PROJECT3: The Quantified Self

My inspiration came from observing my own lifestyle. I discovered that when I stayed home for extended periods, the food in my refrigerator was consumed very slowly. Conversely, if I went out that day, I was more likely to cook when I got home.

To verify whether going out helped me burn food, I decided to keep a record of my daily routine.

INTRODUCTION

Brief

This project asks us to perform a small self-tracking experiment based on the idea of The Quantified Self.

Inspiration

The inspiration for my project comes from observing my own daily habits over time. I used to think that the more time I spend at home, the more I will cook. However, I realised that the opposite is often true. When I stay at home for long periods, the food in my fridge is not consumed very well. I often delay cooking and tell myself, “I will cook later”, but later never comes. Eventually, I choose instant food, snacks, or takeaway instead. Because of this, many ingredients stay untouched for too long or even get forgotten.On the other hand, when I go outside I am actually more motivated to cook once I return home.

This observation made me ask an important question:

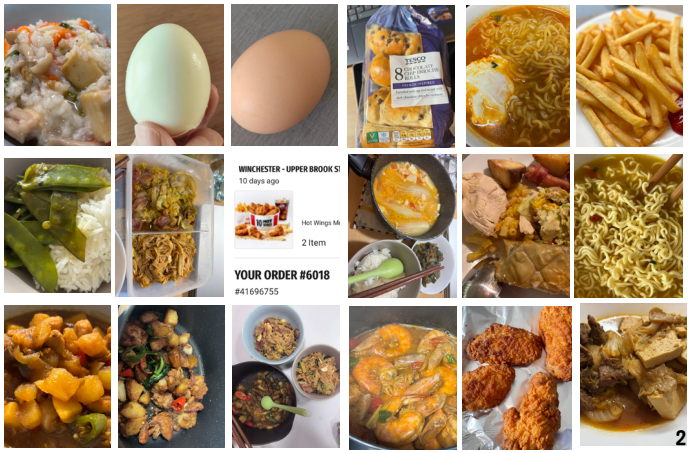
“Is there a relationship between how often I go outside and how quickly I use the food in my fridge?”

Because of this question, I decided to collect these two types of data and visualise them. By doing so, I hope to understand my own behaviour better and see if the connection really exists.

Data Record

Date	Breakfast	lunch	Dinner
Monday	Egg;Milk	beans	Potatoes; Drumstick; Chili
Tuesday	Tofu;Sausage	Tofu;Deef	Sausage;Cabbage
Wednesday	Egg	Drumstick; Chili	
Thursday	Bread	Tomato;Tofu	Prawn
Friday		Instant noodles	Drumstick; Chili
Saturday		Chips	Drumstick;Cabbage
Sunday		Noodles	KFC

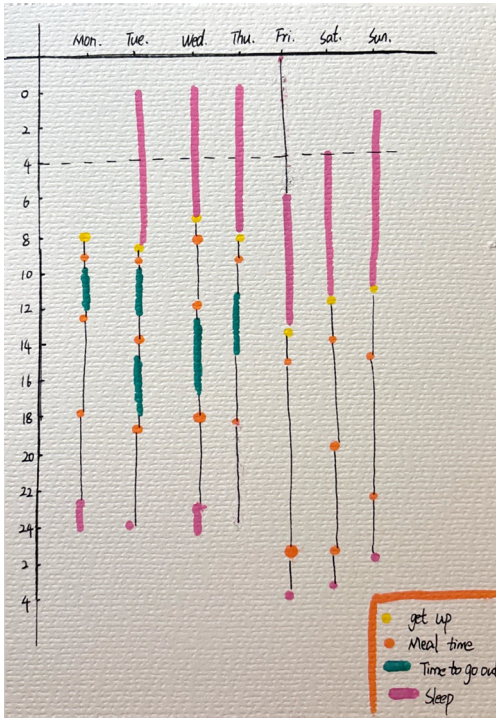
After determining my research direction, I began recording two types of data over a week: the consumption of food in my refrigerator and my outings. After compiling the data on my refrigerator’s contents, I decided to take photos of what I ate each day of the week.



PROCESS

Data Record

On the other hand, I also tried to record my daily going-out time.



The key point of the record is:

1)Did I go outside?

2)How many times did I go outside?

