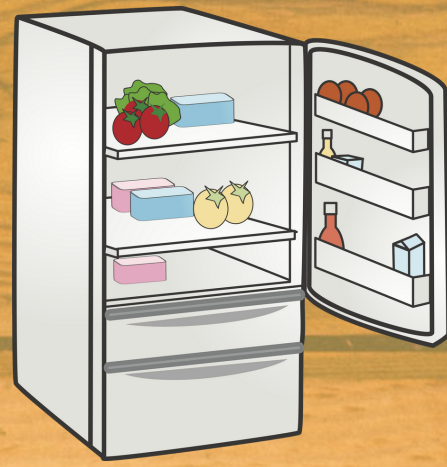# Flambé!

YOUR SOUS CHEF AND GUIDE

Who is Flambé?

Flambé is an AI-assistant and framework that is integrated into your kitchen to turn it into a smart kitchen.

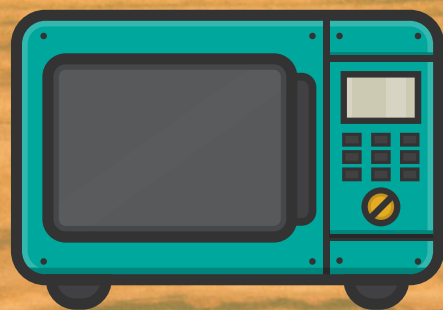Flambé guides people through the entire process of cooking.

Enabling your Creativity

Features of Flambé

1. Flambé monitors the current state of your pantry, the fridge, and the freezer.
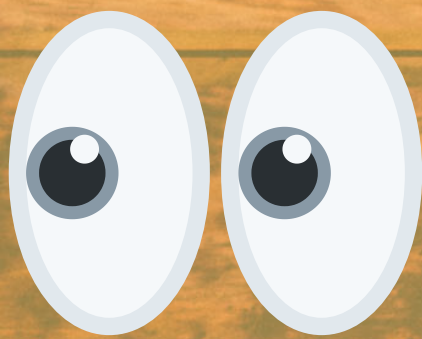
2. Flambé is integrated within the kitchen and it is hooked up to all the technology in it. Thus, it is able to remotely control devices like the stove, fridge, microwave, oven, etc.

3. Flambé has the capability to collect odor-readings of the food, allowing it to generate suggestions on how to fix/improve the dish as the cooking process goes along.

4. Flambé gets visual data on the user, checking on the execution of certain techniques and the safety.

5. Flambé, as an AI, collects data on the user and kitchen and analyzes it.

6. Its interaction with the user is through the usage of a human-like voice emitted by a speaker in the kitchen, similar to Siri.

User Manual:
How does Flambé Work?

1. Enter the kitchen and call: **FLAMBÉ!**
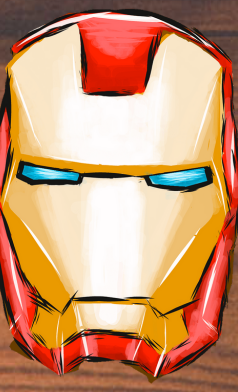
2. Optionally, tell Flambé what you want to make.

3. Flambé will scan your pantry/fridge to generate a feasible recipe for you to make (based on your input, the available fresh ingredients, and previous recipes you've enjoyed).

4. Flambé will guide you along, helping and providing instructions to you as you go. Depending on how advanced you are, Flambé's involvement level will vary. For absolute beginners, it will remotely heat up the stove, explain what each step means, tell you how long to mix stuff for, etc.

5. If you want to improvise as you go along, you can add in various ingredients. For people who are less confident, but still want to get creative, Flambé will do routine sensor-readings of the smell in the air to suggest potential ingredients or seasonings you could add.

6. When you are finished and have served/tried the dish, Flambé will log your happiness-level with it, saving the data for future use.

Blueprint of Flambé

It is an AI system that has control over your kitchen. (Think JARVIS in Iron Man, except for your kitchen).

It interfaces with the human through a voice emitted from speakers set up in the kitchen (think Alexa or Siri).

Why should you use Flambé? What is it for?

The function of Flambé is to enable self-expression, creation, creativity, and in turn, eudaimonia. For many, cooking is one of those activities that allows us to create novel products and show our creativity and imagination, which are core parts of being human. However, cooking often has a lot of skill-based barriers that serve as a roadblock for many people who want to cook. Flambé is meant to eliminate those barriers while keeping the human in the loop, not entirely automating the process. Consequently, adopting its policy still maintains a certain level of human agency.

Who does it affect?

It affects the human. It understands the struggles that humans can go through due to inexperience, and it aims to curb that inexperience and level the playing field. It has the affordance of giving us the ability to be creative and human, while ensuring that skill isn't a barrier that stops us. Similarly, it understands that we might get frustrated, and it stops this from happening. It provides an immediate feedback loop, providing advice and guidance continually over the course of the cooking-process. It gives feedback and guidance on every step, not letting you get stuck at any point.

What is the medium?

The medium is the AI-technology with which it is created, and the user ends up interfacing with it through conversing with a robot-voice (like Siri/Alexa). While Flambé has a clear function, the aesthetics of it are a bit harder to observe. The point of Flambé is to create a seamless experience. The idea behind the form and aesthetics of it is that you shouldn't even have to think about it. You should just consider Flambé as a fellow human, sous-chef, or friend that you can just talk to normally. Because of this, your only interaction with it is through the voice. The rest of its functionality is implemented behind the scenes. The medium is technology, and the idea is that the medium (technology), just like Flambé itself, should seamlessly integrate into your cooking-process.

Manifesto

If I had to articulate a singular vision for my design, I would hope that it simultaneously actively involves humans while still being seamless. My vision for Flambé is as follows. The ideal scenario is that it is integrated in every kitchen. Thus, when a user enters the kitchen, whether or not they know what they want to make, they could call "Flambé!" Flambé could generate a recipe based on the contents available. From that point on, Flambé would find ingredients and help the user locate them in the pantry/fridge. Depending on how experienced the user is, Flambé would either just provide the recipe it generated and not provide further help, or it would take a more involved role. Or, it would do something in between. For absolute beginners, it would help turn on the stove, tell them what to add, continue manually adjusting the heat, and generally take more control. The idea is that regardless of how inexperienced someone is, the human is always in the loop. In the case of beginners, the AI should act as a mentor and guide, not a replacement. Autonomy and self-expression should be maintained. Otherwise, human fulfillment and eudaimonia wouldn't be possible.

The other aspect to the product is its personability and seamless nature. While the medium is technology, which can be very cold and impersonal, the idea that Flambé is simply just a voice that you talk to makes it very personable. The form behind the design makes it so that you aren't intimidate by the AI; rather, it's just there to help you. Regarding the idea of seamlessness, my vision is that you wouldn't have to think about using Flambé. The extremely simple interface (just talking to the voice) reduces the need for signifiers. It provides many affordances without a need for complicated interactions. It provides immediate feedback to the user and offers advice on cooking techniques and additions. This makes it simple yet quite powerful.

My final aspiration for the design is that it understands us. Flambé knows that humans just want to create and express themselves through mediums like cooking, and they don't want to be blocked by barriers like a lack of cooking-skill. Thus, it makes it as easy as possible for the user to express their creative side and create. At the same time, Flambé has an additional level of understanding. By collecting data on the dishes the user typically makes, it understands the types of dishes that they are likely to make in the future. Thus, it begins to understand the user as a person with unique preferences. This level of understanding is the mark of a truly great design.

All in all, I hope that Flambé would reduce the struggle and intimidation from cooking. Its greatest achievement would be freeing people's creative sides.

Photo Sources

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