, and the weekly meals page. To me these would be the most visited and I wanted to bring my ideas into a visual format. During the sketching, it came to me that I wanted the app to have visuals of food, so all pages show photos of meals or ingredients being used.

On the main page, I made the scan button very large, since this is the main purpose of the app. For the grocery list, I decided to add another large button where users can modify the list and add items as needed so that they don't need to make another list elsewhere if something comes up. This step got me closer to visualizing the actual app and what it would be like to click through the app. I went from a simple list of ideas to structured pages. Overall, this process allowed me to turn my words into something more visible and tangible.
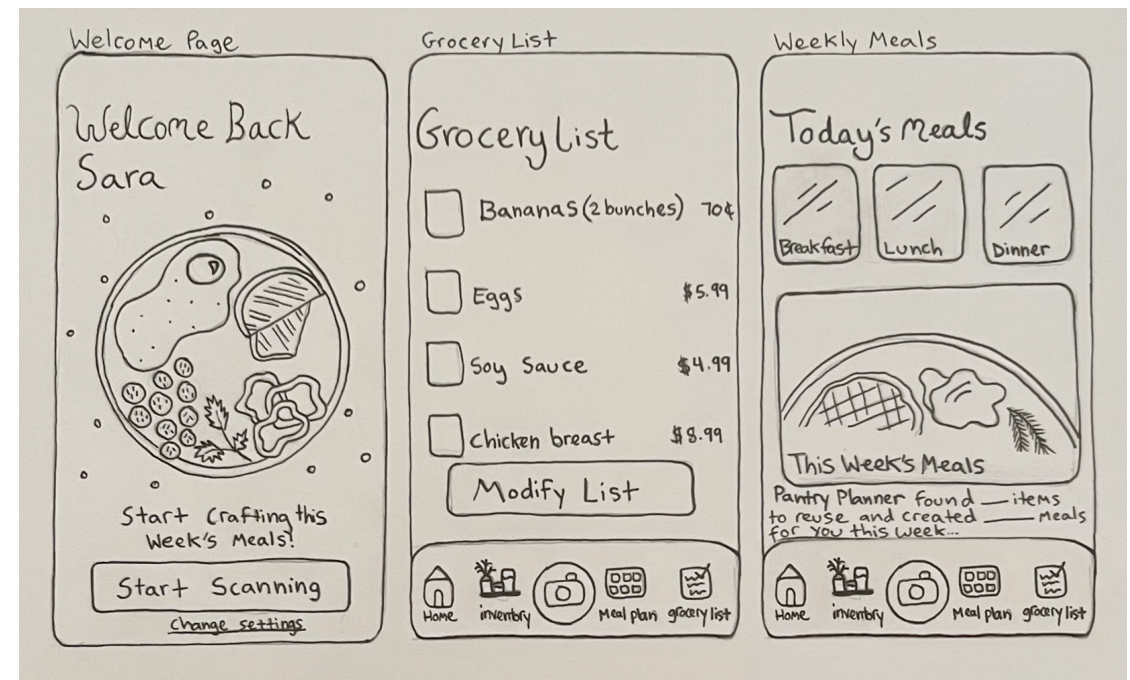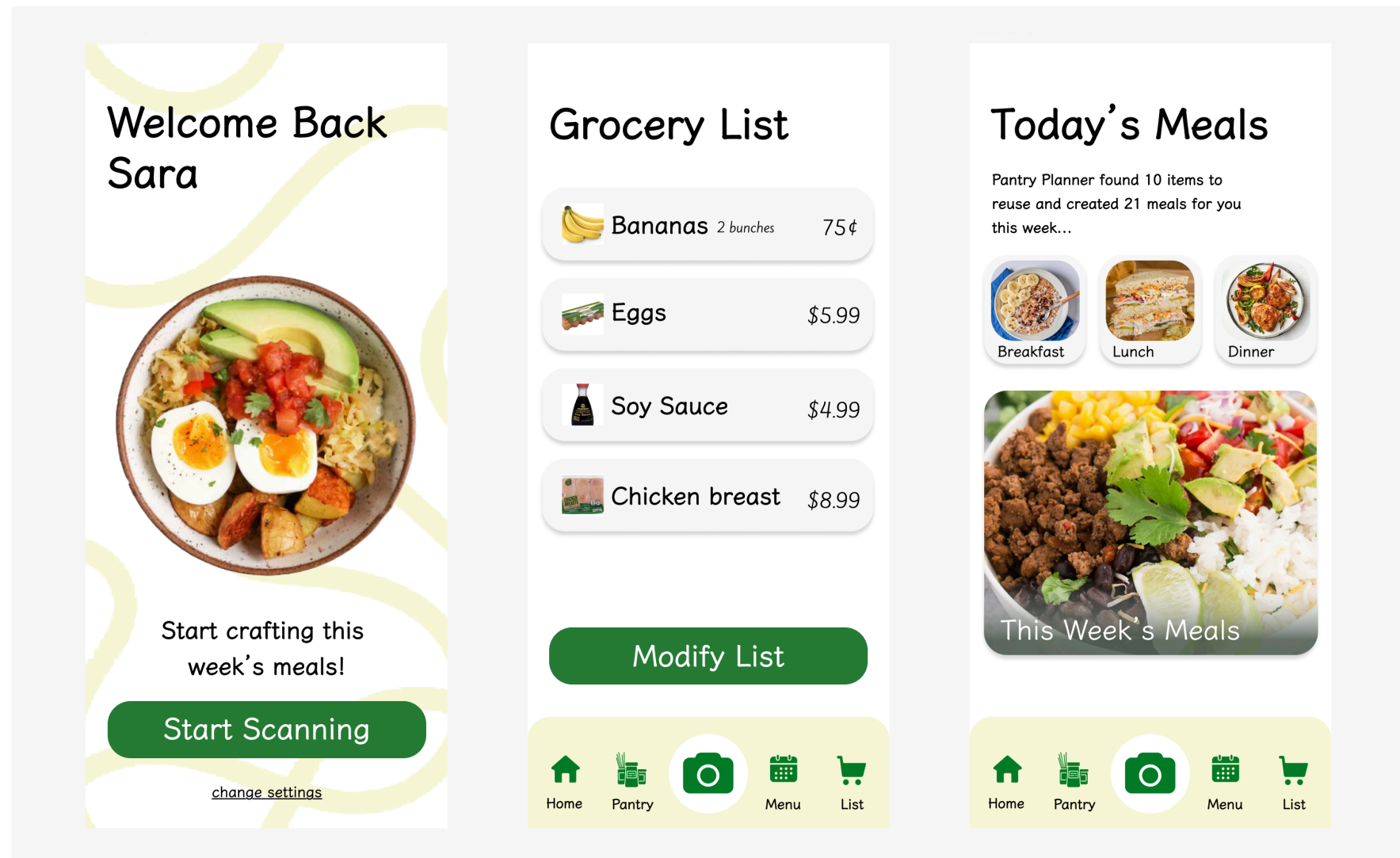
IDEATION METHOD 3: PROTOTYPING

