

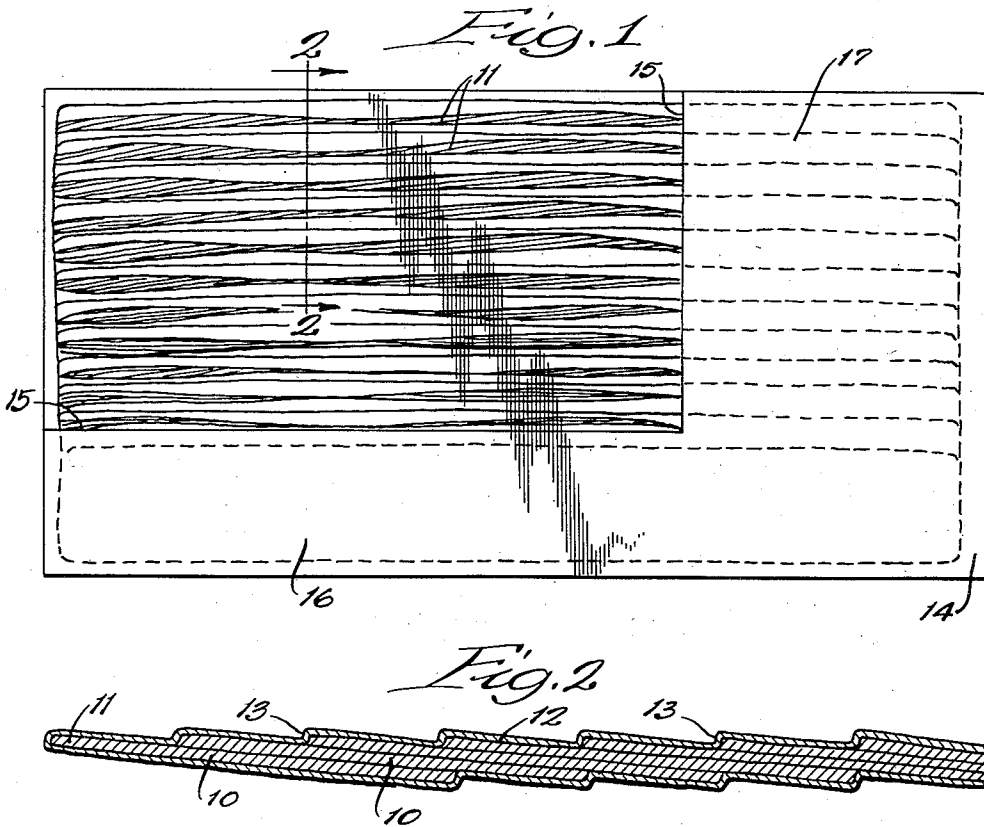
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PACKAGING BACON AND THE LIKE

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PACKAGING BACON AND THE LIKE

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1

This invention relates to the packaging of bacon, and the like, and more particularly to a vacuum-packed bacon package. It will be understood that the invention is applicable to sliced products other than bacon, but for the purpose of clarity, the invention herein will be described in connection with the packaging of bacon.

In the display and sale of bacon, it is important for the purchaser to be able to see the relative proportions of the lean meat and the fat meat, and also in the using up of the packaged material, it is highly desirable for the user to be able to withdraw one slice or more at a time without disturbing the remaining slices.

How to arrange bacon slices so that they will be visible for inspection without opening the package and while at the same time providing a relatively stiff package which may be handled readily by the purchaser, presents a problem which, up to the present time, has not been solved. The bacon slices are usually stacked one upon the other, and in such packages, only the exterior slices are visible for examination. If the slices are placed in a shingle arrangement, the slices are too flexible and the material too loosely held to permit handling. The slices promptly get out of order and the package becomes unattractive. Separation of the slices at a later stage is rendered difficult because of the disalignment.

An object of the present invention is to provide a package and a method of packaging which will permit bacon slices, and the like, to be arranged in staggered relation in a transparent container, so that each of the slices has the lean portion thereof exposed, while at the same time locking the slices together in a container in such a manner that the thin resulting package is relatively stiff and may be handled readily without dislodging the slices within the package. Yet, another object is to provide a package for bacon slices, and the like, which permits removal of slices from the package without disturbing the other slices and while providing a relatively thin and stiff package in which the material enclosing the slices includes thin transparent sheet material. Other specific objects and advantages will appear as the specification proceeds.

