

CULINARY TONGS

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 [0001] This disclosure relates generally to cooking accessories, and more specifically to culinary tongs used to grasp foodstuff in order to, for example, add or remove the foodstuff from a cooking pot, pan, or tray, flip the foodstuff during cooking, and/or mix ingredients during cooking.

BACKGROUND

10 [0002] Traditional tongs are known. Additionally, traditional tongs with a locking mechanism are also known. These traditional tongs with a locking mechanism allow the tongs to be locked in a closed position (e.g., where the working ends of the tongs are making contact with each other, or are nearly making contact with each other (e.g., within 1 inch of each other)), and further allow the tongs to be unlocked to an open position (e.g., where a spring urges the opposing arms to pivot
15 so as to cause the working ends to be at least several inches away from each other). Locking the tongs can position the tongs in a more compact configuration, so as to facilitate storage of the tongs. Additionally, locking the tongs can allow the tongs to be used more like a spoon for stirring or tossing ingredients. However, the traditional tongs and their traditional locking mechanisms may be deficient.

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SUMMARY

[0003] According to a first example, culinary tongs include a first arm and a second arm that each include a grasping member and an opposing hinged end. The culinary tongs further include a hinge including a pin for connecting the first arm and second arm together in a pivoting
25 engagement at a location proximal to the hinged end of each of the first arm and the second arm. The culinary tongs further include a spring that biases the first arm and the second arm toward an open position. The culinary tongs also include a sliding locking plate that includes a first portion with an aperture that receives the pin, and a second portion connected to the first portion. The second portion extends in a first direction and then terminates in an actuating portion. The
30 actuating portion extends from the second portion in a second direction that is orthogonal to the

first direction. The first portion of the sliding locking plate has a forward portion that can oppose the bias of the spring and maintain the first arm and the second arm in a closed locked position when the actuating portion is positioned in a first location relative to the grasping members. The first portion of the sliding locking plate also has a rear portion that can not oppose the bias of the spring when the actuating portion is positioned in a second location relative to the grasping members. Also, the first location is positioned further from the grasping members than the second location.

5 [0004] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the aperture in the first portion is shaped as a slot.

10 [0005] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the spring is a torsion spring that is coiled around a portion of the pin.

[0006] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the spring includes a first terminal shaft that is in contact with an inner portion of the first arm, and further includes a second terminal shaft that is contact with an inner portion of the second arm.

15 [0007] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the spring is a leaf spring, a compression spring, or a tension spring.

[0008] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where, in the open position, the grasping members of each of the first arm and the second arm are substantially separated.

20 [0009] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where, in the closed locked position, the grasping members of each of the first arm and the second arm are in contact with each other or are nearly in contact with each other.

[0010] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the culinary tongs further include a hole positioned in the second portion of the sliding locking plate.

25 [0011] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the culinary tongs further include a hole positioned in the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate.

[0012] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping member of each of the first arm and the second arm includes a first corner and a second corner, and where the first corner has a first radius of curvature that is larger than a second radius of curvature of the second corner.

30 [0013] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping member of each of the first arm and the second arm is concave.

[0014] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping member of the first arm has a principle axis that is aligned with respect to a shank portion of the first arm, and the grasping member of the second arm has a principle axis that is aligned with respect to a shank portion of the second arm. Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping member of the first arm has a principle axis that is tilted with respect to a shank portion of the first arm, and the grasping member of the second arm has a principle axis that is tilted with respect to a shank portion of the second arm.

[0015] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the forward portion of the first portion of the sliding locking plate is a forward broad portion that is sized to abut against a distal end of each of the first arm and the second arm. Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the rearward portion of the first portion of the sliding lock plate is a rearward narrow portion that is tapered inward from the forward broad portion and that is sized to not abut against a distal end of each of the first arm and the second arm.

[0016] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping members are at least partially formed from a heat resistant thermoplastic or thermoset resin that is food compatible.

