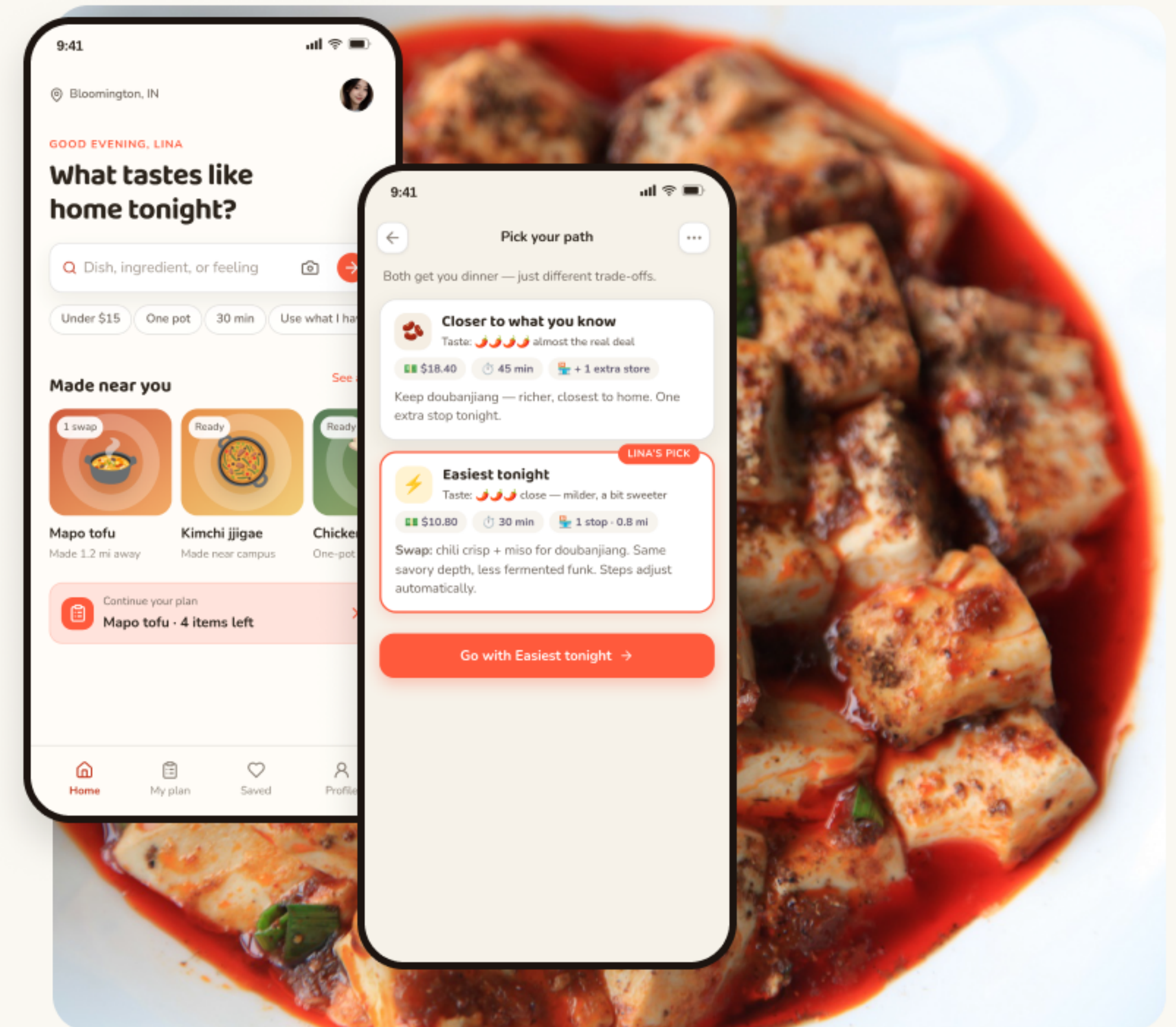


HOMEKIND

Make a little bit of home, wherever you are.

International Food Companion — a plan that fits your store, budget, and kitchen.

