

A FOOD PLATE OR DISH

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to a plate which is used during dining or eating for supporting one or more food items. The present invention has particular application to plates that assist a person to consume a food product from a plate and to plates that enable the food items to be separated from each other.

Background of Invention

[0002] The discussion of the background to the invention that follows is intended to facilitate an understanding of the invention. However, it should be appreciated that the discussion is not an acknowledgement or admission that any aspect of the discussion was part of the common general knowledge as at the priority date of the application.

[0003] Plates on which food can be placed for storage or consumption are of course well known. Typically, a plate has a broad and often flat base and a rim that extends upwardly from the periphery of the base. The rim is intended to form a barrier that provides low level restraint against food items sliding or rolling off the plate such as when the plate is moved or is tilted.

[0004] The rim is often also helpful for loading food onto an eating utensil, such as a spoon or fork. Food can be pushed by the utensil to the rim and when the food engages the rim, it will stop moving allowing the utensil to be pushed into or underneath the food for lifting by the utensil.

[0005] Often however, the rim will either be too shallow or too gently inclined to sufficiently prevent movement of the food. In these cases, the person using the plate will often need to use another utensil, such as a knife, to hold the food product still, or as often happens with children, they will use a finger for that purpose.

[0006] Plates are also available that comprise integral and fixed partitions to divide the plate in two or more sections or compartments within which different foodstuffs can be placed or stored. These plates can thus separate different types of foods, such as separating fruit products like grapes from nuts, or from vegetable items

such as carrots and celery. These plates can also provide a confined area for flowable food products such as dips and sauces. While these plates are very useful when food separation is required, they are very specific to that use and typically are not used where only a single type of food is to be placed on the plate, where
5 partitioned separation of different foods is not required, or where the type of food is smaller than the plate but larger than any of the sections or compartments, i.e. a sandwich for example.

[0007] The present invention aims to provide an improved plate that assists consumption of food from the plate and that enables selective separation of food
10 items on the plate.

Summary of Invention

[0008] According to the present invention there is provided a
food plate or dish comprising:

- a. a rim extending about the periphery of the plate or dish, and
- 15 b. a partition insert that comprises a mounting portion that is releasably connected to the rim to extend at least partially about the rim, the partition insert comprising a partition member extending from a first part of the mounting portion to a second part of the mounting portion, the partition member separating the plate or dish into at least two food compartments.

20 [0009] The present invention can be applied to a plate or to a dish, whereby a plate has a generally flat or planar base and an upstanding rim, whereas a dish has a deeper and generally curved side wall that extends between a rim and a base. A plate typically is shallow, whereas a dish is usually deeper. The terminology "plate or dish" is intended to also cover other related items such as bowls, platters and trays. A
25 more generic expression is a food serving receptacle. Thus, the present invention is intended to be applicable to various forms of items on which food is placed prior to or during consumption. These items will generally all comprise a base or stand on which the item can rest on a table or bench or the like and these items can also comprise a wall that extends from the base to the rim. However, some items, such as shallow
30 plates, can comprise just a base and a rim.

[0010] A food plate or dish according to the present invention can thus comprise a base and a rim that extends about the periphery of the base. The base can be square, rectangular or circular for example, but the present invention covers all base shapes. The rim will have the same general shape as the periphery of the base and
5 will be upstanding from the base when the plate is in use, such as when the plate is placed on a table or bench. Alternatively, a plate or dish can comprise a base, a side wall and a rim, whereby the rim extends from the side wall.

[0011] The mounting portion of the partition insert can have the same shape as the rim and can thus be circular, square or rectangular for example. The mounting
10 portion could also be oval or triangular. The mounting portion can extend for only a portion of the rim and thus can be part circular, square or rectangular for example. The mounting portion could be U-shaped for example. The mounting portion can thus take any shape in order to fit either to a portion of the rim or to the full circumference of the rim of the plate or dish.