[0017] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where the grasping members are at least partially formed from silicone, polyurethane, or thermoplastic elastomer resin.

[0018] According to a second example, a method, such as a method of using culinary tongs, includes, while holding culinary tongs in a first hand of a user, moving a first arm and a second arm of the culinary tongs towards each other into a closed position (e.g., where the grasping members of the arms of the tongs are making contact with each other, or a nearly making contact with each other (e.g., within 1 inch of each other)) using only the first hand of the user. The method further includes, while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, positioning a forward facing portion of an actuating portion of a sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs against a first fixed surface, using only the first hand of the user. The method further includes, while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, moving the culinary tongs forward using only the first hand of the user, so as to cause the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs to move rearward relative to the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs, so as to cause the culinary tongs to lock in the closed position. According to the second example, the method is performed without using a second hand of the user to contact the culinary tongs.

[0019] Another example is any such method, where the method further includes, while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, pressing a rearward facing portion of the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs against a second fixed surface using only the first hand of the user, so as to cause the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs to move forward relative to the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs, so as to cause the culinary tongs to unlock in the closed position. The method further includes, while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, allowing the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs to pivot away from each other into an open position (e.g., where the grasping members of the arms of the tongs are significantly separated from each other (e.g., separated by more than 1 inch, separated by more than 2 inches)) using only the first hand of the user.

[0020] Another example is any such method, where the culinary tongs of the method is any of the culinary tongs discussed above or herein.

[0021] According to a third example, culinary tongs include a first and second arm, each including a grasping member and an opposing hinged end, a hinge including a pin for making a pivoting connection of the first arm to the second arm proximal to the hinge ends thereof, a spring cooperating with the first arm and the second arm for biasing them in an open position in which the grasping members are substantially separated, a sliding locking plate that has a first portion with a slot aperture for receiving the pin that extends in pivoting engagement with respect to at least one of the first and second arms, a second portion coupled to the first portion that extends in the first direction and then terminates in an actuating portion that extends from the second portion in a second direction that is orthogonal to the first direction, in which a portion of the sliding locking plate has a forward portion configured to oppose the bias of the spring and maintain the first and second arms adjacent and in a closed locked position when the actuating portion (or any other portion of the sliding locking plate) is urged away from the grasping members and the a rear portion of the locking plate taper inward toward second portion to allow the spring to urge the first and second arms apart when the locking plate is urged toward the grasping members.

[0022] Another example is any such culinary tongs, where either the actuating portion or the second portion has a hole for hanging the culinary tongs from a fixture.

[0023] According to a fourth example, culinary tongs have a locking mechanism that is easily released in a single-handed operation by urging the locking mechanism away from the hinge connecting the pivotable arms by placing a fixed edge such as a counter or pan edge against a laterally projecting portion of the mechanism. The grasping members at the opposing ends of the pivotable arms from the locking mechanism are shaped to have a large radius curvature at one corner for stirring and scraping the foodstuff off the inner corner of cookware, and further shaped to have a smaller radius at the opposing corner for gripping smaller foodstuff pieces.

[0024] The above and other objects, effects, features, and advantages of the present disclosure will become more apparent from the following description of the embodiments thereof taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0025] For a more complete understanding of the present disclosure and one or more examples of the features and advantages of the present disclosure, reference is now made to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0026] FIG. 1A is a side elevation view of an example of culinary tongs in a closed and locked configuration.

[0027] FIG. 1B is side elevation view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A in an unlocked and open position.

[0028] FIG. 1C is top plan view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A in the closed and locked configuration.

[0029] FIG. 2 is an expanded perspective view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A, showing the actuating portion adjacent the hinge.

[0030] FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A in the unlocked but closed position, where the culinary tongs are in the process of being opened.

[0031] FIG. 4A is a perspective view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A, showing the grasping members in the closed position.

