

PATENT SPECIFICATION

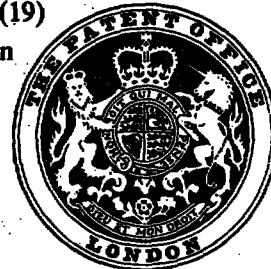
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(54) IMPROVEMENTS IN OR RELATING TO A FOOD STORAGE DEVICE

(71) We, DART INDUSTRIES INC., a Corporation organised and existing under the Laws of the State of Delaware, of Post Office Box 3157, Terminal Annex, Los Angeles, California 90051, 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:-

This invention generally relates to a food storage device, and more particularly to a storage device intended for use in the preparation and storage of fish or vegetables or the like.

It is known that various foodstuffs such as certain hors d'oeuvre and the like are more appetizing and present a more desirable appearance when maintained in an evenly moist and chilled or evenly moist and warmed condition.

According to this invention there is provided a food storage device comprising a receptacle having a base with a peripheral side wall extending upwardly therefrom, a removable foodstuff supporting tray having an outer peripheral lip and which incorporates a plurality of interconnected triangularly sectioned ribs integral with and extending between opposite regions of the peripheral lip, said peripheral lip being dimensioned to be inserted into the receptacle, said lip including oppositely extending upstanding means each adapted in respective orientations of the tray to abut the receptacle base and side walls, one of said at least two means being of greater extent than the other of said at least two means, and a sealing cover for said receptacle and including peripheral sealing means adapted to contact with the free periphery of said side wall so as to hermetically seal said receptacle.

A preferred embodiment of the present invention comprises means by which food-

stuffs such as perishables may be conveniently stored and thereafter displayed and served in conjunction with and from the same device.

It has been found that a device capable of being hermetically sealed and which has been provided with a suitable dual positionable supporting means for the foodstuffs is easily convertible from storage to serving service. Thus, fish or shrimp, for example, may be prepared and supported within a chilled moist and hermetically controlled area and be maintained out of direct contact with the chilling medium which may collect in the bottom of the device, and accordingly be so stored and served under those conditions found to be most favourable for its preservation.

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 top perspective view of a device in accordance with the present invention with its closure in place;

Figure 2 is an exploded top perspective view of the device shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view of the device taken along line 3-3 of Figure 1 but with the closure removed and the supporting tray positioned for display and service;

Figure 4 is a partial cross-sectional side elevational view of the device taken along line 3-3 of Figure 1 but with the tray inverted;

Figure 5 is a partial top plan view of the supporting tray as seen along line 5-5 in Figure 3; and

Figure 6 is a partial bottom plan view of the supporting tray as seen along line 6-6 in Figure 4.

In the drawings, the component portions of the device 10 are a receptacle 11, a seal-

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ing cover or closure 12 therefor, and a supporting tray 13. The receptacle 11 is generally formed with a substantially flat base 14 having a peripheral and integral side wall 15 upstanding therefrom. Such side wall 15 terminates in an open upper end defined by upper terminal edge portion 16 of the side wall.

The closure 12 is comprised of a top wall portion 17, the periphery of which is provided with an inverted groove 19 for receipt of the terminal edge portion 16 of the receptacle. Such inverted groove 19 (Figure 3) is comprised of an inner wall 20, an outer wall 21 and a connecting wall 22. The closure 12 may be further provided with a horizontally extending lip 23 dependent from the outer wall 21. A combination stiffening and handle flange 24 is positioned slightly below the upper terminal edge portion of the receptacle and a vertically extending base rim 14a is provided to elevate the base 14 from the supporting surface for the device 10. As is apparent in the drawings, the tray 13 is comprised primarily of a grid-like supporting surface 25 and a peripheral lip 26 comprising four upstanding portions 27 including upstanding means 27b. In other embodiments of the invention a lesser number of upstanding portions may be provided, but there is always a plurality of such upstanding portions. The surface 25 further includes a plurality of interconnected triangularly-sectioned ribs 28 between which are openings 29. As shown in figure 4 this surface, because of the upstanding means 27b which act as supports, is elevated above the device base or bottom 14. Thus, any cooling or heating medium can be placed in the device under the tray 13 and out of contact with the food placed thereon. Furthermore, in the event the foodstuff is for example, served on ice that is also placed on the tray, as it melts this water will drain into the space provided below the supporting surface 23.

As indicated, the ribs 28 are triangularly sectioned and the apexes thereof are directly upwardly when the tray is in the orientation illustrated in figures 2, 3 and 5. This then minimizes the area of contact between any contained vegetables and the tray 13 and so enables the maximum of vegetable surface to contact the moist atmosphere within the device when water is in the device under tray 13 which is so desirable in obtaining the crisp characteristics which are sought after in connection with such produce.

Each portion 27 is also provided with a leg 30 so that the legs 3 are appropriately positioned around the tray periphery. These legs are recessed into the surface 25 as at 31 and are formed by the interconnected planar members 32, 33 and 34. Such legs are, of course, intended to provide for the elevation

of tray 13 to a position within the receptacle 11 such that the supported foodstuff is well exposed for display thereof and easy serving by the user. Note that edges 35 and 36 of the planar members 32 and 34 are tapered to accommodate the placement of the tray 33 on base 14 (Figures 3 and 4).

