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PACKAGE FOR SLICED BACON AND THE LIKE

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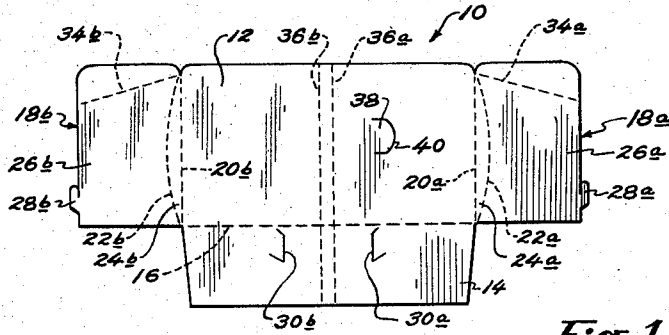


Fig. 1

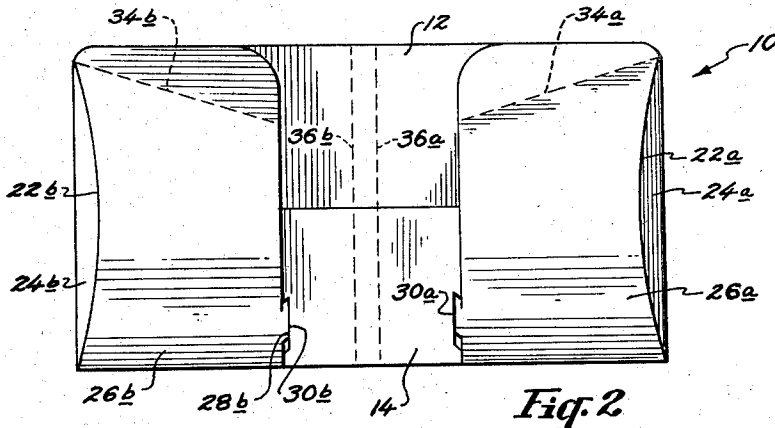


Fig. 2

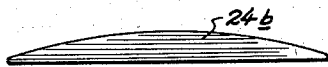


Fig. 3

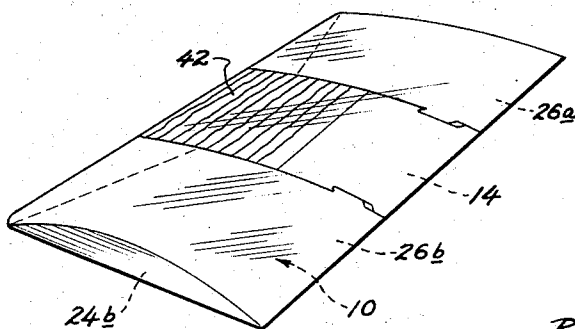


Fig. 5

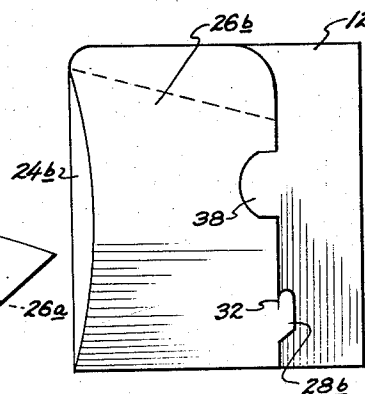


Fig. 4

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PACKAGE FOR SLICED BACON AND THE LIKE

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2 Claims. (Cl. 229—40)

The present invention relates generally to packages, and more particularly is directed to improvements in packages for sliced bacon and the like.

It is now conventional to market bacon in sliced form in individual packages each containing a sufficient number of slices to make up a prescribed weight of bacon, for example, a full pound or a fraction thereof. Such packages generally include a stiff paper backing on which a series of slices of bacon are arranged in overlapping relation to form a mass of generally rectangular plan-form and having a cross-section which is of substantial thickness at the center and tapers to thin edges along the opposite longitudinal margins of the mass. The stiff paper backing and the sliced bacon thereon are then enclosed or wrapped in an outer envelope or over-wrap of thin transparent material.