[0032] FIG. 4B is a front elevation view of the culinary tongs of FIG. 1A, showing the grasping members.

[0033] FIG. 5 is an expanded view of FIG. 1C, showing a portion of a grasping member.

[0034] FIG. 6 is a side elevation view of another example of culinary tongs in a closed and locked configuration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

5 **[0035]** Embodiments of the present disclosure are best understood by referring to FIGS. 1A-6 of the drawings, like numerals being used for like and corresponding parts of the various drawings.

[0036] As is discussed above, traditional tongs are known. Additionally, traditional tongs with a locking mechanism are also known. These traditional tongs with a locking mechanism allow the tongs to be locked in a closed position (e.g., where the working ends of the tongs are making
10 contact with each other, or are nearly making contact with each other (e.g., within 1 inch of each other)), and further allow the tongs to be unlocked to an open position (e.g., where a spring urges the opposing arms to pivot so as to cause the working ends to be at least several inches away from each other). Locking the tongs can position the tongs in a more compact configuration, so as to facilitate storage of the tongs. Additionally, locking the tongs can allow the tongs to be used more
15 like a spoon for stirring or tossing ingredients. However, the traditional tongs and their traditional locking mechanisms may be deficient.

[0037] For example, many traditional locking mechanisms for tongs require using both hands to release the lock: one hand to release the lock while the other hand holds the grips of the tongs. Additionally, some traditional tongs can unlock under the force of gravity, but this type of locking
20 mechanism can accidentally unlock during storage, and can be difficult to re-lock. For example, such tongs may require precise and stable grasping in a nearly perfect up right position to re-lock. Additionally, the grips near the pivoting connection of the arms must be released to confirm the tongs are locked. If not, then the other hand is required to close the grips and try again, which defeats the intended purpose of single-handed operation.

25 **[0038]** In some examples, the culinary tongs described below address one or more (or all) of these deficiencies. As an example of this, the culinary tongs of FIGS. 1A-6 is easier to lock and unlock while the culinary tongs are grasped in one hand, in some examples. This can be advantageous because, in some examples, the ability to lock and unlock culinary tongs with one hand allows the food preparer (or server, or other user) to simultaneously use their other hand for

other task(s), such as grasping the cooking or serving vessel, which can help the preparer (or server, or other user) to avoid interruption or delay of their other tasks.

5 [0039] As another example of this, the culinary tongs of FIGS. 1A-6 facilitate gripping and turning small foodstuff, are useable to stir liquids in pots or pans, and/or are useable to scrape foodstuff off the corners of pots, pans, trays, and backing sheets, in some examples.

10 [0040] FIGS. 1A-5 illustrate one example of culinary tongs 100. In the illustrated example, the culinary tongs 100 include a first arm 111 and a second arm 112 (shown in FIG. 1B), with each arm 111/112 having a working end with a grasping member 115 (shown in FIG. 1B), and with each arm 111/112 also having an opposing hinged end 116 (shown in FIG. 1A). In the illustrated example, the culinary tongs 100 further include a hinge 120 (shown in FIG. 1A) that is proximal to the hinge ends 116, and that provides a pivoting engagement of the first arm 111 and the second arm 112 together.

15 [0041] In the illustrated example, the culinary tongs 100 further includes a spring 130 (shown in FIG. 2) that is disposed at a location adjacent the hinge 120. In some examples, the spring 130 biases (e.g., applies a force, pushes) the first arm 111 and the second arm 112 toward an open position, where the grasping members 115 of each arm 111/112 are substantially separated (e.g., separated by more than 1 inch, separated by more than 2 inches), as is shown in FIG. 1B. The spring 130 is optionally a torsion spring coiled around the center of a pin (or shaft) 122 that is connected to both arms 111 and 112 in a pivoting engagement. However, other shapes, configurations, or types of springs may be used, such as leaf springs, compression springs, tension springs, and/or the like to provide a mechanical bias (e.g., an equivalent mechanical bias).