[0012] A food plate or dish according to the present invention advantageously comprises a releasable partition insert which comprises a mounting portion and a partition member to separate the plate or dish into at least two food compartments. The partition member is releasable with the mounting portion from the rim, leaving the
15 plate or dish to be used without partitions when necessary. This advantageously allows the food plate or dish to have a dual use in which it can be used without
20 partitions when required, while partitions can be applied to the plate by connection of the mounting portion to the rim, when partitions are required. The releasable partition insert also allows the plate components to be separated for cleaning purposes, which can reduce the likelihood of food particles being trapped in the partition structure and
25 thus can increase the hygienic use of the food plate or dish according to the present invention.

[0013] The partition member of the partition insert can form at least two food compartments. In some forms of the present invention, the partition member forms more than two food compartments, such as three, four or more food compartments.
30 The food compartments can have the same general size, or they can have different sizes. In some forms of the present invention, three food compartments are provided and each compartment has a different size. The partition member can be formed in a

T or Y shape to define three food compartments, or it can be formed in a H or X shape to form four food compartments. Alternatively, the partition member could have a central point from which partition sections extend to the ring. These food compartments would then be formed in a triangular shape. The partition member can have a long partition section or sections and a short partition section or sections, for example where the long partition section extends between two different parts of the ring and the short partition section extends from the long partition to another part of the ring. The partition sections can be straight or curved. Clearly, the partition member could have any suitable shape to define any number of food compartments of any shape and size.

[0014] Where the partition member of the partition insert is formed in a T-shape to define three food compartments, two of the three food compartments can have the same size or area, or all of the food compartments can have the same size or area or can be of different sizes.

[0015] The partition member of the partition insert can be formed as an integral part of the partition insert, or it can be a releasable part by being releasably connected to the partition insert. The partition insert can be moulded from a suitable material, such as a plastic material and/or a rigid material in one piece.

[0016] The partition member can extend into contact with facing surfaces of the base of the plate or dish, or with facing surfaces of the side wall of the plate or dish, or with facing surfaces of the base and the side wall. The partition member can also extend into contact with facing surfaces of the rim of the plate or dish. The partition member can extend into contact with facing surfaces of each of the rim and the base, and where provided, the side wall. The contact can be for part of the extent of the partition member or for substantially the full length or extent of the partition member. The partition member can have a partition member edge that extends into contact with facing surfaces of the rim of the plate or dish.

[0017] The partition member can closely approach or extend into actual contact with facing surfaces of one or more of the rim and the base, and where provided, the side wall, to form a barrier between the food placement compartments formed by the partition member. The partition member can closely approach some of the facing

surfaces and can extend into actual contact with other facing surfaces. The partition member could for example, closely approach facing surfaces of the rim and/or where provided, the side wall, and extend into actual contact with facing surfaces of the base.

5 [0018] Engagement between the partition member and one or more of the rim and the base, and where provided, the side wall, can form a seal between the partition member and those facing surfaces. The seal can simply be created by contact with, or by abutting engagement between the partition member and the facing surfaces. In these arrangements, the seal might not be a complete seal, for example not
10 preventing liquid from leaking between the partition member and the facing surface between adjacent food compartments, but it can prevent solid food from transferring between adjacent food compartments. This would be acceptable for example where the plate or dish is not intended for use with liquid food products, or where the liquid of the food products is viscous.

15 [0019] Alternatively, a seal can be created between the partition member and facing surfaces of the rim and/or the base, and/or where provided, the side wall, by sealing material being interposed between edge sections of the partition member that abut the facing surfaces of the rim and/or the base and/or the side wall where provided, and those facing surfaces. The sealing material might be attached to the
20 edge sections of the partition member, or to the facing surfaces to align with the edge sections. The sealing material can seal between the edge sections of the partition member and the facing surfaces.

[0020] Alternatively, the partition member can be arranged to enter suitably shaped grooves formed in the facing surfaces of the rim and/or the base and/or the
25 side wall where provided, and into which edge sections of the partition member can enter and seal in or against. The edge sections could be a close or friction fit within the groove. A portion of the partition member could enter a groove and another portion could closely approach or extend into actual contact with facing surfaces.

