A modular kit of dimensionally complementary pieces which may be used in various combinations for serving food, displaying items or the like. Each of the pieces of the kit has a generally flat bottom and side walls integrally formed with and upstanding from the bottom. One or more of these pieces are capable of receiving within its side walls at least two other pieces of the kit when these other pieces are arranged with their bottom in the same plane as one another.
FIG. 24
MODULAR KIT OF DIMENSIONALLY COMPLEMENTARY SERVING PIECES

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to dinnerware and tableware, as well as general household containers and the like.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention is a modular kit which can be used in a household setting to enable the user to easily combine pieces to create a variety of applications. Specifically, this invention contemplates a kit comprising wide variety of tableware products, such as platters, bowls, plates and the like, including specialty pieces such as olive boats. This kit is designed in a modular manner so that individual pieces may fit together in a wide variety of ways to permit the user to combine them to create a pattern or combination of serving pieces that fit different needs. The various pieces are sized proportionately to work together as a serving system, enabling the end user to create unique table items to fit his or her needs.

This kit also provides that the individual items can be combined to display items or provide solutions to storage problems throughout the home, and not just as serving pieces. For example, the plates can be used as drawer holders, soap holders and the like, while the bowls can be used as plant holders, candle holders and the like. The ability to nest, stack and combine these pieces enables the user to develop unique assemblies without having to purchase a large number of separate pieces. Pieces can be inverted as needed to create additional combinations.

The shape and size of the pieces also enables them to be stored simply and easily in a minimum of space.

A better understanding of the objects, advantages, features, properties and relationships of the invention will be obtained from the following detailed description and accompanying drawings, which set forth illustrative embodiments that are indicative of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the invention, reference may be had to the preferred embodiments shown in the following drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a tray in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a bottom view of the tray shown in FIG. 2.

FIG. 3 is a top view of a rectangular tray in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the tray shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 5 is a side view of the tray shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 6 is an end view of the tray shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the tray shown in FIG. 3.

FIG. 8 is a top view of a bowl in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a bottom view of the bowl shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 10 is a side view of the bowl shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the bowl shown in FIG. 8.

FIG. 12 is a top view of a plate in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a bottom view of the plate shown in FIG. 12.

FIG. 14 is a side view of the plate shown in FIG. 12.

FIG. 15 is a top view of a specialty tray in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 16 is a bottom view of the specialty tray shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 17 is a side view of the specialty shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 18 is an end view of the tray shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 19 is a perspective view of the tray shown in FIG. 15.

FIG. 20 is a top view of one combination of components in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 21 is a side view of the combination shown in FIG. 20. FIG. 22 is a perspective view of the combination shown in FIG. 20.

FIG. 23 is a top view of a second combination of components in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 24 is a perspective view of the combination shown in FIG. 23.

FIG. 25 is a top view of a third combination of components in accordance with the present invention.

FIG. 26 is a perspective view of the combination shown in FIG. 25.

FIG. 27 is a top view of a fourth combination of elements in accordance with this invention.

FIG. 28 is a top view of a fifth combination of elements in accordance with this invention. FIG. 29 is a top view of a sixth combination of elements in accordance with this invention.

FIG. 30 is a top view of a seventh combination of elements in accordance with this invention.

FIG. 31 is a top view of an eighth combination of elements in accordance with this invention.

FIG. 32 is a top view of a ninth combination of elements in accordance with this invention.

The various features and combination possibilities will be apparent from a review of the drawings. FIGS. 1 and
2 show a rectangular tray or platter 20 in the form of a square having a plurality of equal sides 24 integrally formed with and upstanding from a bottom 23 having a top surface 22 and a bottom surface 25. A rib or edge structure 26 is integrally formed about the outer circumference of bottom surface 25 to form a foot on which tray 20 may be placed on a table or other flat surface. Tray 20 shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 preferably has dimensions of approximately 15 in. by 15 in. and a depth of approximately 1.35 in.

[0038] FIGS. 3-7 show various views of a second tray 30 which is structurally very similar to tray 20 discussed above but is formed in a rectangular shape. Tray 30 has a bottom 29 with a top surface 31, a bottom surface 32 and a rib structure 34 formed about the circumference of bottom surface 32 to act as the base thereof, and a plurality of sides 33 integrally formed with and upstanding from bottom 29. Rectangular tray 30 preferably has dimensions of approximately 15.75 in. by 6 in. and a depth of approximately 1.35 in.

[0039] FIGS. 8-11 show different views of a bowl 35 having an bottom 45 comprising an inside surface 36, a bottom surface 38 and a rib 39 formed about the outer circumference of bottom surface 38 to create a base therefor, and a plurality of edges 37 integrally formed with and upstanding from bottom 45. As can be seen, the structure of bowl 35 is very similar to that of the trays 20 and 30 discussed above. In the preferred embodiment, bowl 35 may have dimensions of approximately 5 in. by 5 in., with a depth of 2.5 in. A larger bowl 35 could have dimensions of approximately 7.5 in. by 7.5 in. with a depth of 3.0 in. and still be used in the combinations discussed herein, as shown, e.g. in FIG. 28.