20 [0042] In the illustrated example, the spring 130 (e.g., a torsion spring) has terminal shafts at opposite ends that are straight and that contact (or otherwise engage) an interior surface of the shank 119 (shown in FIG. 1B) on each opposing first arm 111 and second arm 112. In the illustrated example, the pin 122 includes rivets 122h (shown in FIG. 1B) at opposing ends to fasten into the portion of the arms 111 and 112 within the hinge 120. In some examples, at least one portion of the pin 122 and/or rivets 122h permits rotation of the arms 111 and 112 relative to each other when they are urged together by a user (e.g., when the arms 111 and 112 are placed between the user's thumb and opposing fingers in a single hand, and then squeezed).

[0043] In the illustrated example, the culinary tongs 100 include a locking mechanism that can lock the arms 111 and 112 in a closed position (e.g., where they are adjacent and generally parallel). In the illustrated example, the locking mechanism includes a sliding locking plate 140; however, in other examples, other suitable types of locking mechanisms may be used.

5 **[0044]** In the illustrated example, the sliding locking plate 140 has a first portion 141 (e.g., referred to as a stem portion) with an aperture 141A (shown in FIG. 2) that is optionally slot shaped and that receives the pin 122 therein to form an operative portion of the hinge 120. In the illustrated example, the aperture 141A (having a slot shape) extends in a direction that is generally parallel to the closed adjacent arms 111 and 112 in FIG. 1A. In the illustrated example, the opposing
10 hinged ends 116 of the first arm 111 and the second arm 112 generally extend in a first reference direction, indicated by arrow 149x. In the illustrated example, the pin 122 of the hinge 120 extends through aligned apertures in adjacent plates 150 (shown in FIG. 2), which extend, for example, proximal from the adjacent edges of each hinged end 116 toward the other hinged end 116. In the illustrated example, the pin 122 terminates in heads 122h that extend beyond the plates 150 to
15 maintain the pin 122 between the arms 111 and 112, as well as within the aperture 141A. In the illustrated example, the plates 150 are triangular shaped and taper inward as they approach the opposing arms 111 and 112, thus providing strength but also avoiding limiting the degree of angular separation of the arms 111 and 112 in an open position.

[0045] In the illustrated example, and as is most clearly illustrated in FIG. 1C, the sliding
20 locking plate 140 has a second portion 142 (e.g., referred to as a handle portion) that is connected (or otherwise coupled) to the first portion 141, and that extends in the first direction 149x and then terminates in a third portion 143 (e.g., referred to as an actuating portion) that extends from the second portion 142 in a third direction 149y, that is orthogonal to the first direction 149x. However, in other examples, the culinary tongs 100 include a third portion 143 that extends parallel or
25 orthogonal to the pin 122, the latter being in the 149z direction. An example of this configuration is shown in FIG. 6.

[0046] In the illustrated example, the first portion 141 of the sliding locking plate 140 has a forward broad portion 144 (shown in FIG. 2) that is configured to oppose the bias of the spring 130, such as, for example, by abutting against a distal end 111d and 112d of each arm 111/112.
30 As an example of this, the forward broad portion 144 is sized (e.g., it is wide enough) to abut

against the distal end 111d and 112d of each arm 111/112. In the illustrated example, the forward broad portion 144 maintains the first arm 111 and second arm 112 in a closed locked position (by abutting against the distal end 111d and 112d of each arm 111/112), when the actuating portion 143 (or any other portion(s) of the sliding locking plate 140) is urged away from the grasping members 115 (e.g., using the handle portion 142 or the actuating portion 143) so as to be positioned at a location that is further rearward of the grasping members 115.