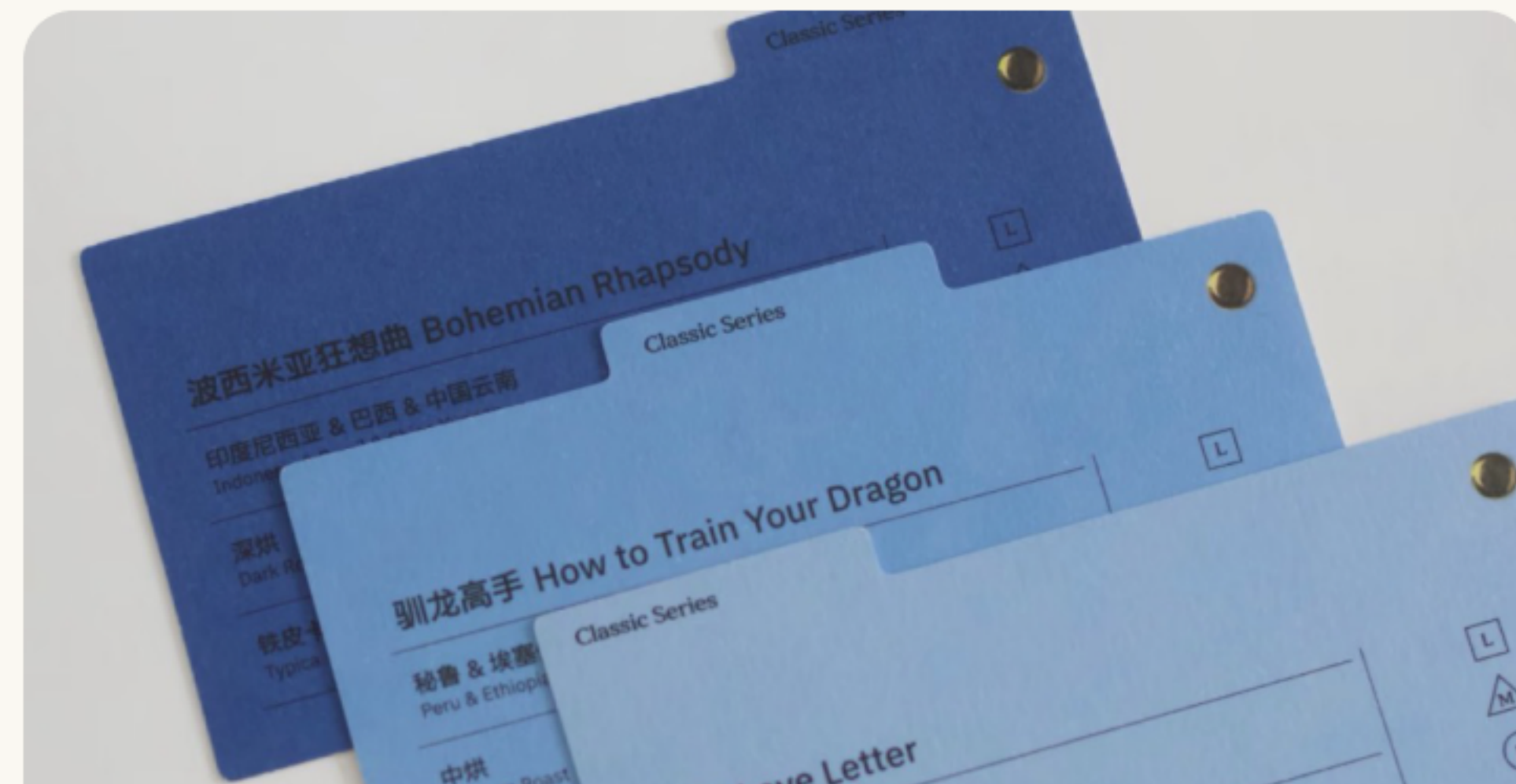
A UX case study on making a familiar meal possible in a college town without an international grocer.



WHY HOMEKIND?

In a US college town without an international grocer, a familiar meal is how you feel like yourself. Dining halls don't taste like home. Specialty delivery takes days. The problem is not a missing recipe. It is a missing way to finish tonight's version of home.

Yami takes three days and a shipping fee. The dining hall is fine until it isn't. What people actually miss is a dish they can finish tonight, with a store they can walk to.



"I knew the dish. I did not know if Walmart had a way to make it."

DINNER DIES IN FOUR PLACES



01

NAME IT

The English grocery word isn't the name you know. Search fails before the store does.



02

FIND IT

The aisle and the package don't match the dish in your head. You put the jar back.



03

SWAP IT

Substitutes exist, but nobody tells you what they do to heat, funk, or texture.



DOUBANJIANG



CHILI CRISP



04

COOK IT

The recipe assumes a wok, a pantry, and a certainty you don't have on a Tuesday.

THE DESIGN PROBLEM

How might we help international students in smaller US towns adapt a culturally familiar meal to the ingredients, budget, equipment, and cooking skills they have tonight?

This is not a recipe encyclopedia, a restaurant finder, or a delivery app. The unit of design is one dinner: is it doable here, tonight, with this kitchen and this budget.



GENERIC RECIPE

TONIGHT'S CONSTRAINTS

Ordinary recipes answer how. Homekind answers whether.

LINA, TONIGHT

PERSONA

22 Bloomington, IN

KITCHEN Shared · one flat pan, no wok

STORE Walmart Supercenter · 0.8 mi

BUDGET Under \$15 tonight

DISH 麻婆豆腐 / Mapo tofu



Saturday, 8pm. She wants 麻婆豆腐. Walmart is 0.8 miles. She has a flat pan, no doubanjiang, and \$15. If the plan isn't obvious in a minute, she will close the app and eat cereal.



THE JOB

She does not need another recipe. She needs to know if tonight's version is actually possible.

RESEARCH: FOLLOWING THE DINNER

RESEARCH SAMPLE

4
STUDENTS

04 HOME CUISINES

03 METHODS

01 SETTING

College town. No international supermarket.
Ordinary Walmart as the default store.

