



# Recipe Recommender

---

Erdős Institute Data Science Bootcamp Spring 2024

Nadir Hajouji, Félix Almendra Hernandez, Nathan Schley, Ali Arslanhan, and Katherine Martin

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6edlBZ64TDk>



# Overview

Goal: Construct recommender system for recipes

Data: One million reviews of 500k recipes from food.com (Kaggle)

Research Question: Can we predict which recipes a user is likely to interact with using information about recipes we know they have already interacted with?

Industry use:

- Standalone product (à la NYT Cooking)
- Targeted advertising (Instacart, supermarkets)





# Model

Want  $f : \text{Users} \times \text{Recipes} \rightarrow \text{Reals}$ ;

One way of obtaining such a model:

- Find maps  $\text{Users} \rightarrow V$  and  $\text{Recipes} \rightarrow V$
- Set  $f(\text{user}, \text{recipe}) = \text{user dot recipe}$

To find a good  $f$ , need a good way of embedding users and recipes in common vector space.



# Data cleaning/processing



## Recipes

Metadata: Name, User ID, Description,  
Recipe category, **Keywords**



Identify **main** Keyword groups

- Main ingredients (fruit, vegetables, dairy, non-meat protein, etc)
- Meal types (breakfast, holiday, kid friendly, weeknight, etc)
- Baking
- Regions (Mexican, French, etc)
- Appliances (pot, pan, ove, etc)

Continuous attributes: **Cooking time, Calories, Fat Content, Fiber content etc.**



Apply appropriate **transformations** and standardize

# Data cleaning/processing



## Recipes

*Cleaned attributes*

<u>Recipe ID</u>	Name	...	Dairy	Fruit	Dessert	Meat	...	log_calories	...
273649	Strawberry cake		1	1	1	0		2.97	



## Reviews

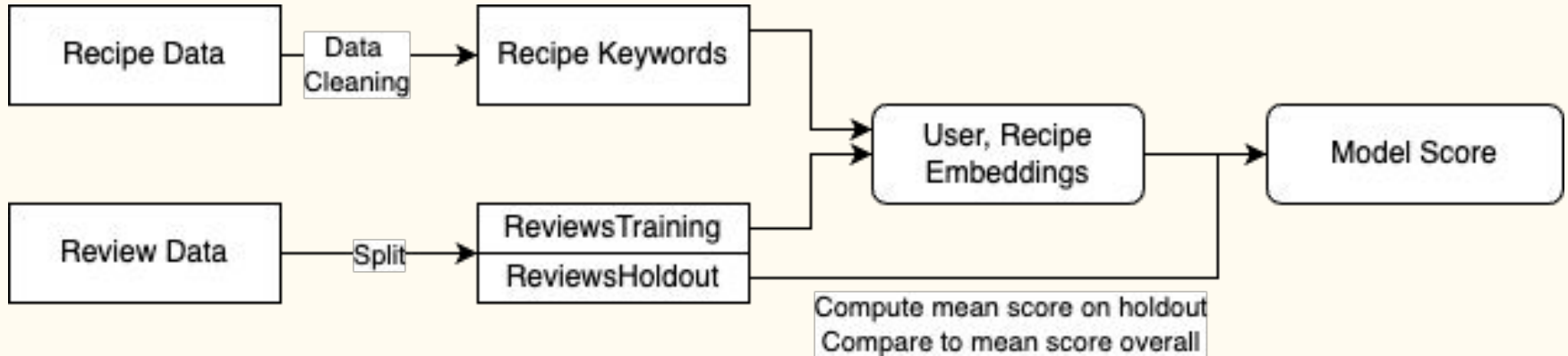
We made sure

- 1) Each recipe had at least 7 reviews
- 2) Each user had reviewed at least 5 recipes