[0021] As explained earlier herein, in most plates or dishes, the rim, and/or the
30 side wall where provided, inclines or tapers outwardly, so that opposing sections of the rim, and/or the side wall where provided are mutually inclined away from each

other. Accordingly, a food product that is pushed into contact with the rim and/or the side wall can be pushed upwardly and over the upper edge of the rim. To stop this, a person can use another utensil or their finger to engage the food product to stop the food product from being pushed over the edge and to assist to load the food product onto the utensil for lifting. In order to resist the food product from being pushed over the edge of the mounting portion of the partition insert, the partition insert can have or present an inwardly facing inclined surface. The inclined surface can extend from close to or adjacent the inwardly facing surface of the rim. The inclined surface can be flat or concave.

- 10 [0022] The inclusion of the inclined surface of the partition insert causes a food product that engages the inclined surface to be shifted radially inwardly as it is moved up the inclined surface as well as being shifted over or onto the lifting surface of the utensil being used. The food product is therefore prevented from being pushed over the rim edge and at the same time, the food product is directed onto the utensil for consumption, benefiting those who have difficulty controlling or using utensils, such as the very young, the elderly and those with physical disabilities.

- 20 [0023] The inclusion of the inclined surface of the partition insert is intended to cover where the inclined surface is provided fully about the mounting portion of the partition insert as well as where the inclined surface is provided in one section of the mounting portion or in multiple but separated sections of the mounting portion.

- 25 [0024] In addition, or alternatively, upper edges, or edges remote from the base, of the partition insert, can comprise an inclined surface that inclines inwardly into one of the food compartments that the partition insert forms, or the partition insert can comprise inclined surfaces that incline inwardly into both of the food compartments that the partition insert forms. For example, where the partition insert comprises a single partition that extends across the base and connects to opposite parts of the mounting portion to form a pair of food compartments on either side of the partition insert, an upper edge of the partition insert may incline inwardly on one side of the partition insert into or over one of the food compartments, or the upper edge of the partition insert may incline inwardly in opposite directions to both sides of the partition insert and into or over both of the food compartments. The presence of an inclined surface on the upper edges of the partition insert allows a food product to be pushed

by a utensil into contact with the partition insert and pushed up the partition insert to engage or slide along the inclined surface so that the food product is pushed inwardly and onto the utensil. Applying the inclined surface to each of the ring of the partition insert as well as the upper edges of the partition insert means that someone using the
5 plate or dish according to the present invention can push a food item to either of the rim or the partition to obtain the benefit of the inclined surfaces.

[0025] One advantage of providing the inclined surface on the mounting portion rather than the partition insert is that a smooth transition to the inclined surface from the side wall or rim can be provided without having to form an undercut surface that is
10 difficult in molding production. In contrast, a partition insert with one or more inclined surfaces could require the partition wall to have an undercut surface which is more difficult and/or expensive to manufacture.

[0026] The partition insert can be secured in place on the rim in any suitable manner. In some forms of the present invention, one of the rim or the mounting
15 portion of the partition insert comprise a bead and the other of the rim and the ring comprise a recess or step and the mounting portion is secured relative to the rim by entry of the bead into the recess or step. The bead may be a continuous bead or an intermittent bead. Likewise, the recess or step can be a continuous recess or step or an intermittent recess or step. In some forms of the present invention, the bead can
20 be provided at the upper edge of the rim. The bead can be a snap fit into the recess or step. In some forms of the present invention, the bead enters the recess or step when the partition member is at a position in which it closely approaches surfaces of one or more of the rim and the base, and where provided, the side wall, or extends into actual contact with those facing surfaces.

[0027] Alternatively, the ring of the partition insert can be a friction fit against a facing surface of the rim with the friction fit securing the partition insert in place against the rim. Still alternatively, one of the rim and the mounting portion of the partition insert can comprise a bead and the other of the rim and the ring can
25 comprise a recess and the mounting portion is at least partially secured relative to the rim by entry of the bead into the recess or step, while the ring of the partition insert
30 can also be a friction fit against a facing surface of the rim.

[0028] The above arrangements to secure the partition insert to the rim are appropriate for most shapes of plate or dish. However, for circular plates or dishes, the option is available to secure the partition insert to the rim using a screw thread, most particularly a coarse screw thread.