WHO I SPOKE WITH



LINA

Chinese home cooking, no car, shared kitchen, Mapo tofu



MIN

Korean, kimchi jjigae, shops with a friend



ANA

Filipino, chicken adobo, one-pot weeknights



ROHAN

Indian, dal tadka, dorm electric burner

HOW I LEARNED

1:1 INTERVIEWS

Last time they craved a home dish and what broke.

GROCERY WALKTHROUGHS

Walmart with the ingredient list in hand.

COOK-ALONGS

Make the dish with only what they actually own.

Each student walked a real last craving, then a real aisle, then a real pan.

CORE QUESTION

When a familiar dish feels impossible here, what would make someone actually start tonight?

THE RECIPE WAS CLEAR; THE AISLE WAS NOT

Across interviews, walkthroughs, and cook-alongs, confidence dropped the moment a key ingredient had to become a US grocery item.

n = 4 students · interviews, grocery walkthroughs, cook-alongs

3/4

Abandoned a home dish over ingredients



Last month, three of four never started because a flavor base — doubanjiang, gochujang, tamarind — felt unavailable at Walmart.

1/4

Could name it on a US package

Only one could point to the English word and the jar they needed. The rest guessed from color and a photo on their phone.

3/4

Would accept a swap if told how taste changes

They did not need identical. They needed an honest delta — heat, funk, and whether it would still taste like home.

1/4

Trusted an app to know Walmart stock

Generic recipes felt like another city. Nobody believed an app knew this Walmart.

The gap is not cooking skill. It is whether tonight’s version is knowable.

CRAVE TO SHARE

01

CRAVE

What tastes like home tonight. Dish, ingredient, or feeling.



02

ASSESS

Can I make this here, tonight. Store, cost, pan, time.



03

ADAPT

Closer to what you know, or easiest tonight. Taste is a trade-off you can see.



06

SHARE

Notes help the next cook nearby. What you paid, what you swapped, how close it tasted.



05

COOK

Steps rewrite after the swap. The pan you have, not the wok in the recipe.



04

SOURCE

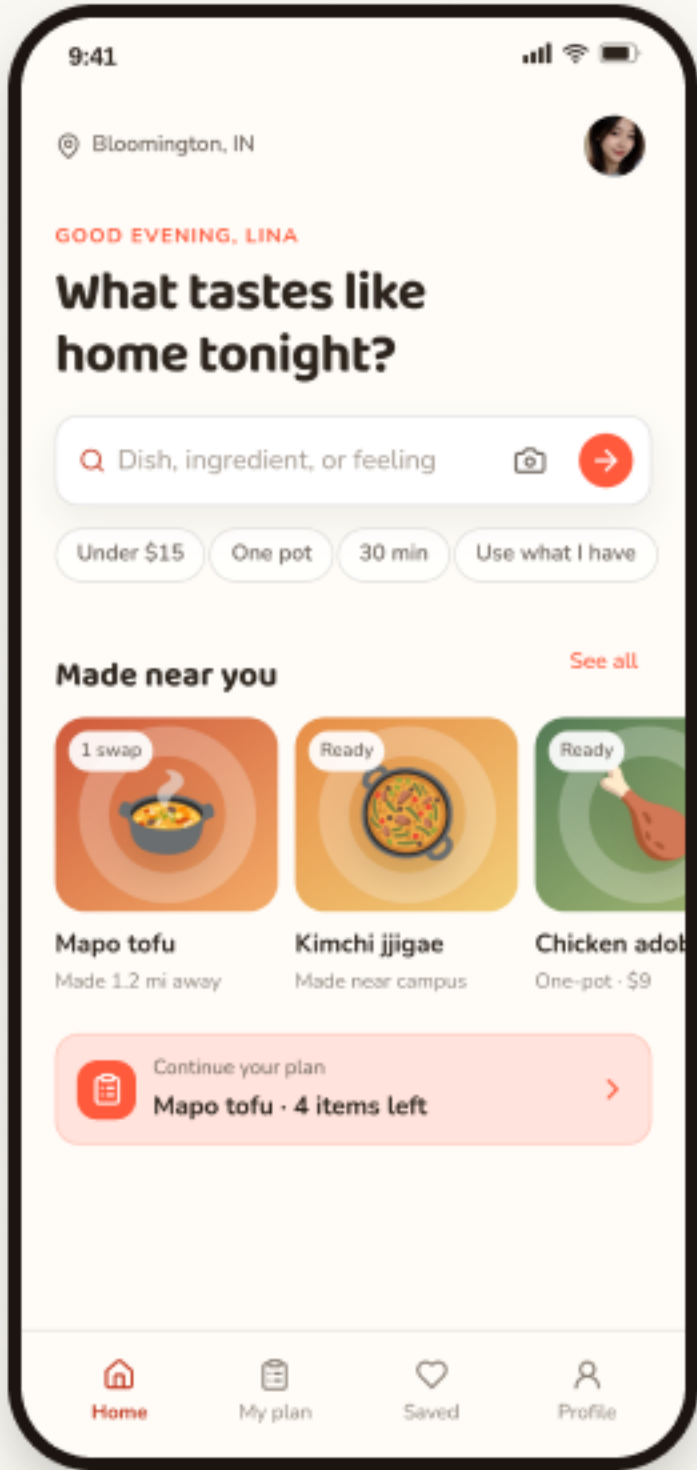
This store, this aisle, this package. Scan before you guess.