[0047] In the illustrated example, the stem portion 141 of the sliding locking plate 140 also has a rearward narrow portion 145 (shown in FIG. 2) that is located rearward of the forward broad portion 144 (e.g., in a position that is rearward of the aperture 141A) so as to be located more proximal to handle portion 142 than the forward broad portion 144. In the illustrated example, the rearward narrow portion 145 is configured to not oppose the bias of the spring 130, such as, for example, by not abutting against the distal end 111d and 112d of each arm 111/112. As an example of this, the rearward narrow portion 145 is sized (e.g., it is narrow enough) to not abut against the distal end 111d and 112d of each arm 111/112. In the illustrated example, the rearward narrow portion 145 tapers inward from the forward broad portion 144, which allow the arms 111 and 112 to be angularly separated by the spring 130 so that the arms 111 and 112 are in an open unlocked position, when the actuating portion 143 (or any other portion(s) of the sliding locking plate 140) is urged towards the grasping members 115 (e.g., using the handle portion 142 or the actuating portion 143) so as to be positioned at a location that is closer to the grasping members 115 than when the culinary tongs 100 are in the closed locked position. An example of these two locations of the actuating portion 143 (or any other portion(s) of the sliding locking plate 140) can be seen in a comparison of FIG. 1A (where the culinary tongs 100 are in the closed locked position) and FIG. 1B (where the culinary tongs 100 are in the open unlocked position, which may also be referred to as an open position).

[0001] In the illustrated example, the stem portion 141, the handle portion 142, and the actuating portion 143 cooperate to provide for locking the culinary tongs 100 with one hand (as opposed to two hands), and for unlocking the culinary tongs 100 with one hand (as opposed to two hands).

[0002] In one example of operation, the culinary tongs 100 are manually closed and then locked, with one hand (as opposed to two hands). As an example of this, the culinary tongs are

manually closed (e.g., by squeezing the arms 111 and 112 together in-between the user's thumb and opposing fingers in a single hand), then a portion (e.g., a forward facing portion) of the actuating portion 143 is positioned against a fixed object (or surface) 10 (e.g., an edge of a table or a countertop), and then the culinary tongs are urged forward in the direction of arrow 300 in
5 FIG. 3. In such an example, the contact of the fixed object 10 with the actuating portion 143, and the subsequent movement forward of the culinary tongs 100, slides the actuating portion 143 (or any other portion(s) of the sliding locking plate 140) rearward (in the direction opposite arrow 300) relative to the culinary tongs 100, to lock the culinary tongs 100 (as is discussed above).

[0003] In another example of operation, the culinary tongs 100 are unlocked with one hand (as
10 opposed to two hands). As an example of this, an opposing portion (e.g. a rearward facing portion) of the actuating portion 143 is pressed against the fixed object 10 (e.g., a table, a countertop, an appliance top or side, an edge of a table or a countertop) or any other fixed surface, with the axis 149x of culinary tongs 100 generally orthogonal to the fixed object 10 or fixed surface. In such an example, the contact of the fixed object 10 with the actuating portion 143, and the subsequent
15 movement rearward of the culinary tongs 100, slides the actuating portion 143 (or any other portion(s) of the sliding locking plate 140) forward (in the direction of arrow 300) relative to the culinary tongs 100, to unlock the culinary tongs 100 (as is discussed above). When the culinary tongs 100 are unlocked, the user can then allow the arms 111 and 112 to pivot away from each other to an open position (e.g., by the user's hand not resisting the bias of the spring 130).

[0004] In some examples, in addition to one or more of the features discussed above, or separately from one or more of the features discussed above, the culinary tongs 100 include material(s) that form grasping members 115 and/or handle grips 117 (as is illustrated in FIG. 1B). In the illustrated example, the portion of the shank 119 most distal from the hinge 120 is covered with material(s) shaped to form the grasping member 115, and portions of the shank 119 are also
25 covered by material(s) that form handle grips 117. The material(s) that form(s) the grasping member 115 is, in some examples, preferably a heat resistant thermoplastic or thermoset resin that is food compatible, and, in some examples, is also preferably a soft but resilient material for hand comfort, such as cured silicone, polyurethane, or thermoplastic elastomer resin.

