

Serving Dish Set

THIS INVENTION relates to a multi-use serving dish set.

5 The prior art discloses serving sets which include pieces which may be utilized in various ways. For example, the prior art includes container, display and serving sets in which a single piece functions as both a base and a cover and as a serving and storage piece. The prior art also includes various means for fastening the pieces together.

10 It is an object of the present invention to provide improved serving sets. It is a further object to provide a serving set in which the various components can be utilized individually or in combination to serve, store and transport foodstuffs.

15 Accordingly, the invention provides a serving set comprising: a first receptacle defined by a transverse wall member and a peripheral sidewall, oppositely facing first and second receiving means being provided to project from either ^{side} of said transverse wall member; a base formed by a peripheral wall defining an open ended container and having an internal transverse divider to define oppositely opening compartments, said peripheral wall having at least one end portion terminating at a mating flange; said first receiving means being positioned to accept said mating flange so that the first receptacle may be removably attached to the base in snap-fit relationship in a first position, wherein said base is located over said receptacle, and said second receiving means being positioned to accept said mating flange in snap-fit relationship in a second position, wherein said base is located under said receptacle, in the first position one of the base compartments forming an upwardly facing open container and the other of the base compartments cooperating with said transverse wall member to form a closed container over said receptacle, and in the second position said other base compartment cooperating with said transverse wall member to form a closed container under said receptacle.

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Preferably each end portion of the peripheral wall of said base terminates in a mating flange, each of said mating flange being removably attachable to either of said first or second oppositely facing receiving means.

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Desirably, said transverse divider is positioned to form oppositely facing compartments of different capacities.

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Conveniently, the serving set also comprises a second receptacle having a transverse wall member with receiving means thereon, one of the said receiving means of said first receptacle being removably attachable to one of the mating flanges of the base and said receiving means of the second receptacle being removably attachable to said other mating flange of the base thereby to enable the formation of a double level serving set.

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Preferably, the first and second receptacles are shaped to fit together so that one of the receptacles may be used to form a cover of the other receptacle.

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An optional closure member that is adapted to fit over one end of the base may be provided.

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Thus it will be appreciated that the serving dish set may include a pedestal-like base and two receptacles which can be utilized individually or in combination to serve, store and transport foodstuffs. The receptacles may be of a similar size and shape and each may have one or more receiving means which enable the base to be attached thereto. ^{The oppositely facing} ~~At least one of the~~ receiving means projecting from either side of said first receptacle ~~receptacles includes oppositely facing receiving means which~~ enable it to function as a dish or a wide diameter base. Either receptacle can be used as a cover for the other receptacle. Further, the pedestal-like base can function as a container for serving, storage and transportation of various foodstuffs. In combination with one of the receptacles the base forms a closed container which may be filled for heating, cooling or stability purposes.

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These and other objects and advantages of the invention will become more apparent from the following detailed description, by way of example only, of an embodiment of the invention when taken in conjunction with the drawings wherein:

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FIGURE 1 is a top perspective view of one form of a serving dish set in accordance with the invention;

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FIGURE 2 is an exploded perspective view of the serving dish set shown in Figure 1;

FIGURE 3 is a side elevational view of the serving dish set shown in Figure 1;

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FIGURE 4 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the serving dish set taken along line 4-4 of Figure 3;

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FIGURE 5 is a top perspective view of another arrangement of the serving dish set;

FIGURE 6 is a side elevational view of the serving dish set shown in Figure 5;

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FIGURE 7 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the serving dish set taken along line 7-7 of Figure 6;

FIGURE 8 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken of the circled segment 8 of Figure 4;

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FIGURE 9 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the circled segment 9 of Figure 4;

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FIGURE 10 is an enlarged cross-sectional view of the circled segment 10 of Figure 4;

FIGURE 11 is an exploded perspective view of the pedestal-like base shown with a cover; and

FIGURE 12 is a partial cross-sectional view of the base with a cover on each end.

5 The serving dish set of this invention, generally shown in Figures 1, 2 and 5 and indicated by reference numeral 10, includes a first dish or receptacle ⁴⁰~~12~~, a second dish or receptacle ¹²~~40~~ and a pedestal-like base 80 which can be assembled in various ways to provide a multi-use serving dish, storage and transportation container.