The product is the loop, not a recipe collection.

DECIDE: CRAVE, ASSESS, AND ADAPT

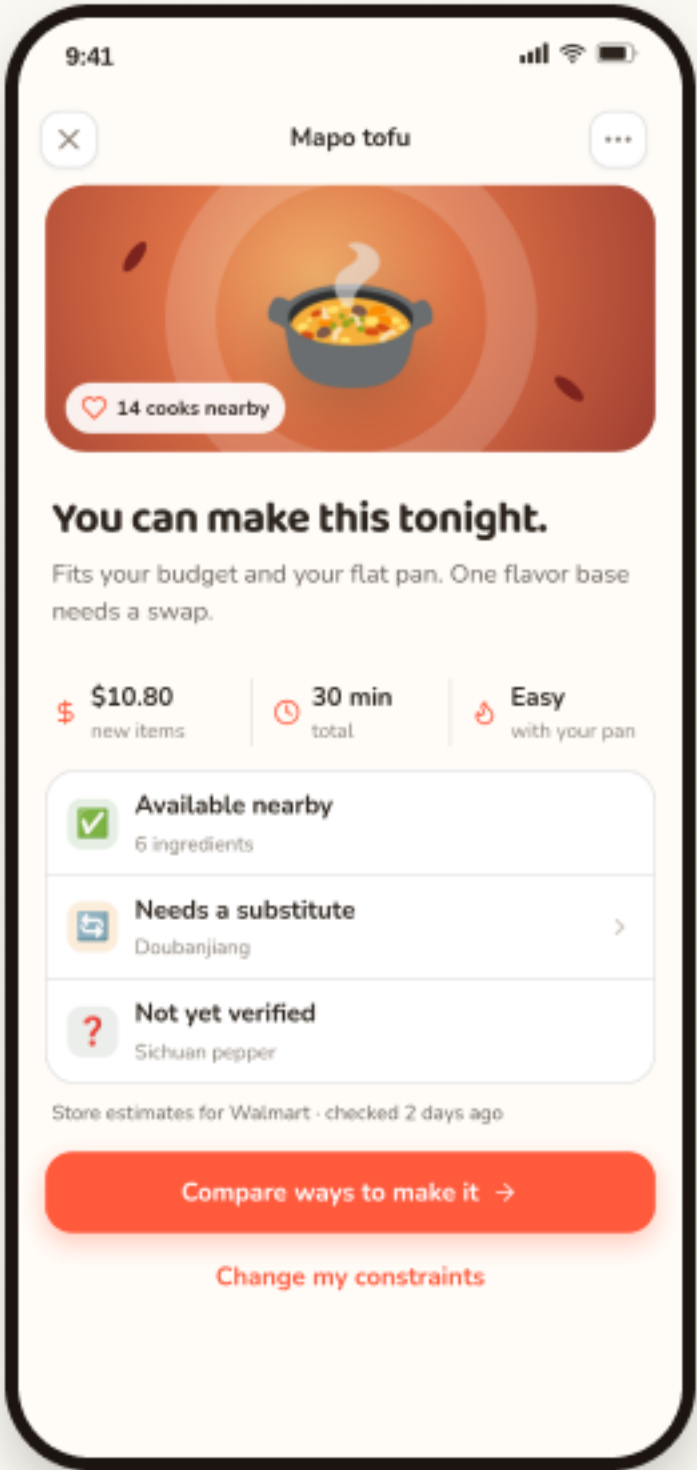
MOBILE EXPERIENCE

One path from a craving to a plan she can actually cook tonight. Feasibility first, then the fork: closer flavor, or fewer stops.