In order to protect the mass of sliced bacon from mutilation along its end and side edges during the application of the transparent over-wrap or by handling of the package during storage or at the point of sale, it has been proposed, for example, in United States Letters Patent No. 2,565,976, issued August 28, 1951, to C. G. Mayer et al., to provide the stiff paper backing with a front flap which is joined to a longitudinal edge of the backing along a fold line and adapted to overlie the corresponding longitudinal edge portion of the sliced bacon mass, an end wall panel joined to an end edge of the backing and having a height approximately the same as the mass of sliced bacon at the center of the latter, and an end flap joined to the end wall panel at the central portion of the latter and adapted to be folded inwardly from the end wall panel to overlie the adjacent end portion of the sliced bacon mass. In order to permit the inwardly folded end flap to conform to the contour of the top surface of the sliced bacon mass, the above identified patent provides V-shaped slots extending inwardly between the ends of the end wall panel and end flap so that, in the regions of such slots, the end flap can be bent downwardly against the inclined top surface portions of the sliced bacon mass. However, with such an arrangement, the fold line connecting the end flap to the end wall panel is shortened and correspondingly weakened, while the V-shaped slots or cutouts present points at which the thin transparent over-wrap can catch to interfere with the smooth enclosure of the package in the over-wrap, particularly when the latter is automatically applied in a suitable wrapping machine. Further, although the parts of the end flap bounded by the V-shaped slots are free to be bent downwardly against the inclined top surface portions of the sliced bacon mass, such parts of the end flaps must be held against the sliced bacon mass during the application of the over-wrap in order to achieve a snug-fitting package capable of holding the several slices of bacon in position and, upon the removal of the over-wrap, at least one of the free parts of the end flap can spring away from the surface of the sliced bacon mass and no longer functions to hold the bacon slices against relative displacement.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved package for sliced bacon and the like which overcomes the above mentioned disadvantages of the existing packages.

Another specific object is to provide an improved package for sliced bacon and the like that includes a stiff paper backing having a front flap foldably joined thereto along a longitudinal edge, end wall panels foldably joined to the opposite end edges of the backing and end flaps foldably joined to the end wall panels in a manner causing such end flaps to conform to the top surface of a sliced bacon mass on the backing when said end flaps are folded inwardly to overlie the mass.

Another object is to provide a package of the described character wherein the end flaps are joined to the related end wall panels along substantially the entire lengths of their adjacent edges thereby providing a relatively strong joint that resists tearing and also avoiding the presence of cutouts of the kind that many interfere with the application of a thin transparent over-wrap in an automatic machine provided for that purpose.

A further object is to provide a package of the described character wherein the stiff paper backing is foldable to provide a package of relatively small dimensions following the removal of a portion of the contents thereof.

In accordance with the invention, the above, and other objects, features and advantages thereof appearing in the following detailed description, are achieved by providing a package for sliced bacon and the like that comprises a rectangular stiff paper backing sheet upon which a mass of sliced bacon may be disposed with the bacon slices in overlapping relation so that the upper surface of the mass is relatively high along its longitudinal medial line and inclines downwardly from the latter toward the opposite longitudinal edges. A front flap is foldably joined to the backing along one of the longitudinal edges of the latter and is adapted to be folded rearwardly over the backing to overlie the front portion of the sliced bacon mass. An extension is joined to each end of the backing along a straight fold line that is substantially coextensive with the width of the backing, and each end extension has an arcuate score or fold line extending substantially from one end to the other end of said straight fold line to define a division between the area enclosed by the straight and arcuate fold lines, and intended to form an end wall panel, and the remainder of the extension which is intended to form an end flap. The outer edges of the extensions have locking tabs projecting therefrom and adapted to be received in suitably shaped slots of the front flap when the extensions are folded about their straight and arcuate fold lines to incline the end wall panels upwardly and inwardly from the opposite ends of the backing and to cause the end flaps to overlie the end portions of the sliced bacon mass with such end flaps being curved downwardly to conform to the upper surface of the mass by reason of the curvature of the arcuate fold lines joining the end flaps to the related end wall panels.