5 [0029] The plate or dish according to the present invention can be made of any suitable materials. Materials that allow some distortion or deflection are preferred for fitting the partition insert to the rim. Components of the plate or dish according to the present invention can be interchangeably made from either a soft or hard flexible material, such as polypropylene, or a stiffened soft material, i.e. nylon or
10 polypropylene co or over-moulded with silicone.

[0030] A food plate or dish according to the present invention can comprise a suction cup for suction connection with a table or bench surface to assist a user of the plate or dish to prevent the plate or dish from movement on the table or bench surface when eating food items from the plate or dish. In some forms of the present
15 invention, a flexible suction cup is releasably attached to the base of the plate or dish. The base can comprise a connector to which the suction cup can connect. The connector can form an outwardly facing recess or channel and the suction cup can comprise an extension, such as a lip, that extends into the recess or channel. The lip can be of a flexible material that can be stretched to fit into the recess or channel.
20 The suction cup can be formed of the same material as the lip and the suction cup can be an integral component. One suitable material for the suction cup is silicone.

[0031] The suction cup can comprise a release tab that can be pulled to release the suction between the plate or dish and the table or bench surface.

Brief Description of Drawings

25 [0032] In order that the invention may be more fully understood, some embodiments will now be described with reference to the figures in which:

[0033] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a food plate according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0034] Figure 2 is an exploded view of the food plate of Figure 1.

[0035] Figure 3 is a cross sectional view of the food plate of Figure 1 taken through III-III.

[0036] Figure 4 is a detailed view taken from Figure 3.

[0037] Figures 5A to 5C are cross sectional end views of the food plate of Figure 1 taken through III-III, showing use with a food product and spoon.

[0038] Figure 6 is a plan view of the food plate of Figure 1.

[0039] Figure 7 is an exploded side view of the food plate of Figure 1.

Detailed Description

[0040] Figure 1 is a perspective view of a food plate 10 according to one embodiment of the present invention. The food plate 10 comprise a base 12 that is generally broad and flat. The base 12 extends to a rim 14 and Figure 1 shows an imaginary line L at the junction between the base 12 and the rim 14. The rim 14 is upstanding from the base 12, which means that in the ordinary course of the use of the plate 10, the rim 14 extends upwardly.

[0041] The base 12 and the rim 14 form what would be considered a normal or standard form of food plate. That is, ordinary food plates generally have a broad base and an upstanding rim and while the configuration can vary significantly from that shown in Figure 1, the general concept of such a plate is well established. The food plate 10 is relatively shallow in depth and so is referred to herein as a "plate". However, it could also be referred to as a dish or bowl, particularly if the rim 14 had a greater extension upwardly from the base 12. if the rim 14 were to have a greater extension upwardly from the base 12, the rim might be defined as forming a wall that extends between the base 12 and the rim 14. This would be applicable if the food plate 10 were a dish or bowl instead. Such a dish or bowl would thus have a base, a wall that extends from the base and a rim at the end or region of the wall remote from the base. The rim terminates in a rim edge 16.

[0042] Figure 2 is an exploded, perspective view of the food plate 10 of Figure 1, and shows that the upper end of the rim 14 terminates in a rim edge 16. It is over the rim edge 16 that food is often inadvertently pushed by a person using the plate 10

with a knife, fork or spoon for example, with a flowable food product, such as pasta, cereals, or dips for example, creating undesirable mess. However, in the present invention, a partition insert comprising a mounting portion in the form of a releasable ring 18 can be fitted to the rim 14 to project upwardly from the rim edge 16 and which
5 can provide an inwardly inclined surface profile 20 that tends to prevent food from passing over the rim edge 16. The releasable ring 18 is shown in more detail in Figures 3 and 4.

[0043] Figure 3 is a cross sectional view of the plate 10 taken through III-III of Figure 1. In Figure 3, it can be seen that an outer surface of the ring 18 engages
10 against a facing inner surface of the rim 14 adjacent the rim edge 16, and the ring 18 presents an inwardly inclined surface 20. This arrangement is better illustrated in Figure 4, which is a detailed view of a section of the plate 10 where the ring 18 fits to the rim 14.