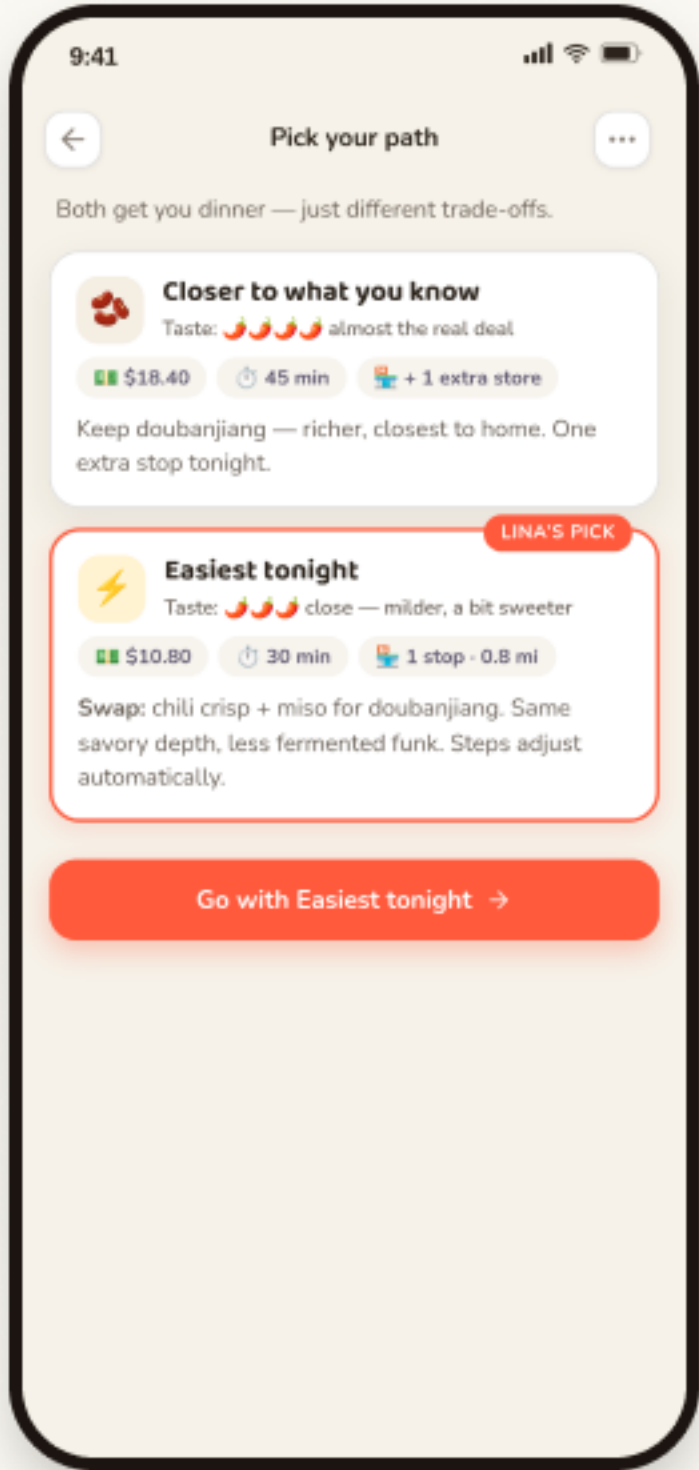
01 CRAVE

What tastes like home tonight?



02 ASSESS

You can make this tonight.



03 ADAPT

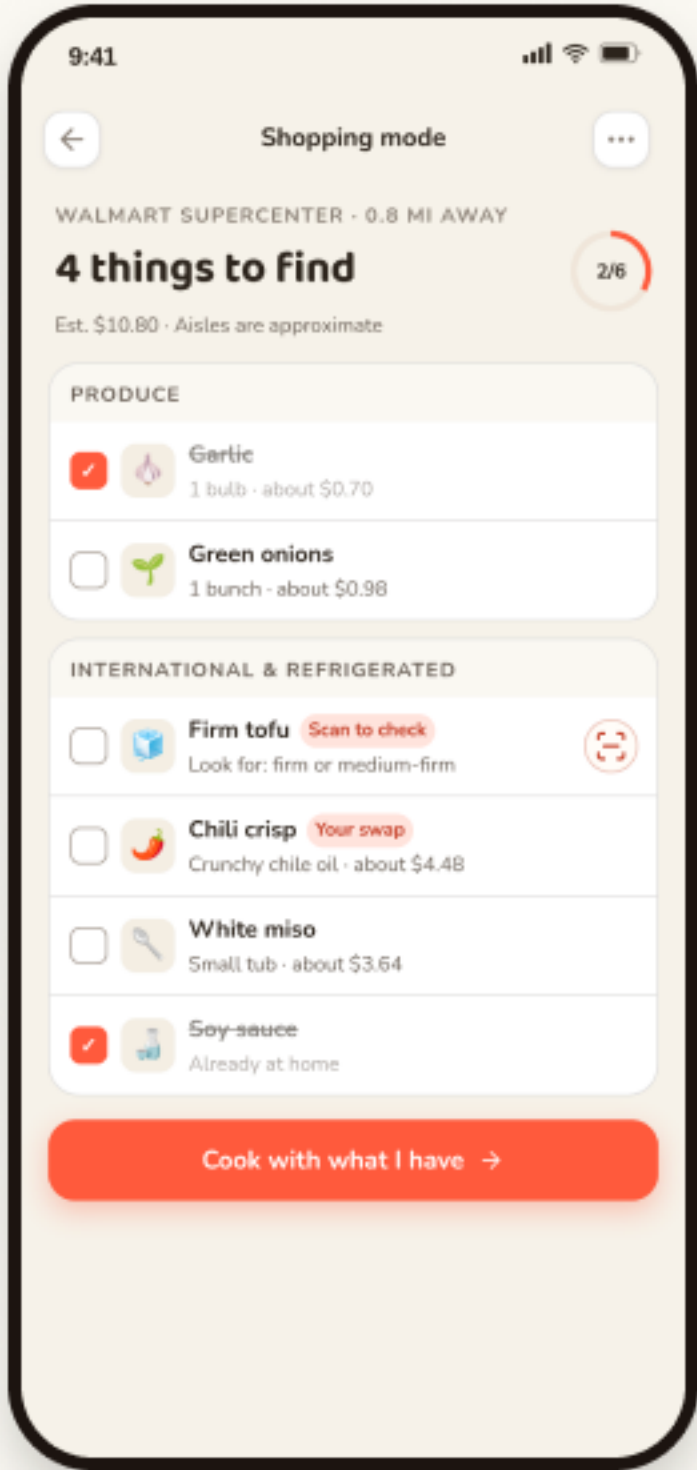
Closer to what you know, or easiest tonight.