Further, the backing and front flap are provided with parallel centrally located fold lines extending laterally thereacross, and about which they can be folded to reduce the size of the package after a portion of the contents have been removed, and the backing, at one side of the lateral fold lines, has a tab struck therefrom to receive and hold the end flap at the opposite side of the lateral fold lines for maintaining the package in its reduced size condition.

In order that the invention may be fully understood, an illustrative embodiment thereof is hereinafter described in detail with reference to the accompanying drawing forming a part hereof, and wherein:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a flat blank adapted to form

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a stiff paper backing embodying the present invention in a package for sliced bacon and the like;

Fig. 2 is an enlarged plan view of a stiff paper backing embodying this invention and formed by suitably folding the blank of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an end view of the backing of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 2, but showing the backing after it has been further folded to provide a package of reduced size; and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a package containing sliced bacon and including the backing shown in Fig. 2.

Referring to the drawing in detail, and initially to Fig. 1 thereof, a flat blank intended to be folded to form a backing embodying the present invention for a package containing sliced bacon and the like is there illustrated and generally identified by the reference numeral 10.

The backing 10 is formed of stiff paper, cardboard and the like, and has a generally rectangular bottom portion 12. A front flap 14, which is coextensive longitudinally with the bottom portion 12, is joined to the latter along a longitudinal edge of the bottom portion, and a score or fold line 16 is provided along that longitudinal edge to permit the front flap 14 to be folded rearwardly over the bottom portion 12. The width of the front flap 14 is preferably approximately one-half the width of the bottom portion 12.

Extensions 18a and 18b are provided at the opposite ends of the bottom portion 12 and are substantially coextensive with the width of the latter. The extensions 18a and 18b are joined to the ends of the bottom portion 12 by straight score or fold lines 20a and 20b, respectively, extending along the opposite end edges of the bottom portion. Further, the extensions 18a and 18b have arcuate score or fold lines 22a and 22b, respectively, which are inwardly concave, that is, concave in the directions toward the related straight fold lines 20a and 20b, and which extend between the ends of the adjacent straight fold lines. The arcuate fold lines 22a and 22b serve to divide the extensions 18a and 18b into end wall panel forming portions 24a and 24b, defined between the straight and arcuate fold lines 20a and 22a and the straight and arcuate fold lines 20b and 22b, respectively, and into end flap forming panels 26a and 26b constituted by the remainder of the related extensions.

The extensions 18a and 18b are further provided with locking tabs 28a and 28b projecting from their free end edges at the lower portions of the latter, while the front flap 14 has slits 30a and 30b therein extending generally laterally at locations which are spaced from the ends of the flap 14 distances approximately equal to the distances from the fold lines 20a and 20b to the free end edges of the related extensions 18a and 18b. The slits 30a and 30b have angled end portions inclined toward the fold line 16 and the related ends of the front flap, and are located with respect to the fold line 16, so that, when the front flap 14 is folded upon the bottom portion 12 and the extensions 18a and 18b are folded inwardly toward each other about the related straight and arcuate fold lines, the tabs 28a and 28b will register with, and be received in, the slits 30a and 30b, respectively. Further, the upper portion of each of the tabs 28a and 28b is separated from the related extension 18a or 18b by a cut 32, as seen particularly on Fig. 4, and extends above the upper end of the related slit 30a or 30b when the front panel 14 is in its folded position, so that an interlocking engagement between the tabs 28a and 28b and the slits 30a and 30b, respectively, may be realized.

