

PATENT SPECIFICATION

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(54) IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO CULINARY UTENSILS

(71) We, DART INDUSTRIES INC., of 8480 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90048, United State of America, a corporation organized and existing under the Laws of the State of Delaware United States of America, do hereby declare the invention for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us and the method by which it is to be performed to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

The present invention relates to culinary utensils and more particularly to a measuring spoon set.

One type of prior proposed measuring spoon set, as disclosed in United States Design D-184,027 comprises a combined measuring spoon set and holder therefore, wherein the spoons are hung from the holder which is mounted on a wall.

Another type of prior proposed measuring spoon set is disclosed in United States Patent 3,400,591 and comprises a set of stacked measuring spoons having releasable snap fastening means in the handles whereby the spoons are snapped together in a nested fashion.

According to this invention there is provided a measuring spoon set comprising a connecting member and a plurality of spoons, each spoon having a handle and an integral bowl at one end thereof, each of said respective bowls defining different capacities, the other end of the handle of each spoon being free, each said free end having an open ended slot therein, a portion of the slot nearest said free end having opposed arcuate edges, said edges being mutually facing concave areas, a second portion of the slot extending beyond said arcuate edges, said second portion having edges extending out to a greater slot width than the maximum width of the slot at the opposed arcuate edges to permit flexing apart of the portions of the handle on each side of the slot and said slot in each handle

being of such size and configuration that each spoon may be snapped on to or off from said connecting member.

According to another aspect of this invention there is provided a spoon comprising a handle and an integral bowl at one end thereof, and the other end of the handle being free, said free end having an open ended slot therein, a portion of the slot nearest said free end having opposed arcuate edges, said edges being mutually facing concave areas, and a second portion of the slot extending beyond said arcuate edges said second portion having edges extending out to a greater slot width than the maximum width of the slot at the opposed arcuate edges to permit flexing apart of the portions of the handle on each side of the slot.

In order that the invention may be more readily understood and so that further features thereof may be appreciated the invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a measuring spoon set, in accordance with the invention comprising a number of spoons attached to a spoon holding ring and disposed in a rotated or fanned position, with one of the spoons being removed from the spoon holding ring;

Figure 2 is a top plan view of the individual spoons of the measuring spoon set shown in Figure 1,

Figure 3 is a top plan view of the measuring spoon set with the spoons in nested position and attached to the spoon holding ring;

Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view taken on line 4-4 of Figure 3;

Figure 5 is a bottom plan view of the spoons in nested position and attached to the spoon holding ring;

Figure 6 is a cross-sectional view taken on line 6-6 of Figure 3;

Figure 7 is a partial side view of the spoon holding ring with the ends of the spoons attached;

Figure 8 is a cross-sectional view taken on line 8-8 of Figure 7;

Figure 9 is a perspective view showing the manner in which a spoon is attached to the spoon holding ring;

Figure 10 is an enlarged plan view of the end of a spoon showing in phantom how the end of the spoon is deformed as the spoon is joined to the spoon holding ring; and,

Figure 11 is an enlarged plan view of the end of a spoon.

Figure 1 shows a measuring spoon set 5 including a spoon holding ring 6 and six spoons 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 each having a different bowl capacity.

Spoon 7 has a $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon capacity; spoon 8 has a $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon capacity; spoon 9 has a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon capacity; spoon 10 has a 1 teaspoon capacity; spoon 11 has a dual capacity since it has continuous ledge 13 within the bowl, parallel to the top edge of the bowl, which provides a 1 teaspoon capacity to the ledge (and thus avoids spillage of the measured material) and a $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon capacity to the top of the bowl, and spoon 12 has a dual capacity since it has a continuous ledge 14 within the bowl, parallel with the top edge of the bowl, which provides a 1 tablespoon capacity to the ledge and a 4 teaspoon capacity to the top of the bowl.

Each of the spoons 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 has a bowl designated 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 respectively, the configuration of each bowl being shown most clearly in Figures 4 and 6. Each bowl has an integral handle extending therefrom and each handle has a slot in the free end of the handle. The slots are substantially identical to one another each having the configuration shown in Figure 11. Each slot is defined by two sloping converging edges 21 which function to direct the portion of the ring 6 to which the spoons are to be attached toward a ring engaging portion of the slot (see Figures 9 and 10). The sloping edges 21 slope towards each other as they approach the ring engaging portion of the slot which comprises opposed arcuate portion 22 which extend to sloping edges 23. The sloping edges 23 diverge from each other with increasing distance from the ring engaging portion and join an arcuate end wall of the slot. The slot may be broadly defined as being somewhat keyhole shaped. The arcuate portions 22 do not lie on the circumference of the same circle but rather are two opposed arcuate portions which each extend through an arc of approximately 80° . The walls 23 extend outwardly in forming the slot to a greater distance than the distance between the two

arcuate faces 22. Thus shown in Figure 10, the slot opens by flexing about pivot points 25 and 26 when the spoon holder ring 6 is pushed into the slot. Preferably the spoons and the ring 6 are fabricated from a flexible plastics material such as polyethylene or polypropylene which permits sufficient flexure to allow the slot to open to receive the ring 6 but is sufficiently stiff to hold the spoons on the ring until they are pulled off.

The cross-sectional diameter of the ring 6 is slightly greater than the distance between the most distant points between the arcuate edges 22. This provides a gripping action by the ring engaging portion of the spoon slot on ring 6; however, the spoons are releasably free to pivot around the portion of the ring 6 to which they are attached.