[0044] It will be well known that a person that is eating from the food plate 10
15 using a suitable utensil, can push food to the rim 14 to assist loading the food onto the utensil. However, it will also be appreciated from Figure 3 that because opposing sections of the rim 14 are mutually inclined away from each other, a food product that is pushed into contact with the rim 14 can be pushed up the rim 14 and up and over the rim edge 16 as the person continues to attempt to load the food product onto the
20 utensil. To stop this, a person can engage the food product with another utensil or can use their finger to stop movement of the food product, thereby allowing the first utensil to properly engage the food product for lifting.

[0045] However, the use of the ring 18 assists to not only prevent food from passing over the rim edge 16, but also to load the food product onto a utensil. As
25 shown in Figures 3 and 4, connection of the ring 18 to the rim 14 places the inwardly inclined surface 20 in the path of any food that is travelling upwardly along the rim 14 towards the rim edge 16. The surface 20 will either simply stop movement of the food product so that the utensil can push into or underneath the food product without requiring additional input from another utensil or by the use of a finger, or if the food
30 product continues movement along the surface 20, it will tend to travel inwardly along the surface 20 and over and onto an upper surface of the utensil, so that the food product is properly secured by the utensil and can be lifted away from the plate 10.

This beneficially assists those who have difficulty controlling or using utensils, such as the very young, the elderly and those with physical disabilities.

[0046] An example of the operation of the ring 18 in use is shown in Figures 5A to 5C in relation to the lifting of a food product FP from the plate 10 utilising a spoon S.

5 The food product FP is shown as a circular product for illustrative purposes only, but as will be appreciated, the food product FP can be of any shape and any type of food that is loose within the plate 10. In Figure 5A, the spoon S has pushed the food product FP to the rim 14 and upwardly along the inside surface of the rim 14. In the position shown, the food product FP is about to engage the ring 18.

10 [0047] In the absence of the ring 18, the food product FP might continue to be pushed upwardly along the inside surface of the rim 14 and over the rim edge 16. However, the inclusion of the ring 18 has the effect illustrated in Figure 5B, in which the food product FP engages the inwardly inclined surface 20 of the rim 18 and is shifted radially inwardly and onto the lifting surface LS of the spoon S. The food
15 product FP is prevented from being pushed over the rim edge 16, while further movement of the food product FP by the spoon S as illustrated in Figure 5C, shows that the food product FP continues to be pushed onto the lifting surface LS of the spoon S as the spoon S continues to lift the food product FP. In Figure 5C, the food product FP has cleared the inwardly inclined surface 20 of the ring 18 and is properly
20 located on the lifting surface LS of the spoon S, and so the person using the spoon S can lift the spoon S and the food product FP away from the plate 10 for consumption.

[0048] As shown in Figure 1, the surface 20 extends fully about the ring 18 and so the assistance discussed above for removing food products from the plate 10 is provided fully about the rim 14.

25 [0049] The ring 18 provides assistance for extracting solid but flowable foods from the plate 10, such as pastas and cereals, and it can also assist liquid like products, or more flowable type products, such as dips and sauces to be eaten from the plate 10 using food items such as bread or biscuits.

[0050] Figure 2 shows that the rear surface 22 of the ring 18 seats against a
30 facing surface of the rim 14 adjacent the edge 16. The rim 14 comprises an inwardly extending bead 24 that nests with a recess or step 26 (hereinafter "recess") formed in

the ring 18. The dimensions of the rim 14 and the ring 18 are such that the surface 22 frictionally engages the facing surface 28 of the rim 14 when the ring 18 is connected to the rim 14. This means that the ring 18 must push past the bead 24 for the ring 18 to seat against the surface 28 and so either or both of the rim 14 and the ring 18 need to distort or deflect to fit the ring 18 to the rim 14. There is also frictional engagement and tension between the downwardly facing surface of the bead 24 and the upwardly facing surface of the recess 26. The ring 18 is thus held securely in place on the rim 14 by these frictional engagements. Suitable selection of materials can ensure that the ring 18 can be pushed into the seated position. The rim 14 (and thus the base 12) and the ring 18 can be interchangeably made from either a soft or hard or composite flexible material. One suitable material for both components is polypropylene.