Metadata: Recipe ID, User ID, Review, Rating

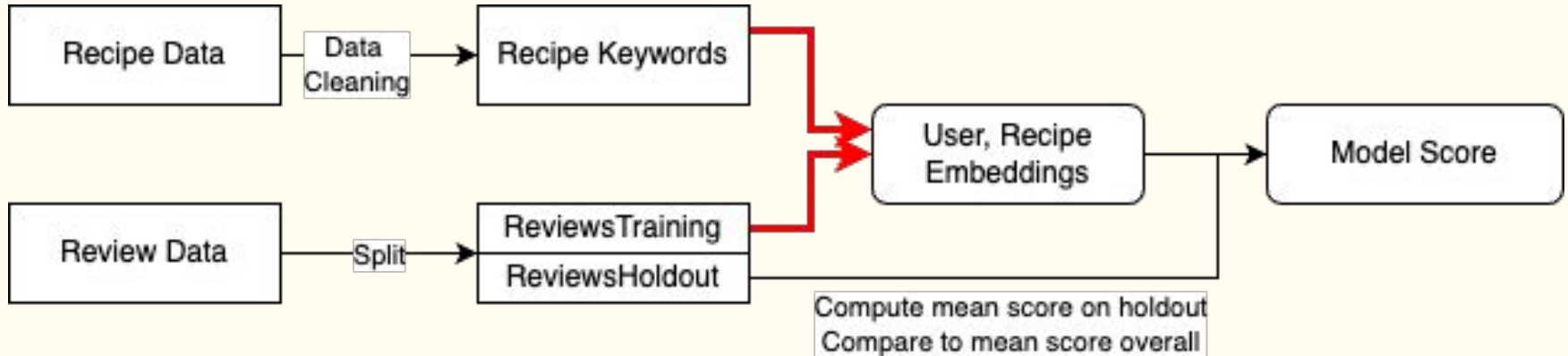


# Training and evaluating models: General Pipeline





# Training and evaluating models: General Pipeline





# What didn't work: Recipe-based models

- Using “multi-hot” encoding and continuous attributes to obtain embeddings of recipes
- Define “user vectors” to be average of recipe vectors that the user has interacted with





# What worked: User-based models

- Ignore recipe data



# What worked: User-based models

- Ignore recipe data
- Encode (training portion) of review data into an “affinity matrix”  
(*Affinity matrix = matrix where each row associated to user, each column associated to recipe, entry is 1 if user reviewed recipe, 0 otherwise*)

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 1 \\ & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

$n \times m$

$n$  = number users  
 $m$  = number recs



# What worked: User-based models

- Ignore recipe data
- Encode (training portion) of review data into an “affinity matrix”  
(*Affinity matrix = matrix where each row associated to user, each column associated to recipe, entry is 1 if user reviewed recipe, 0 otherwise*)
- Use Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) to factor the affinity matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 1 \\ & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} * & * \\ * & * \\ \vdots & \vdots \\ * & * \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} * & * & \dots & * \\ * & * & \dots & * \end{pmatrix}$$

$n \times k$                        $k \times m$

$n$  = number users  
 $m$  = number recs  
 $k$  = hyperparam.



# What worked: User-based models

- Ignore recipe data
- Encode (training portion) of review data into an “affinity matrix”  
(*Affinity matrix = matrix where each row associated to user, each column associated to recipe, entry is 1 if user reviewed recipe, 0 otherwise*)
- Use Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) to factor the affinity matrix
- **Interpret the factors as the user/recipe embeddings**

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 1 \\ & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \dots & \text{user}_1 & \dots \\ \dots & \text{user}_2 & \dots \\ & \vdots & \\ \dots & \text{user}_n & \dots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \text{rec}_1 & \text{rec}_2 & \text{rec}_m \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

$n \times k$

$k \times m$

$n$  = number users

$m$  = number recs

$k$  = hyperparam.



# What worked: User-based models

- Ignore recipe data
- Encode (training portion) of review data into an “affinity matrix”  
*(Affinity matrix = matrix where each row associated to user, each column associated to recipe, entry is 1 if user reviewed recipe, 0 otherwise)*
- Use Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) to factor the affinity matrix
- **Interpret the factors as the user/recipe embeddings**

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 & 0 & \dots & 0 \\ 0 & 0 & 0 & \dots & 1 \\ & & & \vdots & \\ 0 & 0 & 1 & \dots & 0 \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} \dots & \text{user}_1 & \dots \\ \dots & \text{user}_2 & \dots \\ & \vdots & \\ \dots & \text{user}_n & \dots \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\ \text{rec}_1 & \text{rec}_2 & \text{rec}_m \\ \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \end{pmatrix}$$