The extensions 18a and 18b further preferably have score or fold lines 34a and 34b extending outwardly from the upper ends of the fold lines 22a and 22b, respectively, and diverging with respect to the upper edges of the related extensions. Finally, the bottom portion 12 and front flap 14 have two parallel, centrally located

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score or fold lines 36a and 36b extending laterally thereacross, and a tab 38 is struck from the bottom portion 12 at one side of the above mentioned lateral fold lines and is defined by a generally U-shaped cut 40 disposed so that the tab 38 is joined to the remainder of the bottom portion at the end of the tab closest to the lateral fold lines 36a and 36b.

When the backing 10 is to be employed as a part of a package for sliced bacon or the like, several slices of bacon, sufficient to make up a predetermined weight thereof, are arranged in overlapping relation upon the bottom portion 12, and such an arrangement results in a sliced bacon mass of generally rectangular configuration, as viewed from above, substantially covering the bottom portion 12 and having a lateral cross-section which is of substantial thickness at the center and tapers to thin edges at the opposite longitudinal edges of the bottom portion 12. After the mass of sliced bacon has been positioned on the bottom portion 12, the front flap 14 is folded along the line 16 to overlie the front portion of the bacon mass, and then the extensions 18a and 18b are folded upwardly, along the straight fold lines 20a and 20b, and inwardly toward each other, along the arcuate fold lines 22a and 22b, to define generally upstanding end wall panels 24a and 24b and end flaps 26a and 26b (Fig. 2) which overlie substantial end portions of the front flap and of the sliced bacon mass. Since the fold lines 22a and 22b are arcuate, the upper edges of the end wall panels curve downwardly (Fig. 3) from the center and end flaps are similarly contoured thereby to conform relatively closely to the shape of the top surface of the mass of sliced bacon on the bottom portion 12. Further, by reason of the arcuate form of the fold lines 22a and 22b between the end flaps and the end wall panels, the latter are inclined from the vertical toward each other (Fig. 2).

In order to hold the end flaps 26a and 26b in their folded positions covering the end portions of the front flap 14 and of the sliced bacon mass, the tabs 28a and 28b thereof are fitted into, and interlocked with, the slits 30a and 30b, respectively, of the front flap. Since the arcuate form is imposed on each end flap at the arcuate fold line between that end flap and the related end wall panel and only the lower free corner is held down by the engagement of the tab 28a or 28b in the related slit, the tendency of the end flap to return to its original flat condition may cause the upper free corner thereof to stand away from the inclined surface of the sliced bacon mass. In order to overcome this tendency, the upper free corners of the end flaps 26a and 26b may be bent downwardly about the fold lines 34a and 34b to maintain such corners close against the surface of the bacon mass.

After the sliced bacon mass of predetermined weight has been enclosed in the backing 10 in the manner indicated above, an over-wrap 42 (Fig. 5) of thin transparent material may be applied smoothly therearound and secured in a suitable automatic wrapping machine provided for that purpose so that the over-wrap protects the contents while exposing any printed material appearing on the backing. During the storage of the package or the handling thereof in transit to, or at, the point of sale, the backing 10 prevents relative displacement of the several bacon slices and mutilation of the edge portions of the sliced bacon mass. Further, the attachment of the end flaps 26a and 26b to the end wall panels 24a and 24b along the arcuate fold lines 22a and 22b, respectively, that are coextensive with the end flaps and end wall panels provides a smooth end structure that inherently conforms to the sliced bacon mass and facilitates the enclosure within the transparent over-wrap.

When the contents of the backing 10 are to be used, the over-wrap 42 is removed from the package and the tabs 28a and 28b are freed from their respective slits 30a and 30b to permit unfolding of the end flaps and

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front flap of the backing. If any of the sliced bacon remains after initial opening of the package, such remaining bacon can be stored and protected in the backing 10 by again folding the front flap 14 to overlie the bottom portion 12 and resealing the tab 28a of extension 18a in the slit 30a. Thereafter, the bottom portion 12 and front flap 14 are folded about the central, laterally extending fold lines 36a and 36b to superpose the part of the bottom portion 12 appearing to right of such fold lines in Fig. 2 upon the other part of the bottom portion, and then the end flap 26b is folded over that superposed part of the bottom portion and slipped under the tab 38 so that the latter acts to hold the backing 10 in the folded condition of Fig. 4 whereby the remaining sliced bacon is enclosed and protected by the backing 10 in a package of reduced size for convenient storage in a refrigerator or the like.