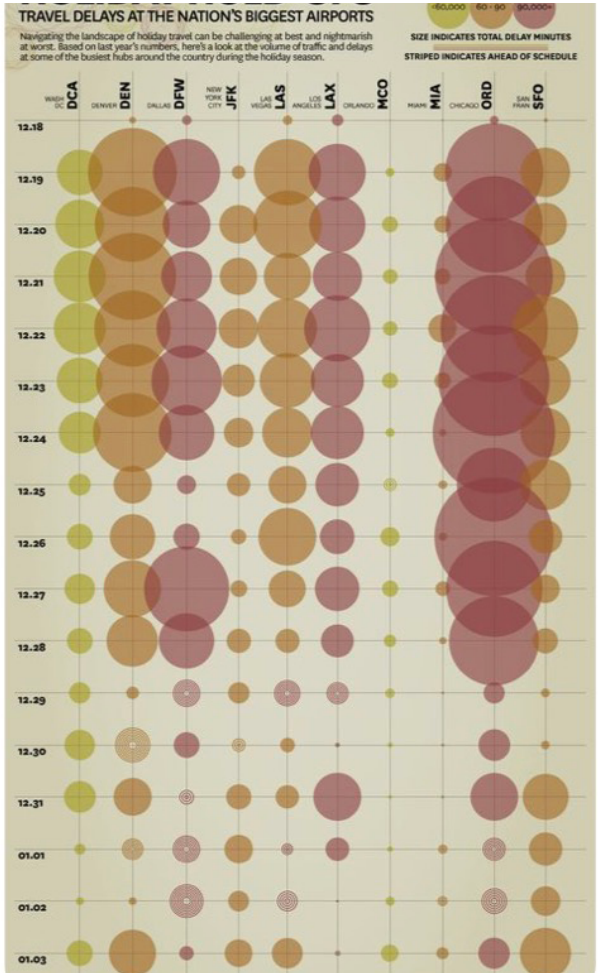
3)Approximately how long each time lasted (short / half day / whole day)

In this project, I wanted to use dots and lines as the main visual elements because they effectively represent "process" and "rhythm," rather than just a result.

A dot represents a specific action, such as going out or eating food from the refrigerator. Each dot is an event, a record of "what I did." Lines, on the other hand, represent many points/events occurring, turning this process into a continuous trajectory. I think this feeling suits my pig's trotters.