$n \times k$

$k \times m$

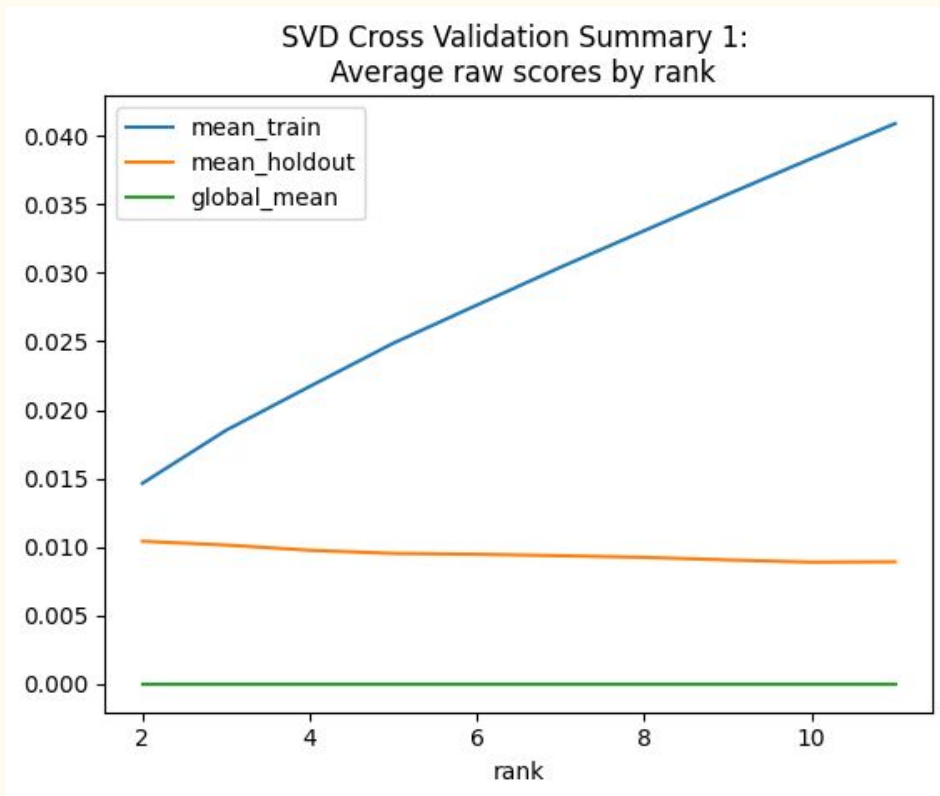
$n$  = number users

$m$  = number recs

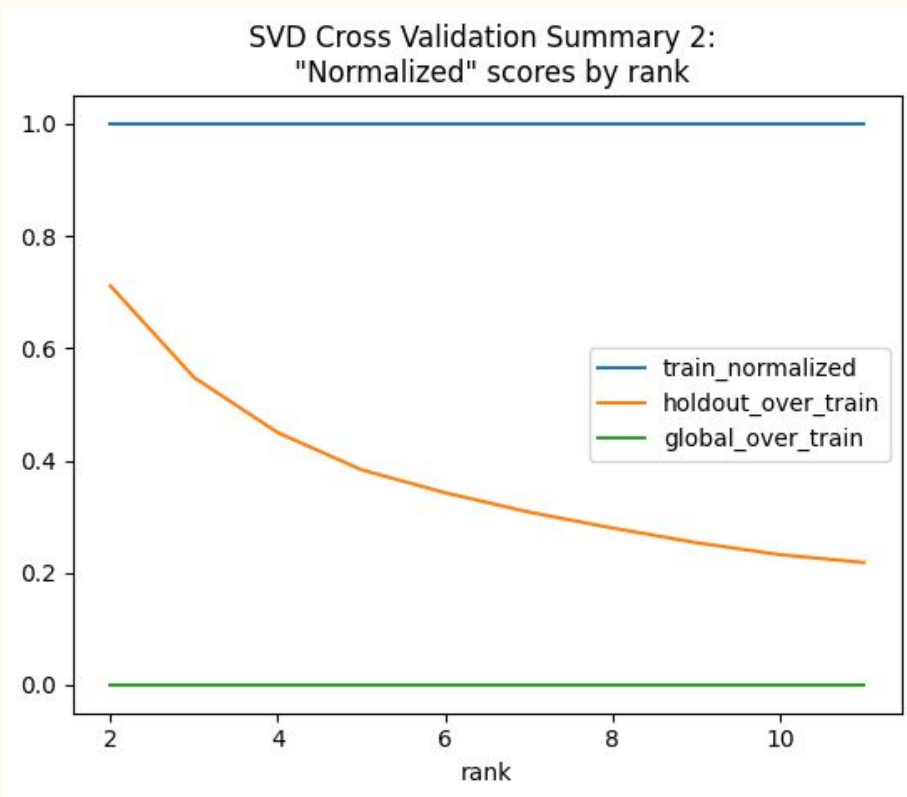
**$k$  = hyperparam.**

“The rank” =  $k$

# Results



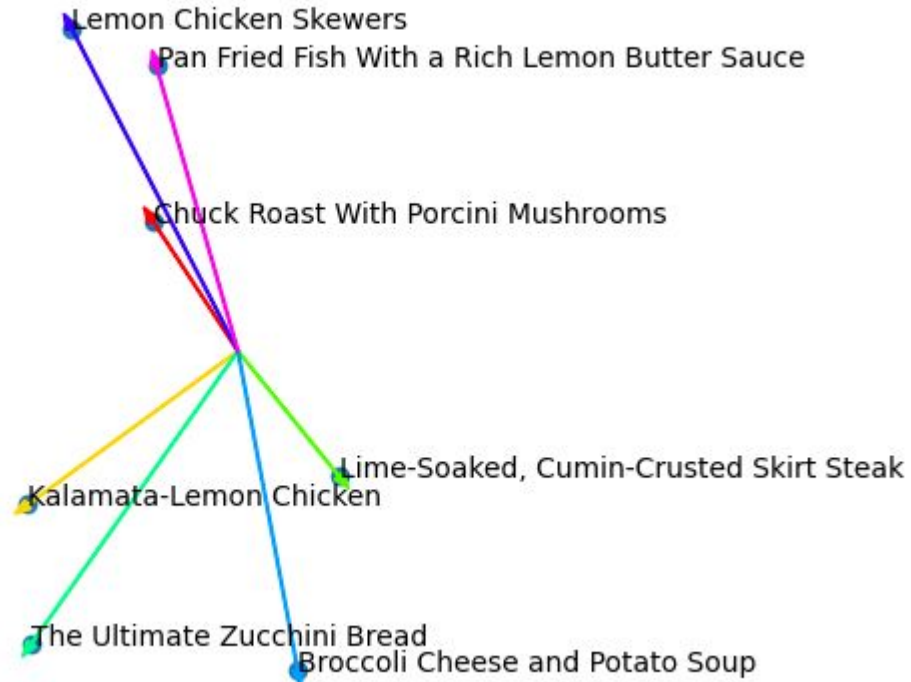