[0040] FIGS. 12-14 show a small plate 40 that can be used in the combinations contemplated with this invention and is formed generally in the shape of a square as viewed from the top. As with the other structures, plate 40 comprises a bottom 41 having a bottom surface 43 and an inside generally flat surface 47, a plurality of upstanding edges 42 integrally formed with bottom 41, and a rib 44 formed about the outer circumference of bottom surface 43 to act as the foot or base therefor. Plate 40 preferably has a side dimension of approximately 7.2 in. and a depth of 3.5 in.; a large square plate that could be used with these designs could have a side dimension of approximately 10 in. and a depth of 1.0 in.

[0041] FIGS. 15-19 show a specialty dish 50 which, like the other kit elements described herein, comprises a bottom 59 comprising an inside generally flat surface 51, a bottom surface 53, a plurality of edges 52 integrally formed with and upstanding from bottom 59, and a rib 54 formed about the outer circumference of bottom surface 53 to act as the base therefor. Specialty dish 50 could be used as an olive dish or the like, and this type of dish is often referred to as an olive boat. Specialty dish 50 preferably has dimensions of approximately 6.7 in. by 1.9 in. and a depth of 1.0 in., while a larger version that can be used in the kit described herein may have dimensions of approximately 13.6 in. by 1.9 in. and a depth of 1.0 in.

[0042] The benefits of this invention can be seen most clearly in FIGS. 20-32, which show a variety of combinations of the elements of this kit. These are representative combinations only and are not intended to be limiting of the invention.

[0043] A first combination of elements is shown in FIGS. 20-22 which show various views of tray or platter 20 with a plurality of bowls 35, such as are shown in FIGS. 8-11, mounted thereon. A second combination is shown in FIGS. 23 and 24, which show the same tray 20 with a plurality of small plates 40, such as are shown in FIGS. 12-14, mounted thereon.

[0044] A third combination is shown in FIGS. 25 and 26, which shows rectangular tray 30 of, e.g., FIG. 3, having a plurality of smaller specialty dishes 50, which would be of the smaller dimensions listed above, and a larger specialty dish 50, which would be of the larger dimensions outlined, all mounted thereon. It will be understood that alternative combinations will be readily available based on the dimensions of the various elements. For example, the combination of FIGS. 25 and 26 could be easily altered by the use of four of the smaller specialty dishes 50, or two of the larger dishes 50. Similarly, in the combinations shown in, e.g., FIG. 25, the user could remove one or more of the smaller plates 40 and either replace these with other elements, such as bowl 35, specialty dish 50 or the like.

[0045] FIGS. 27-32 show a variety of other combinations. FIG. 27 shows tray 20 having plate 40 mounted thereon, with bowl 35 mounted on plate 40. FIG. 28 shows the larger bowl 35 mounted on plate 40. FIG. 29 depicts tray 20 having a rectangular tray 30 mounted at a diagonal thereon, while a pair of bowls 35 are mounted on rectangular tray 30. FIG. 30 depicts a similar arrangement to that shown in FIG. 29, except that bowls 35 are mounted directly on tray 20, on opposite sides of rectangular tray 30. FIG. 31 shows the use of specialty dish 50 with small plate 40 in an arrangement that could be repeated in many of the other combinations shown. A further unique feature of this kit is that the elements can be turned upside down and used as a base for other elements, such as is shown in FIG. 32, where a larger size bowl 35 is inverted and used as the base to support larger size plate 40, which in turn supports inverted bowl 35 that acts as a base for plate 40. The dimensional relationships of each of these elements permits these various combinations plus other combinations that will be obvious to one of skill in the art.

[0046] While specific embodiments of the invention have been described in detail, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that various modifications and alternatives to those details could be developed in light of the overall teachings of the disclosure. Accordingly, the particular arrangement disclosed is meant to be illustrative only and not limiting as to the scope of the invention which is to be given the full breadth of the appended claims and any equivalents thereof.

I/we claim:

1. A modular kit of dimensionally complementary pieces which may be used in various combinations for serving food, displaying items or the like, each of said pieces having a generally flat bottom and side walls integrally formed with and upstanding from said bottom, at least one of said pieces being capable of receiving within its side walls at least two other pieces of said kit when at least two other pieces of said kit are arranged with their bottom in the same plane as one another.
2. The kit of claim 1, wherein said at least one piece is a base piece having a generally rectangular shape.

3. The kit of claim 2 wherein said at least two other pieces are generally rectangular in shape and proportioned in their exterior dimensions to said base piece so as to be capable of being placed within the side walls of said base piece and adjacent the bottom of said base piece.