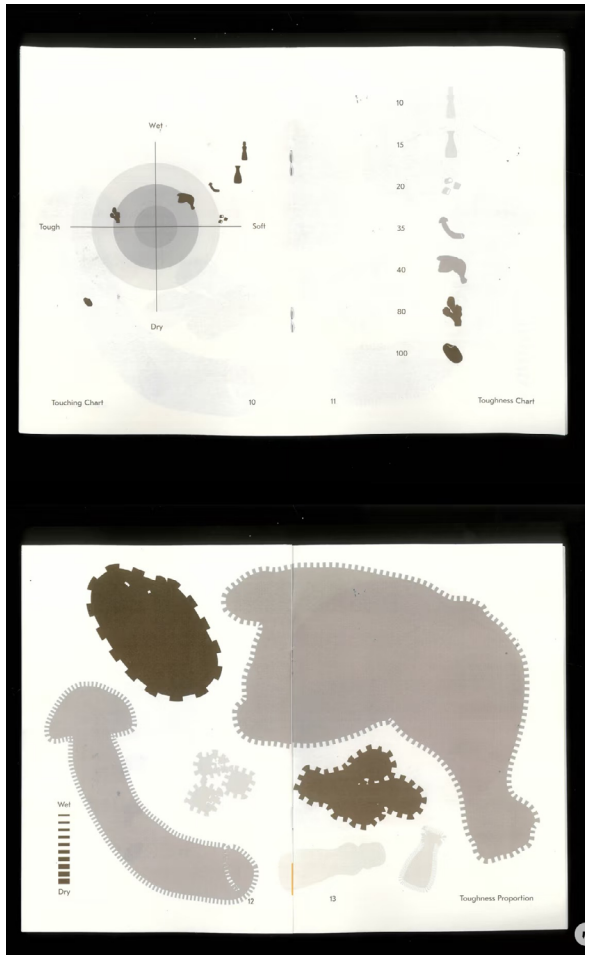
Visual Reference

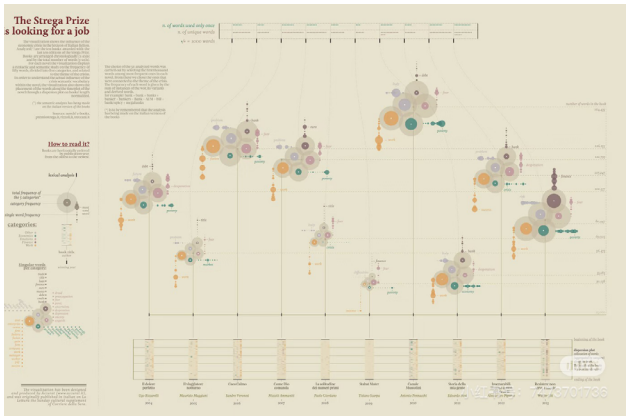
To better visualize the data, I looked for some references.