The tray 13 is thus constructed for reversible placement within the receptacle. Accordingly, the means 27b and the legs 30 are intended to be such that the supporting surface 25 is elevated well above base 14 in one position (Figure 3) i.e. the serving position. In the storage position (Figure 4) the underside of surface 25 faces upwardly while the top side thereof is in close proximity to base 14. It will be appreciated that legs 30 are also upstanding means but extend in the opposite direction to means 27b.

The planar members 32-34 because of recessed relationship with the tray surface 25 and an opening 37 produced thereby, form handles that enable the user easily to position and/or remove the tray in or from the receptacle 11. This particular arrangement therefore permits such removal without emptying the contents of the device and without inverting the device. Thus, excess collections of water or other liquids can easily be disposed of or water may easily be added to the device without unduly disturbing the contents thereof.

It should, however, be appreciated that the peripheral lip 26 of the tray 13 may be constructed differently and yet accomplish the same desired result, i.e. tray reversibility to different heights above the container base.

It should further be pointed out that the preferred embodiments of the device herein described are manufactured of plastics materials. Likewise, the receptacle and tray are generally made of high and low density polyethylene blends or of polypropylene while the closure is preferably made of low density polyethylene material. However, other materials may be employed with equally good results.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:-

1. A food storage device comprising a receptacle having a base with a peripheral side wall extending upwardly therefrom, a removable foodstuff supporting tray having an outer peripheral lip and which incorporates a plurality of interconnected triangularly sectioned ribs integral with and extending between opposite regions of the peripheral lip, said peripheral lip being dimensioned to be inserted into the receptacle, said lip including oppositely extending upstanding means each adapted in respective orientations of the tray to abut the receptacle base, one of said at least two means being of greater extent than the other

ing cover or closure 12 therefor, and a supporting tray 13. The receptacle 11 is generally formed with a substantially flat base 14 having a peripheral and integral side wall 15 upstanding therefrom. Such side wall 15 terminates in an open upper end defined by upper terminal edge portion 16 of the side wall.

The closure 12 is comprised of a top wall portion 17, the periphery of which is provided with an inverted groove 19 for receipt of the terminal edge portion 16 of the receptacle. Such inverted groove 19 (Figure 3) is comprised of an inner wall 20, an outer wall 21 and a connecting wall 22. The closure 12 may be further provided with a horizontally extending lip 23 dependent from the outer wall 21. A combination stiffening and handle flange 24 is positioned slightly below the upper terminal edge portion of the receptacle and a vertically extending base rim 14a is provided to elevate the base 14 from the supporting surface for the device 10. As is apparent in the drawings, the tray 13 is comprised primarily of a grid-like supporting surface 25 and a peripheral lip 26 comprising four upstanding portions 27 including upstanding means 27b. In other embodiments of the invention a lesser number of upstanding portions may be provided, but there is always a plurality of such upstanding portions. The surface 25 further includes a plurality of interconnected triangularly-sectioned ribs 28 between which are openings 29. As shown in figure 4 this surface, because of the upstanding means 27b which act as supports, is elevated above the device base or bottom 14. Thus, any cooling or heating medium can be placed in the device under the tray 13 and out of contact with the food placed thereon. Furthermore, in the event the foodstuff is for example, served on ice that is also placed on the tray, as it melts this water will drain into the space provided below the supporting surface 23.

As indicated, the ribs 28 are triangularly sectioned and the apexes thereof are directly upwardly when the tray is in the orientation illustrated in figures 2, 3 and 5. This then minimizes the area of contact between any contained vegetables and the tray 13 and so enables the maximum of vegetable surface to contact the moist atmosphere within the device when water is in the device under tray 13 which is so desirable in obtaining the crisp characteristics which are sought after in connection with such produce.

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of tray 13 to a position within the receptacle 11 such that the supported foodstuff is well exposed for display thereof and easy serving by the user. Note that edges 35 and 36 of the planar members 32 and 34 are tapered to accommodate the placement of the tray 33 on base 14 (Figures 3 and 4).

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It should, however, be appreciated that the peripheral lip 26 of the tray 13 may be constructed differently and yet accomplish the same desired result, i.e. tray reversibility to different heights above the container base.

It should further be pointed out that the preferred embodiments of the device herein described are manufactured of plastics materials. Likewise, the receptacle and tray are generally made of high and low density polyethylene blends or of polypropylene while the closure is preferably made of low density polyethylene material. However, other materials may be employed with equally good results.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:-

1. A food storage device comprising a receptacle having a base with a peripheral side wall extending upwardly therefrom, a removable foodstuff supporting tray having an outer peripheral lip and which incorporates a plurality of interconnected triangularly sectioned ribs integral with and extending between opposite regions of the peripheral lip, said peripheral lip being dimensioned to be inserted into the receptacle, said lip including oppositely extending upstanding means each adapted in respective orientations of the tray to abut the receptacle base, one of said at least two means being of greater extent than the other



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- of said at least two means, and a sealing cover for said receptacle and including peripheral sealing means adapted to contact with the free periphery of said side wall so as to hermetically seal said receptacle.
- 5 2. A food storage device according to claim 1, wherein said upstanding means are peripheral upstanding portions extending approximately perpendicularly from the plane formed by said ribs.
- 10 3. A food storage device according to claim 1 or 2, wherein one of said upstanding means comprises a plurality of legs spaced around said peripheral lip.
- 15 4. A food storage device according to claim 3, wherein said legs are recessed with respect to said peripheral lip.
5. A food storage device according to claim 3 or 4, wherein each of said legs include three interconnected planar members.
6. A food storage device substantially as herein described with reference to and as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.
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