# Results





# Visualizing the final model

Final embedding in  $R^2$  using SVD

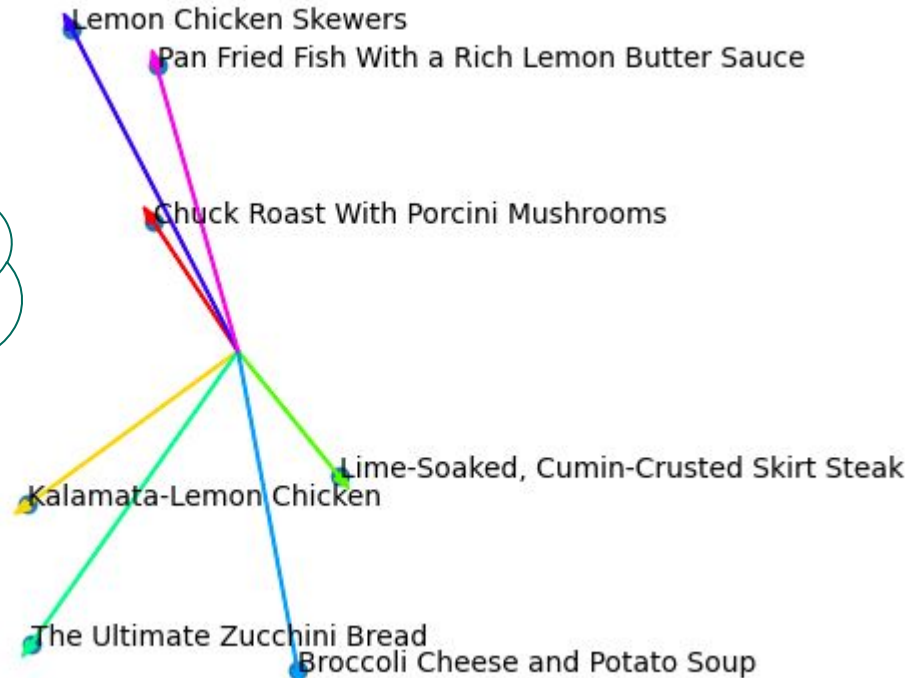






# Visualizing the final model

Final embedding in  $R^2$  using SVD

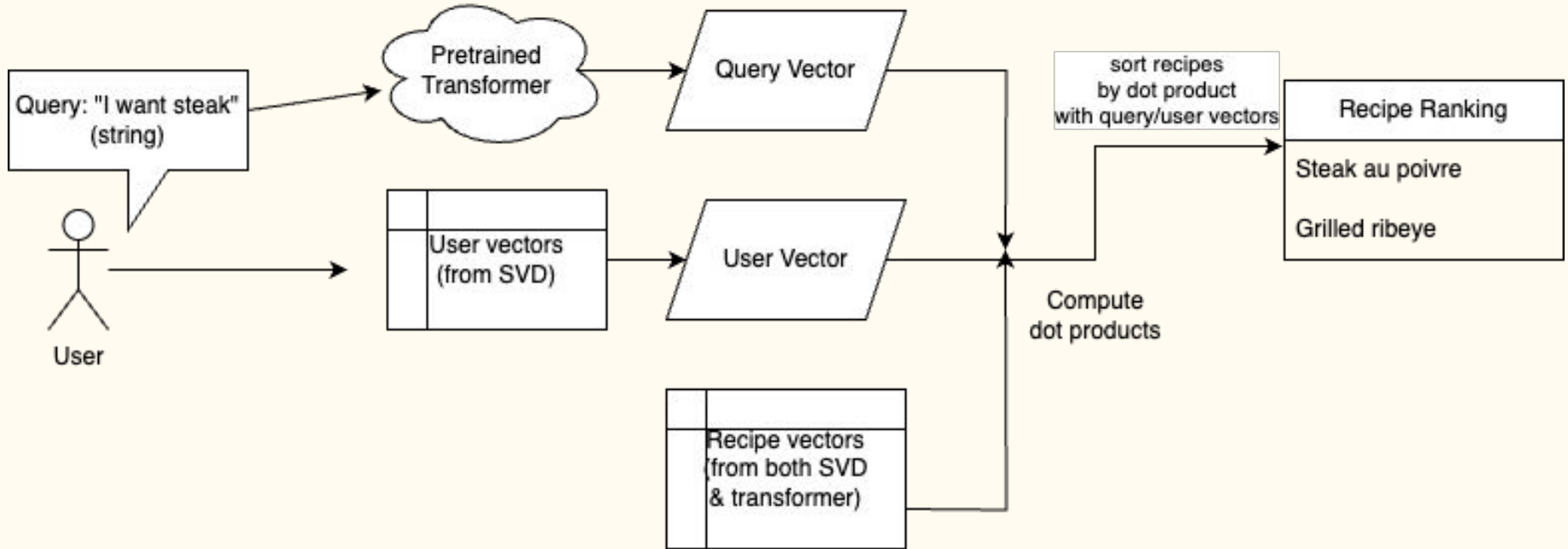


*Why are Kalamata-lemon chicken and lemon chicken skewers pointing in different directions?*





# Final product





Many thanks to...

Karthik Prabhu, Steven Gubkin, and  
Roman Holowinsky for your help and  
support for this project!