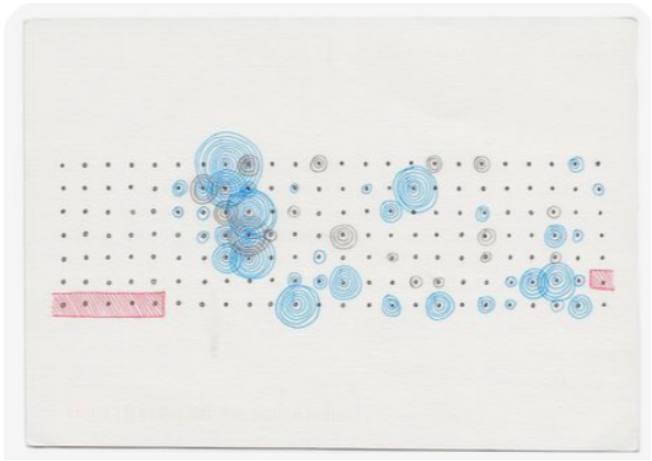


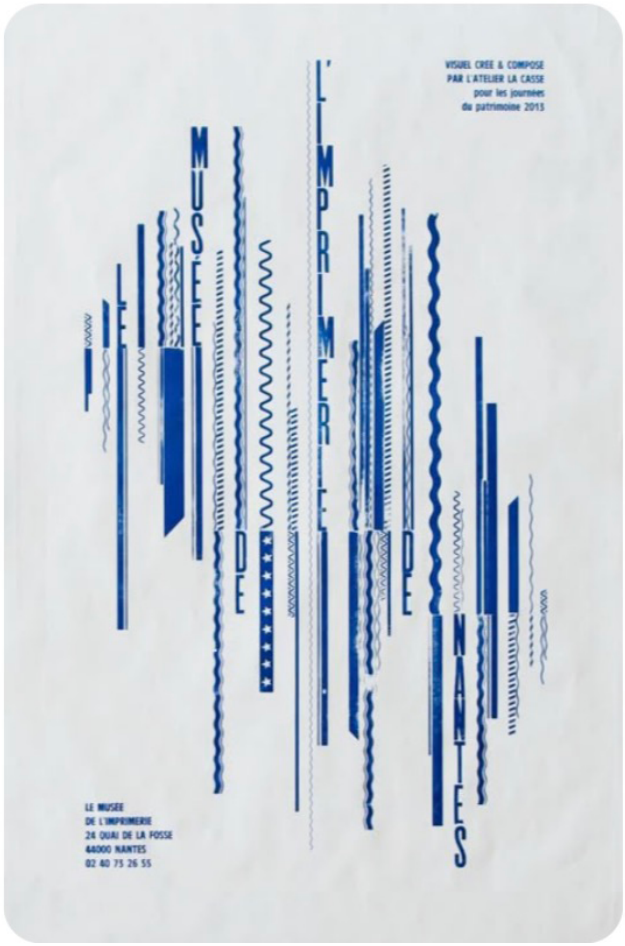
PROCESS

Visual Reference

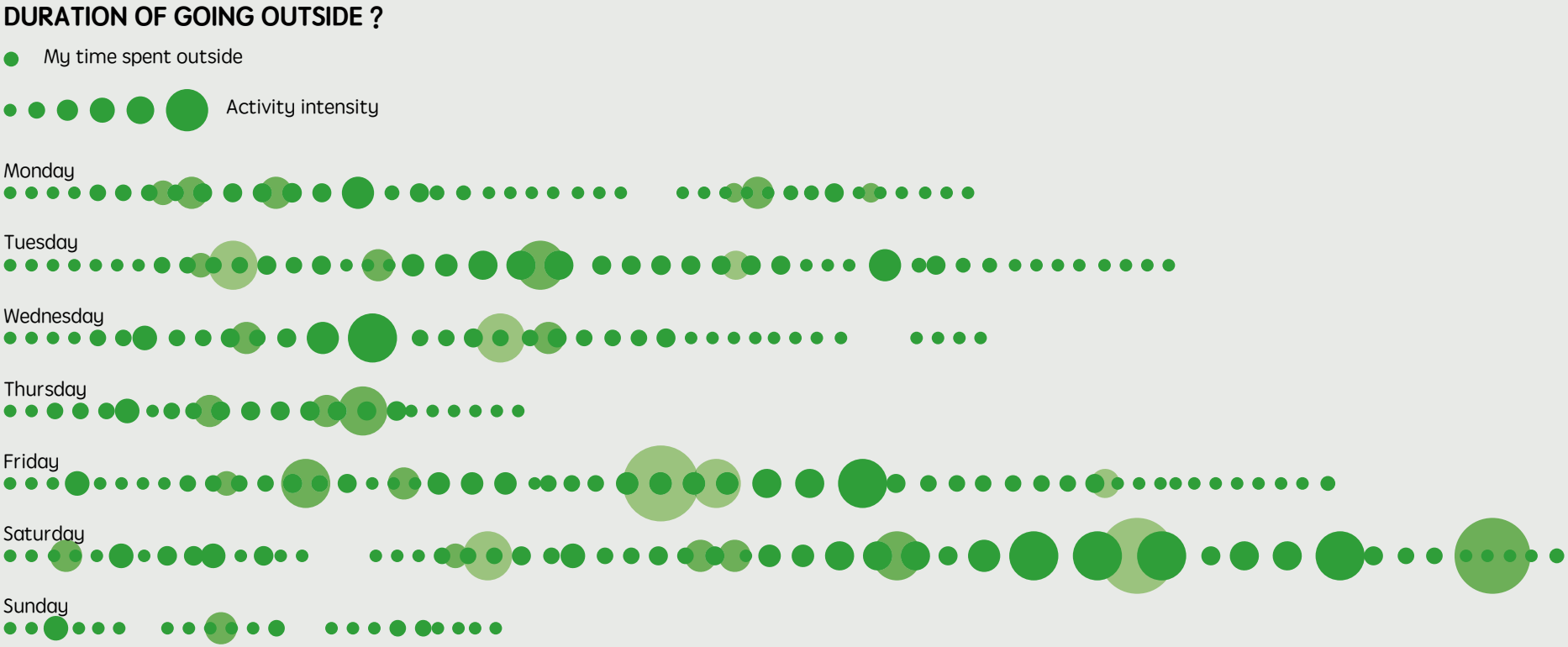






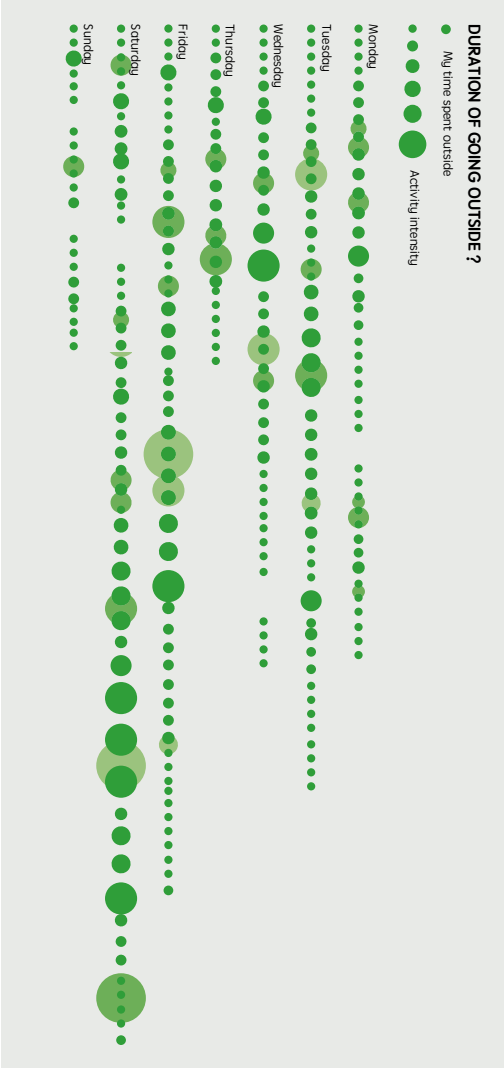


Data Visualization 1



PROCESS

Data Visualization 1



In this visualisation, I use dots and lines to record my daily going-out behaviour.

Why dots?

Each dot represents one actual action of going outside.
Going out is not one continuous block—it is made of many small phases: leaving home, walking, waiting, staying, moving again…

Why different dot sizes?

The size of each dot shows the "intensity" of the activity:

Small dots at the beginning – when I first leave home

Bigger dots in the middle – when I stay outside longer or move more

Small dots at the end – just before returning home

The dot size lets the viewer see how long or intense the outing was.

What do the lines mean?

Each line represents a full journey from "leaving home" to "coming back".
If I go out twice in one day, there will be two separate lines with a gap in between.

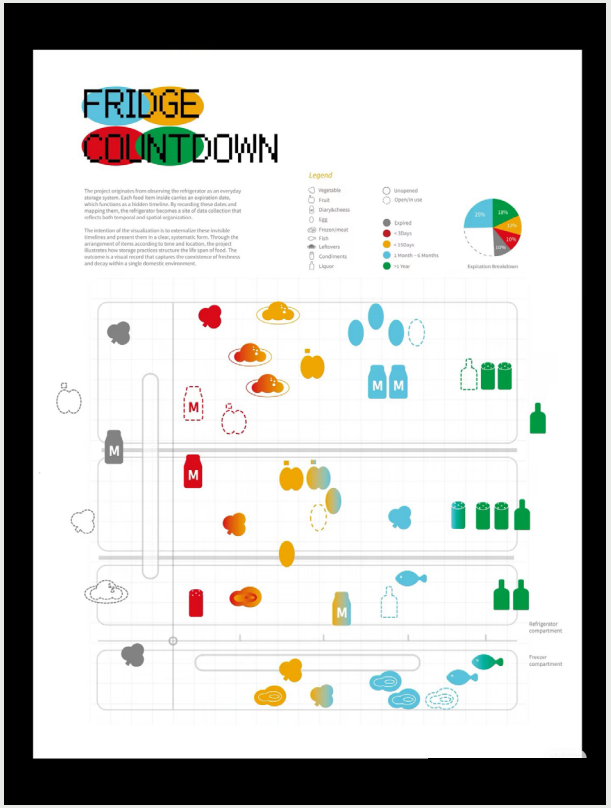
What does the blank space mean?

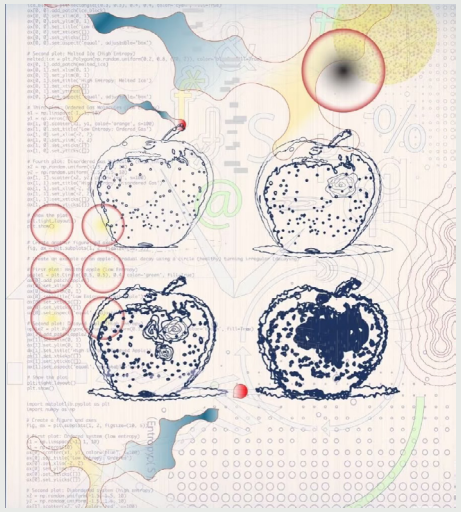
Blank space represents the time I stay at home.
No dots and no lines = no going-out activity.