Although an illustrative embodiment of the invention has been described in detail above and shown in the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to that precise embodiment, and that various changes and modifications may be effected in the latter without departing from the scope or spirit of the invention, except as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A backing of relatively stiff material for use in the packaging of sliced bacon; said backing comprising a generally rectangular bottom portion adapted to receive thereon a mass of bacon slices arranged longitudinally and in edge overlapping relation so that the height of the mass is greatest at the center of said bottom portion and decreases towards the opposite longitudinal edges of the latter, a front flap foldably joined to said bottom portion along one of said longitudinal edges and adapted to overlie the adjacent portion of the sliced bacon mass, end wall panels extending upwardly from the opposite ends of said bottom portion and joined to the latter along straight fold lines defining the bottom edges of said end wall panels and extending across substantially the entire width of said bottom portion, each of said end wall panels having an arcuate, downwardly concave upper edge substantially coextensive with the related bottom edge, and end flaps extending toward each other over said bottom portion from said end wall panels and foldably joined to the latter along substantially the entire lengths of said arcuate upper edges thereby to be flexed into a similar downwardly concave contour for conforming to the upper surface of a mass of bacon slices on said bottom portion and to incline said end wall panels toward each other so that flexing of said end flaps away from said bottom portion is resisted, said bottom portion and front flap having aligned fold lines extending laterally thereacross at central locations to permit the folding of the backing upon itself, and said bottom portion having a tab struck therefrom at a location between said lateral fold lines and one end of said bottom portion so that, when said backing is folded upon itself and the end flap joined to the end wall panel at the other end of said

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bottom portion is disposed over the outside surface of said one end of the bottom portion, said tab struck from the bottom portion can overlie the free end edge of said end flap disposed over the outside surface of said one end of the bottom portion to hold the backing folded upon itself in a condition of reduced size.

2. A backing of relatively stiff material for use in the packaging of sliced bacon; said backing comprising a generally rectangular bottom portion adapted to receive thereon a mass of bacon slices arranged longitudinally and in edge overlapping relation so that the height of the mass is greatest at the center of said bottom portion and decreases towards the opposite longitudinal edges of the latter, a front flap foldably joined to said bottom portion along one of said longitudinal edges and adapted to overlie the adjacent portion of the sliced bacon mass, end wall panels extending upwardly from the opposite ends of said bottom portion and joined to the latter along straight fold lines defining the bottom edges of said end wall panels and extending across substantially the entire width of said bottom portion, each of said end wall panels having an arcuate, downwardly concave upper edge substantially coextensive with the related bottom edge, end flaps extending toward each other over said bottom portion from said end wall panels and foldably joined to the latter along substantially the entire lengths of said arcuate upper edges thereby to be flexed into a similar downwardly concave contour for conforming to the upper surface of a mass of bacon slices on said bottom portion and to incline said end wall panels toward each other so that flexing of said end flaps away from said bottom portion is resisted, and interengageable tab and slit means on said end flaps and front flap operative, when engaged, to hold said end flaps against said front flap for securing a mass of bacon slices against said bottom portion, said bottom portion and front flap having aligned fold lines extending laterally thereacross at central locations to permit the folding of one half of said bottom portion and front flap upon the other half thereof and said bottom portion having a tab struck therefrom at a location within said one half so that, when said bottom portion and front flap are folded along said lateral fold lines and the end flap associated with said other half of the bottom portion has its associated tab and slit means disengaged and is disposed over said one half of the bottom portion with its free end edge tucked under said tab of the bottom portion, said backing is held in a condition of reduced size.

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