[0051] It will be appreciated that because the ring is continuous (as shown in Figures 1 and 2) and because the surface 28 of the rim 14 is inclined, the ring 18 will tend to compress as it moves down the surface 28. The ring 18 can only move down the surface 28 so far before it reaches its maximum compression and cannot move any further or is prevented by contact between partitions (as described later herein) and facing surfaces of the rim 14 and/or the base 12. Careful selection of the dimensions of the rim 14 and the ring 18 mean that the ring 18 can be securely held in place by frictional engagement of the ring 18 against the surface 28 and by the bead 24 nesting in the recess 26. Other arrangements for seating and securing the ring 18 to the rim 14 can of course be adopted.

[0052] Figures 1 and 2 show that the partition insert further comprises a partition member in the form of a partition 32 that extends into contact with three different parts or points of the ring 18. The partition 32 is formed in a T-shape and thus comprises a long partition section 34 and a short partition section 36. Ends of each section 34 and 36 connect to the inclined surface 20 of the ring 18, and in the arrangement illustrated, the connection between the sections 34 and 36 of the partition 32 with the ring 18 are integral connections. The ring 18 and the associated partition 32 is thus formed by a suitable moulding process from a suitable moulded material, such as the polypropylene material described earlier.

[0053] The partition sections 34 and 36 extend into contact with the upper facing surface of the base 12, which is a food placement surface 38. The partition sections 34 and 36 separate the food placement surface 38 into three food placement compartments 40, 41 and 42 (see also Figure 6). Engagement between the partition sections 34 and 36 with the food placement surface 38 is not required to form a seal, but rather, is intended to form a barrier between the food placement compartments 41 to 42, and indeed, it is not actually a requirement that touching engagement actually occur between the partition sections 34 and 36 the food placement surface 38, although that is preferred. The present invention does however cover arrangements in which there is a better engagement or even a sealed engagement between the partition sections 34 and 36 the food placement surface 38, and these arrangements can comprise a suitably shaped groove formed in the food placement surface 38 into which bottom edges of the partition sections 34 and 36 enter when the ring 18 is applied to the rim 14.

[0054] Entry of the bead 24 of the rim 14 into the recess 26 of the ring 18 can be arranged to provide a tactile indication that the ring 18 has been fitted to the correct position on the rim 14. This can be by the bead 24 snapping into the recess 26. Such an indication can also be provided by the bottom edges of the partition sections 34 and 36 engaging the facing surface of the food placement surface 38.

[0055] It is to be understood that the upper edges 34a and 36a (see Figures 1 and 6) of the partition sections 34 and 36 can comprise inclined surfaces similar to the inclined surface 20 of the ring 18. In respect of the partition section 34, inclined surfaces could be introduced at the upper edge 34a to project into just the food placement compartment 40 or 41 or 42, a combination of the food placement compartments 40, 41 and 42, or all of the food placement compartments 40, 41 and 42. The addition of an inclined surface to the partition sections 34 and 36 can be in addition to, or an alternative to, the inclined surface 20 that is applied to the ring 18.

[0056] The food plate 10 as illustrated comprises three food placement compartments 40 to 42, although it should be appreciated that as few as two food placement compartments could be provided, or more than three can be provided. Four or more food placement compartments could easily be provided in the plate 10,

while larger plates, bowls or dishes could easily comprise more than four compartments.

[0057] The food plate 10 as illustrated further comprises a suction cup attachment which comprises a flexible suction cup 44 that is releasably attached to the base 12 of the plate 10. With reference to Figures 2, 3 and 7, the base 12 comprises a circular connector 46 that comprises a first leg 48 and a second leg 50 (Figure 3), whereby the first and second legs 48 and 50 are at right angles or perpendicular to each other. The first and second legs 48 and 50 form a recess R (Figure 7), into which is received a circular lip 52 when the suction cup 44 is connected to the connector 46. The suction cup 44 is easily attached to the connector 46 by stretching the lip 52 for insertion into the recess R.