[0005] As is illustrated in FIG. 4A-5, in some examples, the grasping members 115 are shaped
30 for optimum use in serving, stirring, scraping, and grasping. As an example of this, in the

illustrated example, the lower and upper front corners 115C1 and 115C2 (shown in FIG. 4B) of the grasping members 115 are generally rounded, but with one corner (such as, for example, the lower front corner 115C1) having a larger radius of curvature R1 than the radius of curvature R2 of other corner (such as, for example, the upper front corner 115C2). In some examples, the larger radius of curvature R1 (e.g., the larger radius of curvature R1 of the front corner 115C1) aids in scraping portions of a cooking vessel (e.g., to aid in scraping an inner corner of a cooking vessel between the bottom and sidewall) when, for example, stirring foodstuff in the cooking vessel. In some examples, the smaller radius of curvature R2 (e.g., the smaller radius of curvature R2 of the upper front corner 115C2) creates a larger gripping region for foodstuff (as shown by the height of region RG2 versus RG1 in FIG. 4B) when the culinary tongs 100 are closed (as is shown in FIG. 4B). In some examples, the grasping members 115 are each concave, which also creates a larger gripping region for foodstuff when the culinary tongs 100 are closed. As such, in some examples, the grasping members 115 are suitable for picking, turning, and lifting smaller foodstuffs using the upper corners 115C2, and are suitable for stirring with the lower front corner 115C1.

[0006] Although the grasping members 115 are illustrated as being concave, in some examples, the grasping members 115 are not concave. As one example of this, the grasping members 115 have a principal axis that is aligned or tilted with respect to the shank portion 119.

[0007] In some examples, as is illustrated in FIG. 1B, the handle portion 142 includes a hole 140H that may be used to hang the culinary tongs 100 from a fixture (e.g., a hook, a nail). In other examples, such a hole can also (or alternatively) be provided in the actuating member 143.

[0008] Modifications, additions, and/or substitutions may be made to the culinary tongs 100 of any one or more of FIGS. 1A-6, the components of the culinary tongs 100 of any one or more of FIGS. 1A-6, and/or the functions of the culinary tongs 100 of any one or more of FIGS. 1A-6 without departing from the scope of the specification. For example, the components of the culinary tongs 100 of any one or more of FIGS. 1A-6 may have any suitable shape(s), and may be made of any suitable material(s). Furthermore, one or more of the components illustrated in FIGS. 1A-6 may be added to, removed from, or modified in any of the culinary tongs 100 illustrated in FIGS. 1A-6.

[0009] This specification has been written with reference to various non-limiting and non-exhaustive examples. However, it will be recognized by persons having ordinary skill in the art

that various substitutions, modifications, or combinations of any of the disclosed examples (or portions thereof) may be made within the scope of this specification. Thus, it is contemplated and understood that this specification supports additional examples not expressly set forth in this specification. Such examples may be obtained, for example, by combining, modifying, or
5 reorganizing any of the disclosed components, elements, features, aspects, characteristics, limitations, and the like, of the various non-limiting and non-exhaustive examples described in this specification.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. Culinary tongs, comprising:
 - 5 a. a first arm and a second arm, each comprising a grasping member and an opposing hinged end;
 - b. a hinge including a pin for connecting the first arm and the second arm together in a pivoting engagement at a location proximal to the hinged end of each of the first arm and the second arm;
 - 10 c. a spring that biases the first arm and the second arm toward an open position;
 - d. a sliding locking plate that comprises:
 - i. a first portion with an aperture that receives the pin; and
 - 15 ii. a second portion coupled to the first portion, wherein the second portion extends in a first direction and then terminates in an actuating portion, wherein the actuating portion extends from the second portion in a second direction that is orthogonal to the first direction;
 - e. wherein the first portion of the sliding locking plate has a forward portion that is configured to oppose the bias of the spring and maintain the first arm and the second arm in a closed locked position when the actuating portion is positioned in a first location relative to the grasping members; and
 - 20 f. wherein the first portion of the sliding locking plate has a rear portion that is configured to not oppose the bias of the spring when the actuating portion is positioned in a second location relative to the grasping members, wherein the first location is positioned further from the grasping members than the second location.
- 25 2. The culinary tongs of Claim 1, wherein the aperture in the first portion is shaped as a slot.
3. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the spring is a torsion spring that is coiled around a portion of the pin.

4. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the spring comprises a first terminal shaft that is in contact with an inner portion of the first arm, and further comprises a second terminal shaft that is contact with an inner portion of the second arm.
- 5 5. The culinary tongs of any of Claims 1-2, wherein the spring is a leaf spring, a compression spring, or a tension spring.
6. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein, in the open position, the grasping members of each of the first arm and the second arm are substantially separated.
- 10 7. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein, in the closed locked position, the grasping members of each of the first arm and the second arm are in contact with each other or are nearly in contact with each other.
- 15 8. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, further comprising a hole positioned in the second portion of the sliding locking plate.
9. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, further comprising a hole positioned in the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate.
- 20 10. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the grasping member of each of the first arm and the second arm comprises:
- a. a first corner;
 - b. a second corner; and
 - 25 c. wherein the first corner has a first radius of curvature that is larger than a second radius of curvature of the second corner.
11. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the grasping member of each of the first arm and the second arm is concave.

12. The culinary tongs of any of Claims 1-10, wherein:
- a. the grasping member of the first arm has a principle axis that is aligned with respect to a shank portion of the first arm; and
 - b. the grasping member of the second arm has a principle axis that is aligned with respect to a shank portion of the second arm.
13. The culinary tongs of any of Claims 1-10, wherein:
- a. the grasping member of the first arm has a principle axis that is tilted with respect to a shank portion of the first arm; and
 - b. the grasping member of the second arm has a principle axis that is tilted with respect to a shank portion of the second arm.
14. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the forward portion of the first portion of the sliding locking plate is a forward broad portion that is sized to abut against a distal end of each of the first arm and the second arm.
15. The culinary tongs of Claim 14, wherein the rearward portion of the first portion of the sliding lock plate is a rearward narrow portion that is tapered inward from the forward broad portion and that is sized to not abut against the distal end of each of the first arm and the second arm.
16. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the grasping members are at least partially formed from a heat resistant thermoplastic or thermoset resin that is food compatible.
17. The culinary tongs of any of the preceding claims, wherein the grasping members are at least partially formed from silicone, polyurethane, or thermoplastic elastomer resin.
18. A method, comprising:

- a. while holding culinary tongs in a first hand of a user, moving a first arm and a second arm of the culinary tongs towards each other into a closed position using only the first hand of the user;
- b. while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, positioning a forward facing portion of an actuating portion of a sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs against a first fixed surface, using only the first hand of the user;
- c. while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, moving the culinary tongs forward using only the first hand of the user, so as to cause the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs to move rearward relative to the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs, so as to cause the culinary tongs to lock in the closed position;
- d. wherein the method is performed without using a second hand of the user to contact the culinary tongs.
19. The method of Claim 18, further comprising:
- a. while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, pressing a rearward facing portion of the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs against a second fixed surface using only the first hand of the user, so as to cause the actuating portion of the sliding locking plate of the culinary tongs to move forward relative to the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs, so as to cause the culinary tongs to unlock in the closed position;
- and
- b. while holding the culinary tongs in the first hand of the user, allowing the first arm and the second arm of the culinary tongs to pivot away from each other into an open position using only the first hand of the user.
20. The method of any of Claims 18-19, wherein the culinary tongs comprise the culinary tongs of any of Claims 1-17.