10 As can be seen in Figures 4, 8 and 10 the ^{second}~~first~~ dish or receptacle 12 includes a wall member 14 and a sidewall member 16 terminating in an edge 18. The sidewall member 16 further includes an outwardly extending rim 20 having a first surface 22 and a second surface 24. The wall member 14 has an inner surface 26 and an outer surface 28. A flange 30 extends outwardly from the outer surface 28 and terminates in an edge 31. The flange 30 is circular shaped in plan view but it should be understood that other shapes may be suitable for certain uses. The flange 30 includes an outer surface 32 and an inner surface 34. As best shown in Figures 4 and 10, the inner surface 34 forms receiving means including a first section 36 and a second section 38. Relative to the longitudinal axis of the flange 30 the first and second sections 36 and 38, slope inwardly towards the centre of the dish. As shown in Figure 10, the first section 36, may slope inwardly at an angle of 8° with respect to the longitudinal axis of the flange 30, whilst the second section 38 slopes inwardly at an angle of 7° with respect to the longitudinal axis of the flange 30.

15 The ^{first}~~second~~ dish or receptacle 40 includes a wall member 42 and a sidewall 44 terminating in an edge 47. The side wall 44 includes an outwardly extending rim 46 having a first surface 48 and a second surface 50. The outside diameter of the first dish sidewall 16 is less than the inside diameter of the second dish sidewall 44. As best shown in Figure 4 the dishes fit together so that one dish or the other can be used as a cover to protect the foodstuffs contained therein. In this regard it should be noted that the edge 47 of the ^{first}~~second~~ receptacle 40 fits snugly against the first surface 22 of receptacle rim 20.

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As best shown in Figures 4 and 9, the wall member 42 of the ^{first} ~~second~~ receptacle 40 has an inner surface 48 and an outer surface 50. Extending outwardly from the outer surface 50 is a flange 52. Flange 52 has a first portion 54 and a second portion 56 separated by a partition 58. The partition 58 is integrally connected at one end to the wall member 42 and at the other end to the flange 52. Thus the partition 58 and the first portion 54 of flange 52 form a groove which opens toward the inner surface 48 of plate 40. The second portion 56 of the flange 52 extends outwardly from the junction between the first flange portion 54 and the partition 58, terminating at an edge 60.

In a manner similar to the ~~first dish~~ flange 30 the first portion 54 of flange 52 has an inner surface 62. As best shown in Figures 7 and 9 the inner surface 62 forms receiving means including a first section 64 and a second section 66. Relative to the flange 52 both the first and second sections 64 and 66, slope inwardly towards the centre of the dish. The second portion 56 of flange 52 has an inner surface 68 which forms receiving means having a third section 70 and a fourth section 72. Again relative to the flange 52, both the third and fourth sections, 70 and 72, slope inwardly towards the centre of the dish. As shown in Figure 9 the first flange section 64 and the fourth section may slope inwardly at an angle of 8° with respect to the longitudinal axis of the flange 52, and the second flange section 66 and third section 72 may slope inwardly at an angle of 7° with respect to the longitudinal axis of the flange 52. Thus the ^{first} ~~second~~ dish 40 has oppositely facing receiving means on wall member 42.

The pedestal-like base 80 includes a ^{peripheral} ~~central~~ wall 82 having two end portions 83, 85. A transversely extending divider 84 separates the base 80 into two compartments of differing sizes. The outer periphery of each of the end portions 83, 85 respectively includes a mating flange 86, 94, having an exterior surface 88, 96, and terminates in an edge 90, 98. The two compartments of the base 80 can be utilized to store and transport foodstuffs particularly when covered with a closure means 99 as shown in Figures 11 and 12.

Preferably the dishes or receptacles 12, 40 and the base 80 are formed from a rigid plastics materials such as high density polyethylene or

polypropylene. It should be noted that a cover (not shown) of low density polyethylene or polypropylene can also be used as a closure means.

Turning now to Figures 1 to 4, one arrangement of the dish set is shown wherein the base 80 is positioned below the ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 12. As best shown in Figure 4 (and also Figure 10), the mating flange 86 can be snap fitted into the flange 30. The slope of first section 35 allows the mating flange 86 to initially easily fit into flange 30. The slope of the second section 38 is matched to the mating flange 86 such that a snap fit is produced. Thus in the assembled position (shown in Figure 4) the exterior surface of the mating flange 86 abuttingly engages the second section 38 and the mating flange edge 90 abuttingly engages the outer surface 28 of receptacle 12. The ~~second~~^{first} receptacle 40 may be used as a cover to protect foodstuffs placed in the receptacle 12 prior to serving.