[0058] The suction cup 44 comprises a release tab 54 for releasing the suction from between the plate 10 and the bench or table top.

[0059] The plate 10 comprises four feet 56 extending from the underside of the base 12. The plate 12 stands on the feet 56 when the suction cup is not being used and has been removed to improve the stability of the plate 10 during use. Alternative to the feet 56, the plate 10 can have a skirt that extends from the base 12 close to the junction between the base 12 and the rim 14.

[0060] Where any or all of the terms "comprise", "comprising" or "comprises" are used in this specification (including the claims) they are to be interpreted as specifying the presence of the stated features, integers, steps or components, but not precluding the presence of one or more other features, integers, steps or components.

[0061] Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the invention described herein is susceptible to variations and modifications other than those specifically described. It is understood that the invention comprises all such variations and modifications which fall within the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0062] Future patent applications may be filed in Australia or overseas on the basis of or claiming priority from the present application. It is to be understood that the following claims are provided by way of example only, and are not intended to limit the scope of what may be claimed in any such future application. Features may

be added to or omitted from the claims at a later date so as to further define or re-define the invention or inventions.

Claims

1. A food plate or dish comprising:
 - a) a rim extending about the periphery of the plate or dish, and
 - 5 b) a partition insert that comprises a mounting portion that is releasably connected to the rim to extend at least partially about the rim, the partition insert comprising a partition member extending from a first part of the mounting portion to a second part of the mounting portion, the partition member separating the plate or dish into at least two food compartments.
- 10 2. A food plate or dish according to claim 1, the mounting portion being a ring.
3. A food plate or dish according to claim 1 or 2, having a generally flat or planar base and the rim being upstanding from the base.
4. A food plate or dish according to claim 1 or 2, having a generally curved
15 side wall extending between the rim and a base.
5. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 4, the partition member of the partition insert forming three, four or more food compartments.
6. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 4, the partition member comprising a first partition section and a second partition section, the first
20 partition section extending from a first part of the mounting portion to a second part of the mounting portion, the second partition section extending from the first partition section to a third part of the mounting portion, such as where the first and second partition sections form a T-shape, to define three food compartments in which at least two of the three food compartments have the same size, or all of the food
25 compartments being of different size.
7. food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 6, the partition member of the partition insert being formed integrally with the mounting portion of the partition insert.
8. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 7, the partition
30 member extending into contact with facing surfaces of the plate or dish.

9. A food plate or dish according to claim 8, the partition member extending into contact with facing surfaces of the rim.
10. A food plate or dish according to claim 8 the plate or dish having a base and the partition member extending into contact with facing surfaces of the base.
- 5 11. A food plate or dish according to claim 8, the plate or dish having a side wall and the partition member extending into contact with facing surfaces of the side wall.
12. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 8 to 11, the contact of the partition member with facing surfaces of the plate or dish being contact along
- 10 substantially the full length or extent of the partition member.
13. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 12, the mounting portion of the partition insert having or presenting an inwardly facing inclined surface for the purpose of causing a food product that engages the inclined surface to be shifted over or onto the lifting surface of a utensil.
- 15 14. A food plate or dish according to claim 13, the inwardly facing inclined surface extending from close to or adjacent an inwardly facing surface of the rim.
15. A food plate or dish according to claim 13 or 14, the inwardly facing inclined surface being provided fully about the mounting portion of the partition insert or being provided in one section of the mounting portion or in multiple but separated
- 20 sections of the mounting portion.
16. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 15, upper edges of the partition member comprising an inclined surface that inclines inwardly into one of the food compartments that the partition member forms or comprising inclined surfaces that incline inwardly into both of the food compartments that the partition
- 25 member forms.
17. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 16, one of the rim or the mounting portion of the partition insert including a bead and the other of the rim and the mounting portion including a recess or step and the mounting portion being secured relative to the rim by entry of the bead into the recess or step.

18. A food plate or dish according to claim 17, bead being a snap fit into the recess or step.

19. A food plate or dish according to any one of claims 1 to 19, the mounting portion being restrained against movement relative to the rim by interaction between
5 the bead and the recess or step.

10

15

20