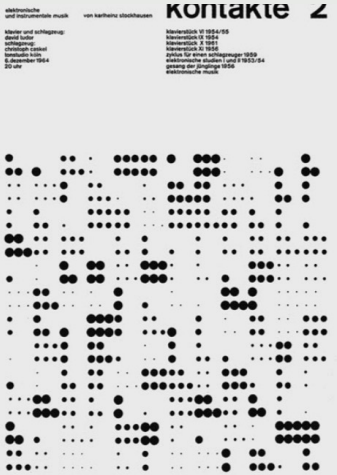
PROCESS

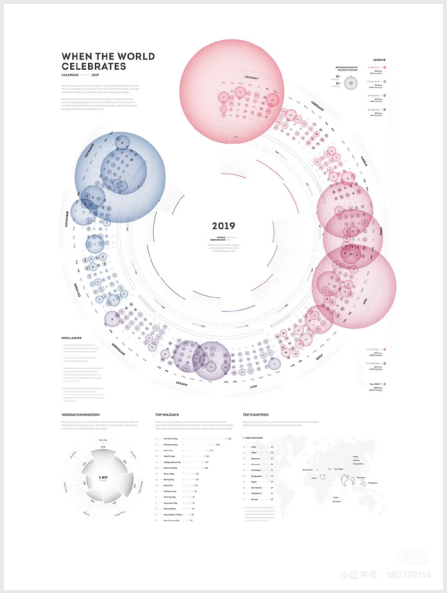
Data Visualization 2

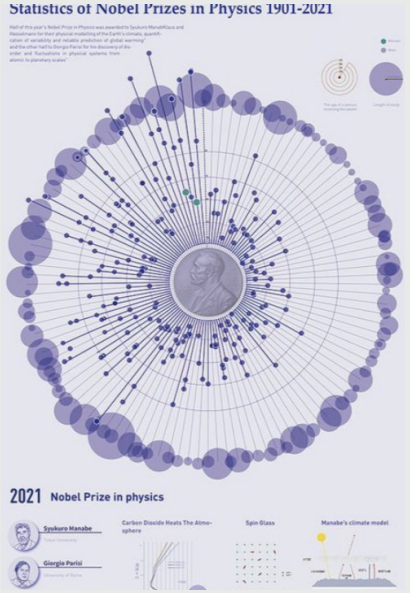
Regarding visual visualization 2, I think the difficulty lies in how to show the remaining quantity to the audience. I've looked for some visual references that I hope can help me.

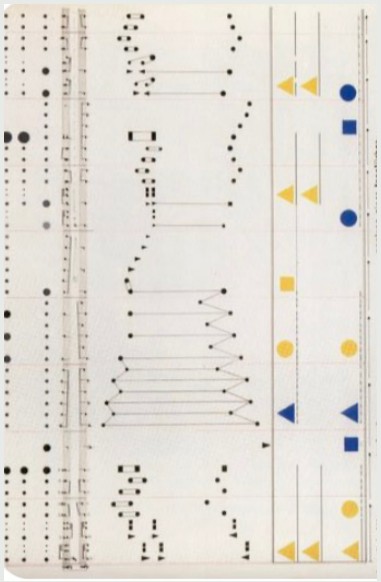












PROCESS

In my second visualisation, I use a circular structure to show how different foods in my fridge are used up over time.
In this chart:

The centre of the circle represents the moment when the food is first bought. It is the starting point.

The line from the centre to the outer edge shows the process of consumption.

Each time I eat that food, I add one dot along this line.

When the dot reaches the outer ring, it means that this item has been completely used up.

The circle allows every food item to start from the same centre and move outward. This makes it easy to compare their states:
some dots are near the edge, so the food is almost finished; some dots are still close to the centre, so that food has hardly been touched. The circular form brings all these different “stages” into one clear structure and highlights the idea of small cycles being completed.

Data Visualization 1

STORY

INSPIRATION

My inspiration came from observing my own lifestyle. I discovered that when I stayed home for extended periods, the food in my refrigerator was consumed very slowly. Conversely, if I went out that day, I was more likely to cook when I got home.

To verify whether going out helped me burn food, I decided to keep a record of my daily routine.

RECORD

I manually recorded data for a week, mainly covering two aspects:

1. Going out

- Did I go out that day?