The spoon holder ring 6 is shown in the preferred embodiment as a generally triangular or "D" shaped configuration, however, it may have other configurations such as round, square and the like. The cross-section through ring 6 is shown in Figure 8 as circular; however, various alternative cross-sections may be employed so long as the slots in the spoon handles are modified to accept such alternative cross-sections. Even though Figure 8 shows the cross-section through ring 6 as circular, the preferred embodiment is not circular but rather has a small flat portion on the top 28 and bottom 29 of the portion of the ring which enters the slot. This results in the ring having a greater dimension in one direction (horizontally as shown in Figure 8) than the other direction. By properly designing the slot dimension so that the spoons are snug on the ring when in the position shown in Figure 8, the spoons may be loosened on the ring by merely rotating the ring 90° from its Figure 8 position.

Each spoon may be individually pivoted around or removed from ring 6. The pivoting action is important since as a result the bowl capacity marking (see Figure 2) may be quickly viewed by the user to select the proper spoon.

It will be appreciated that more or less than six spoons may be provided if desired.

In use of a measuring spoon set as described above, a person wishing to measure, for example, one teaspoon of a substance, would pivot the spoons one from the other to locate the particular spoon provided with the bowl capacity marking "1TSP."

The person would then if necessary or desirable, detach that spoon from the spoon holding ring and dip the spoon into the substance to withdraw a spoonful of the desired substance. To provide an accurate measurement of one teaspoon of the substance it would be necessary for the person to ensure that the surface of the

substance was level with the top of the bowl, for example by striking off any excess with a straight edge. When using one of the spoons 11 or 12, however, the spoons would have to be filled either to the ledge or the top of the bowl depending on the amount of substance required. Whenever a person has finished using a spoon, the spoon may be snapped back into engagement with the spoon holding ring until it is required again.

portions, the arrangement being such that in one relative orientation between said connecting rod and one of the handles the connecting rod can be freely passed into or out of the circular part of the slot of that handle.

7. A measuring spoon set according to any one of the preceding claims wherein at least one of the bowls has a line running parallel to and spaced downwardly from the upper edge of the bowl, both the capacity of the bowl to the line and the capacity of the bowl to the upper edge of the bowl being indicated on the handle of the spoon.

8. A measuring spoon set according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said spoons and said connecting member are fabricated from flexible plastics material.

9. A spoon comprising a handle and an integral bowl at one end thereof, and the other end of the handle being free, said free end having an opened ended slot therein, a portion of the slot nearest said free end having opposed arcuate edges, said edges being mutually facing concave areas, and a second portion of the slot extending beyond said arcuate edges, said second portion having edges extending out to a greater slot width than the maximum width of the slot at the opposed arcuate edges to permit flexing apart of the portions of the handle on each side of the slot.

10. A spoon according to claim 11 wherein the spoon is fabricated from flexible plastics material.

11. A measuring spoon set substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

12. A spoon substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. A measuring spoon set comprising a connecting member and a plurality of spoons, each spoon having a handle and an integral bowl at one end thereof, each of said respective bowls defining different capacities, the other end of the handle of each spoon being free, each said free end having an open ended slot therein, a portion of the slot nearest said free end having opposed arcuate edges, said edges being mutually facing concave areas, a second portion of the slot extending beyond said arcuate edges, said second portion having edges extending out to a greater slot width than the maximum width of the slot at the opposed arcuate edges to permit flexing apart of the portions of the handle on each side of the slot and said slot in each handle being of such size and configuration that each spoon may be snapped on to or off from said connecting member.

2. A measuring spoon set according to claim 1 wherein said connecting member is a continuous ring.

3. A measuring spoon set according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein a part of said connecting member is a cylindrical rod.

4. A measuring spoon set according to claim 1, claim 2 or claim 3 wherein said connecting member is substantially triangular in shape.

5. A measuring spoon set according to any one of the preceding claims wherein each said slot is partly circular in configuration, at least part of said connecting member being at least partly circular in cross-section and of approximately the same diameter as the circular part of each said slot so that the connecting member can be snapped into or out of the circular part of each of the slots.

6. A measuring spoon set according to claim 5 wherein said at least part of said connecting member is generally circular in cross-section but has two opposing flattened

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substance was level with the top of the bowl, for example by striking off any excess with a straight edge. When using one of the spoons 11 or 12, however, the spoons would have to be filled either to the ledge or the top of the bowl depending on the amount of substance required. Whenever a person has finished using a spoon, the spoon may be snapped back into engagement with the spoon holding ring until it is required again.

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3. A measuring spoon set according to claim 1 or claim 2 wherein a part of said connecting member is a cylindrical rod.

4. A measuring spoon set according to claim 1, claim 2 or claim 3 wherein said connecting member is substantially triangular in shape.

5. A measuring spoon set according to any one of the preceding claims wherein each said slot is partly circular in configuration, at least part of said connecting member being at least partly circular in cross-section and of approximately the same diameter as the circular part of each said slot so that the connecting member can be snapped into or out of the circular part of each of the slots.

6. A measuring spoon set according to claim 5 wherein said at least part of said connecting member is generally circular in cross-section but has two opposing flattened

portions, the arrangement being such that in one relative orientation between said connecting rod and one of the handles the connecting rod can be freely passed into or out of the circular part of the slot of that handle.

7. A measuring spoon set according to any one of the preceding claims wherein at least one of the bowls has a line running parallel to and spaced downwardly from the upper edge of the bowl, both the capacity of the bowl to the line and the capacity of the bowl to the upper edge of the bowl being indicated on the handle of the spoon.

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