Feasibility before the recipe.

SOURCE: FIND IT, CHECK IT, PUT IT IN THE BASKET

MOBILE EXPERIENCE

The store is not after the recipe. It is how the plan becomes real. Aisle order, package language, and a scan that answers: does this tofu work for this dish.



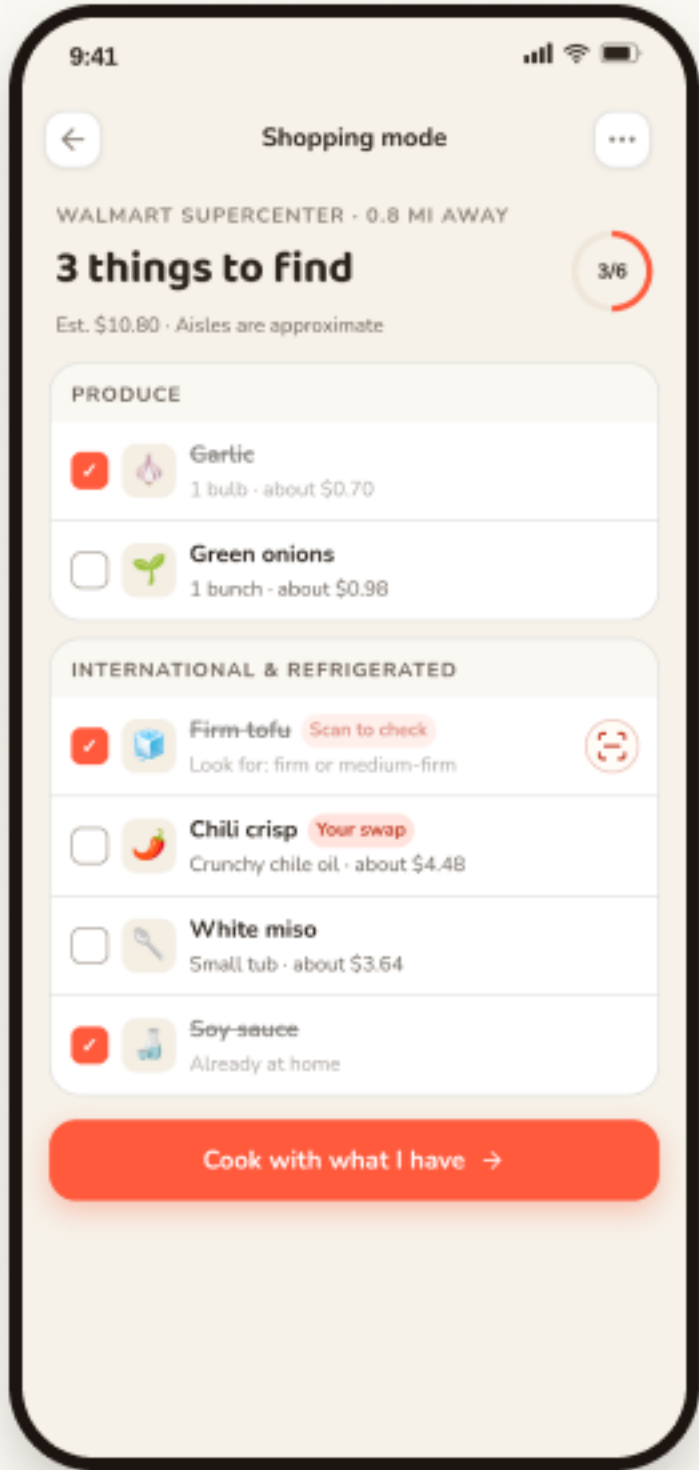
01 LIST

Walmart, four things to find



02 SCAN

This tofu works



03 BASKET

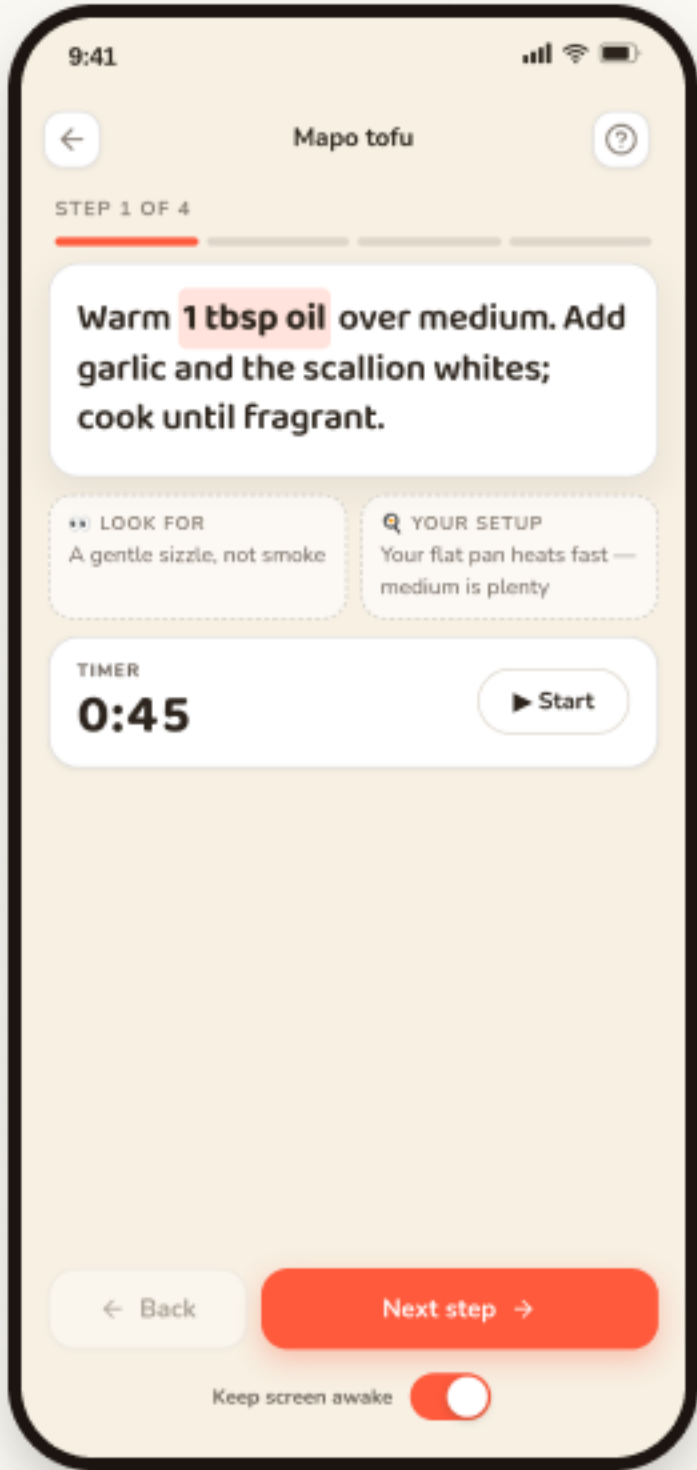
In the basket / cook with what I have

The store is part of the recipe.