Whilst it is not shown by a separate drawing it should be clear that the ~~second~~^{first} receptacle 40 may be substituted for the ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 12 since the inner surface of first portion of flange 52 is identical to the inner surface of flange 30. It should be noted that the sidewall 16 is lower than sidewall 44 so that the first and second receptacles are of differing capacities. Thus for some uses it may be more convenient to attach the higher sidewall, larger capacity, receptacle 40 to the base 80 and to utilize the ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 12 as a cover. It should also be noted that when the base 80 is attached to either receptacle 12, 40, as illustrated in Figure 4, a closed compartment is formed in the base. This compartment can be used to house heating or cooling media to heat or cool the foodstuffs being served. Other substances could be placed in the compartment to add weight in order to make the base more stable.

Figures 5, 6 and 7 disclose an arrangement of the dish set 10 in which the ~~second~~^{first} receptacle 40 is positioned below the base 80 such that a double-level serving set is formed. The ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 12 is positioned on the base 80 as previously discussed. The mating flange 94 is press or snap fitted into the groove formed between the partition 58 and the first portion 54 of the flange 52. In the assembled position the exterior surface 96 of flange 94 abuttingly engages the second section 66 of flange 52 and flange edge 98 abuttingly engages the partition 58. In some cases it may be desirable to

have a wide diameter base in order to insure that the set does not tip while in use. In such a situation it is possible to position the ~~second~~^{first} receptacle 40 with the edge 47 facing downwardly. In this case, the mating flange 94 engages the third section of flange 52 in snap-fit relationship as previously discussed in detail.

In yet another arrangement of the serving dish set, the base 80 may be positioned in the groove formed on the inner surface 48 of the ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 40, as shown in Figure 7. However, instead of attaching the ~~first~~^{second} receptacle 12, the base 80 is left uncovered. The base 80 thus forms a convenient serving dish for dip or the like. As the divider 84 separates the base into two compartments of different sizes, either of these compartments can be used since the mating flanges 86 and 94 are identical, the choice depending upon the volume of dip or the like to be served.

It will be appreciated that whilst a number of different arrangements of the dish set have been illustrated and described, other combinations and arrangements of the described elements may be preferred.



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CLAIMS:

1. A serving set comprising: a first receptacle defined by a transverse wall member and a peripheral sidewall, oppositely facing first and second receiving means being provided to project from either^{side} of said transverse wall member; a base formed by a peripheral wall defining an open ended container and having an internal transverse divider to define oppositely opening compartments; said peripheral wall having at least one end portion terminating at a mating flange; said first receiving means being positioned to accept said mating flange so that the first receptacle may be removably attached to the base in snap-fit relationship in a first position, wherein said base is located over said receptacle, and said second receiving means being positioned to accept said mating flange in snap-fit relationship in a second position, wherein said base is located under said receptacle, in the first position one of the base compartments forming an upwardly facing open container and the other of the base compartments cooperating with said transverse wall member to form a closed container over said receptacle, and in the second position said other base compartment cooperating with said transverse wall member to form a closed container under said receptacle.
2. A serving set according to claim 1, wherein each end portion of the peripheral wall of said base terminates in a mating flange, each of said mating flange being removably attachable to either of said first or second oppositely facing receiving means.
3. A serving set according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said transverse divider is positioned to form oppositely facing compartments of different capacities.
4. A serving set according to claim 2 or claim 3 when dependent on claim 2, further comprising a second receptacle having a transverse wall member with receiving means thereon, one of the said receiving means of said first receptacle being removably attachable to one of the mating flanges of the base and said receiving means of the second receptacle being removably attachable to said other mating flange of the base thereby to enable the formation of a double level serving set.

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5. A serving set according to claim 4, wherein said first and second receptacles are shaped to fit together so that one of the receptacles may be used to form a cover of the other receptacle.
- 5 6. A serving set according to any one of claims 1 to 5, further comprising an optional closure member that is adapted to fit over one end of the base.
- 10 7. A serving set substantially as herein described with reference to, and as shown in the accompanying drawings.
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