For my third and final ideation method, I decided on prototyping. This is not a common method, but it can still be used to build and make final decision in a project. For me, this felt like the right and final step. Here I wanted to go from my black and white sketches to color and photos to see just how the layout would look if a user was interacting with it. In this stage I focused on how the app would look moving from one page to another. I also picked photos and fonts to match the character of the app and decided how large buttons should be.

 I also picked out the icons for the bottom tab, since I envision it being visible on every page. Here I decided on icon placement. I also decided that the main purpose of the navigation tab is the large photo scanning button. This feature is the app's main purpose so it should be available at all times. Hence, its large presence within the tab and the large button on the homepage. In the weekly meal page, I did some rearranging of elements but kept with the theme of it being image heavy.

Seeing how these three pages turned out, it was clear that prototyping helped me solidly the visuals of the app and allowed me to finalize placement of text and images. It also gave me a clearer picture of what items are most important and should be easily accessible.

IDEATION METHOD 3: PROTOTYPING

Welcome Back Sara

Start crafting this week's meals!

Start Scanning

<u>change settings</u>

Grocery List

🍌 **Bananas** *2 bunches*		75¢
🥚 **Eggs**		$5.99
Soy Sauce		$4.99
Chicken breast		$8.99

Modify List

Home · Pantry · 📷 · Menu · List

Today's Meals

Pantry Planner found 10 items to reuse and created 21 meals for you this week...

Breakfast · Lunch · Dinner

This Week's Meals

Home · Pantry · 📷 · Menu · List

CONCLUSION

All Ideation methods are great ways to jump start design thinking and the creative process for any project. I found mind mapping, sketching, and prototyping the most helpful for this app project. I enjoyed allowing myself to think outside the box and letting ideas be documented without having to elaborate on them or figure out how they would actually work within the app. This allowed me to think more creatively and give every idea a chance. Some ideas I would have never thought of if I didn't allow my mind to wonder. While the three methods I chose helped me jumped from low commitment all the way to a high-fidelity mockup, I enjoyed how each method has brought me closer to a finished product.

My favorite method was the sketchstorm, as I was able to turn my mindmap into something more visual. This is where I put everything into perspective. Many decisions were made for visuals and hierarchy of information. It was also the quickest process, probably because I am most comfortable sketching. Here I found it quite easy picking out my best ideas and refining them.

While these ideation sessions are just the beginning of this app's journey, it's amazing to see how many ideas you can generate in such a small amount of time. In future projects I hope to try out other popular methods.