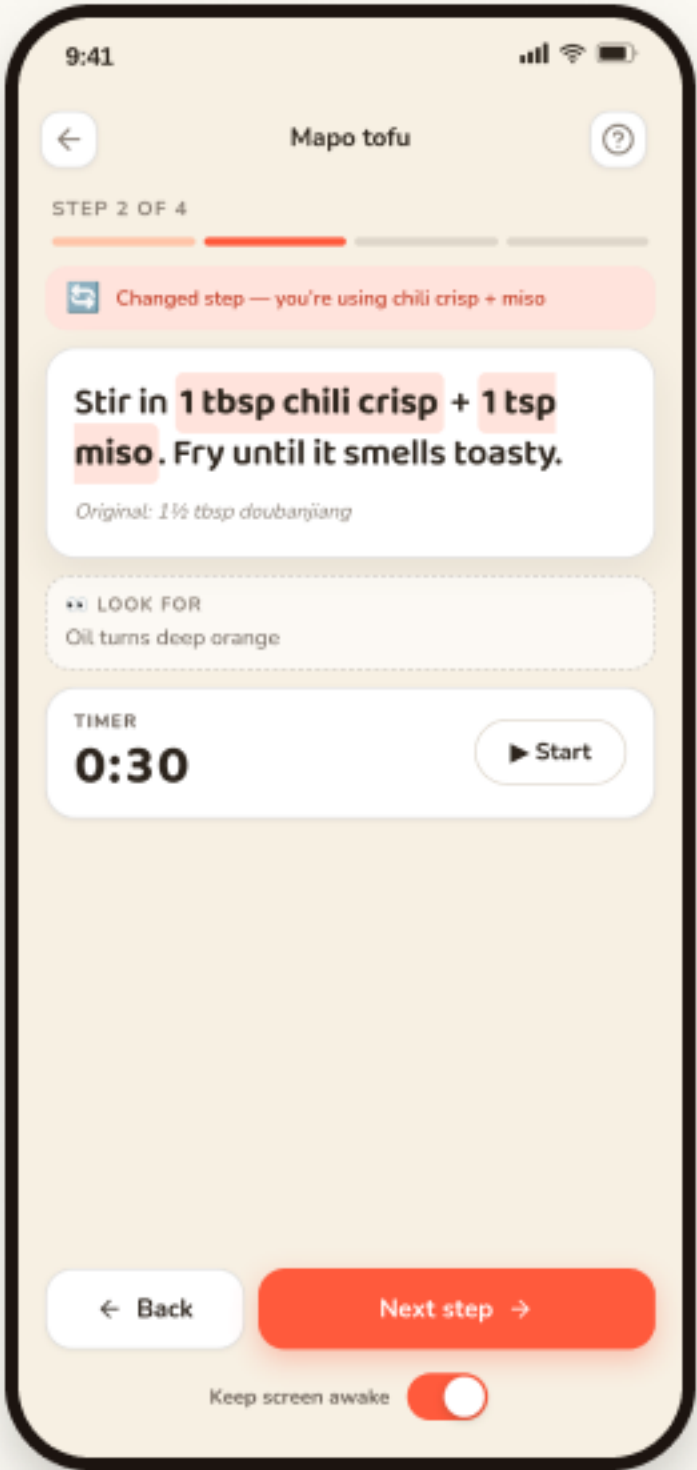
COOK: THE STEPS FOLLOW THE SWAP

MOBILE EXPERIENCE

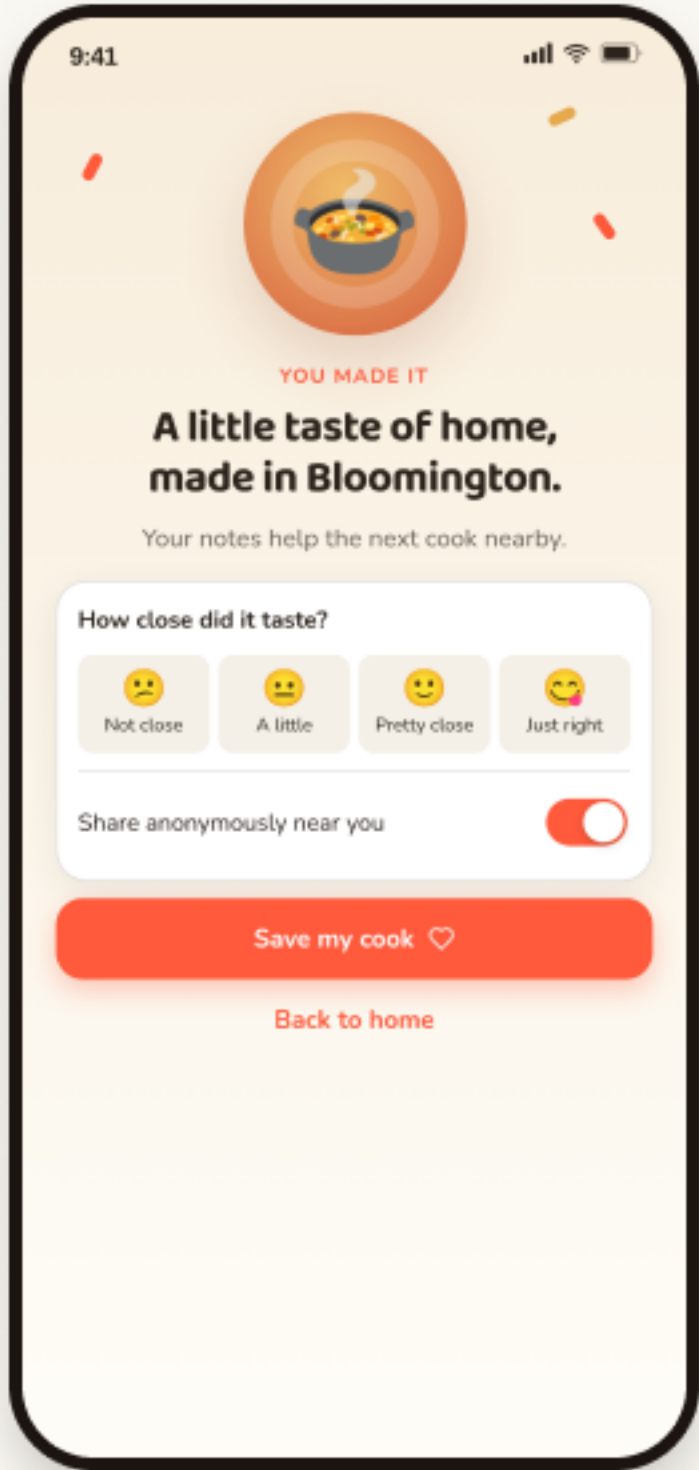
Once she picks easiest tonight, the cook mode is not the original recipe. Chili crisp and miso show up in the step, in the timer, and in what to look for in the pan.



01 STEP
One step, her pan



02 CHANGED
Chili crisp + miso, not
doubanjiang



03 SHARE
A little taste of home, made
in Bloomington

Substitutions are not a footnote. They rewrite the cook.

TEST THE BET, NOT A BIGGER APP

- 01** Can she tell in 30 seconds if tonight is possible
- Task: open Mapo tofu and say whether tonight is possible, without scrolling the full recipe.
-
- 02** Can she explain the two paths and the taste trade-off
- Task: explain Closest vs Easiest in her own words, including taste.
-
- 03** Does confidence to actually start go up after the plan



Ask before and after: how sure are you that you would actually start.

If the loop holds, community and extra cuisines can wait.