- Duration of being out (short/ medium/long)

- Number and order of going out

2. Food consumption in the refrigerator

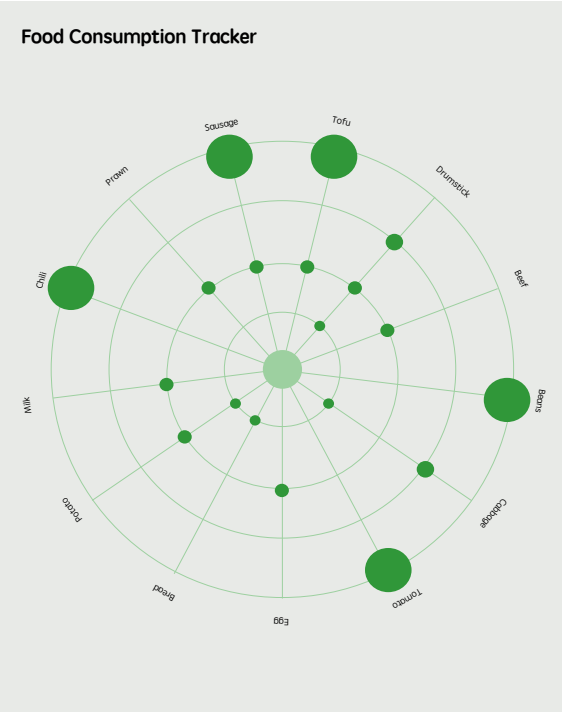
- What foods did I eat each day?

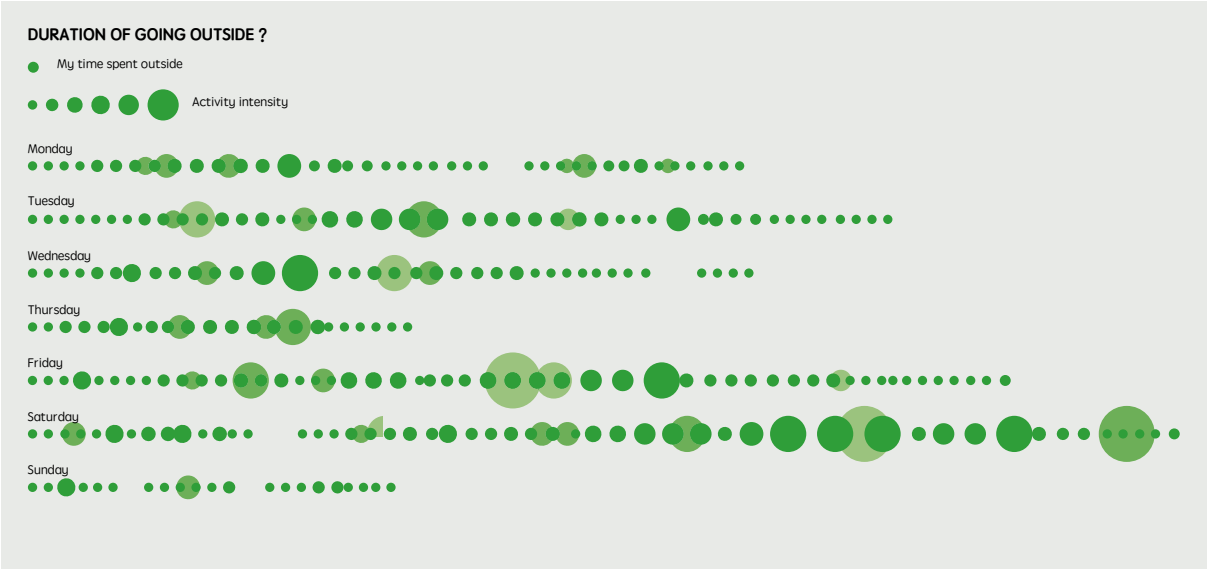
- How many times did I eat each type of food?

CONCLUSION

By comparing the two sets of data: Appropriate outings can help me better utilize the food in my refrigerator.

A small behavioral change (going out) can actually influence my daily eating patterns.





REFLECTION

The visualisation stage was the most challenging part. The first chart, which uses dots and lines, helped me show the movement and rhythm of my daily activity. It made me think seriously about how abstract shapes can represent behaviour in a way that is simple but still meaningful. The second chart required me to translate food consumption into a circular diagram, and I struggled with how to represent “remaining amount” without numbers. This difficulty helped me understand that visualisation is not only about making something look nice, but about designing a clear system that makes sense to other people.

sketchbook