The invention is illustrated, in a single embodiment, by the accompanying drawing in which—

Figure 1 is a top plan view of a package illustrating my invention and with which my improved method may be employed; and Fig. 2, a transverse detail sectional view, the section being taken as indicated at line 2 of Fig. 1.

2

In the illustration given, 10 designates slices of bacon which are arranged in overlapping or "shingled" relation, with the lean meat portion 11 exposed on the top side by the shingle arrangement. With this arrangement, the amount of lean meat in each bacon slice is rendered visible but the thin slice arrangement is highly pliable and the meat cannot be handled effectively.

The bacon arranged as described above, is placed within a pouch 12 of transparent material, such as, for example, a transparent film from chlorinated rubber, a cellulose film, etc. It will be obvious that a large number of transparent type of materials may be employed. I prefer to use a transparent material which may be heat sealed.

The bacon slices in the shingle formation illustrated, may be introduced within the pouch in any suitable way. If desired, the method and means illustrated in the co-pending application Serial No. 742,509 for Pouch-packaging device may be used.

After the bacon slices have been placed within the pouch, the open end of the pouch is connected with a suitable source of vacuum to extract the air and the end of the package is heat sealed so as to leave the interior of the package subject to the imposed vacuum. The subsection of the pouch to vacuum results in the walls of the pouch forming a sharp stepped arrangement about each edge of the bacon slices. As shown more clearly in Fig. 2, the pouch wall has a vertical stepped portion 13 at each edge of the bacon slices, and this shoulder forms a lock against the bacon slice edge. Thus, the bacon slices are prevented from sliding relative to each other and, in addition, the offset portions 13, which extend across the entire length of the package, provide, in effect, vertical ribs which resist bending of the slices and result in a relatively rigid package, which can be handled very much like a board or rigid flat object.

While the package is formed of thin and flexible material, and while the bacon slices are also highly flexible, nevertheless, the effect of the vacuum in conjunction with the bending of the pouch walls to give the above mentioned ribbing effect, produces a tight and relatively stiff package.

When it is desired to open the package to use the same, one corner of the package may be clipped away as, for example, at the corner indicated by the numeral 14, and the slice adjacent the opened corner may be drawn out of the package. The remaining slices will remain intact within the package and may be removed

3

one-by-one as needed and by extending the tear of the corner upwardly.

It will be understood that the package may be formed in any desired manner. In the specific illustration given in Fig. 1, the back of the package and the front portion of the package within the lines 15 are left transparent so that the bacon slices can be observed. The lower portion of the front side of the package, as indicated by the numeral 16, and also the outer edge portion 17 may be covered with opaque material for receiving printed matter, etc. It is sufficient for the purposes of the invention that portions of the bacon slices be exposed so that the customer can directly observe the portion of lean meat on the slices and, further, that the package be sealed under vacuum so that the interlock between the bacon corners and the vertical pouch wall portions will be effective in providing the necessary rigidity for the package.

The package is particularly effective in the packaging of bacon because the thin flat slices of bacon have great cohesive attraction for each other, and upon the fitting of the flexible pouch walls about the overlapping cohering strips, an extremely rigid or stiff package is obtained.

While in the foregoing specification, I have set forth a description of the process and product in great detail for the purpose of illustrating one mode of using the invention, it will be understood that such details of operation and structure may be varied widely by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of my invention.

I claim:

1. A package of the character set forth, comprising thin flat strips of flexible material in edge-overlapping relation, a flexible pouch enclosing the strips in said relation and sealed, the walls of the pouch fitting about the corners of the strips and forming longitudinally-extending stiffening ribs for the package.

2. A package of the character set forth, comprising thin flat strips of flexible material arranged in edge-overlapping relation, a transparent flexible pouch enclosing the same and sealed, the walls of the pouch fitting about the corners of the strips and forming longitudinal stiffening ribs for the package, said pouch being substantially free of air.

3. A bacon package of the character set forth, comprising slices of bacon arranged in edge-overlapping relation, a flexible pouch enclosing the

4

same and sealed, the walls of the pouch fitting closely about the corners of the slices to form longitudinal stiffening ribs for the package, said pouch being substantially free of air.

4. A bacon package of the character set forth, comprising bacon slices arranged in edge-overlapping formation with the lean meat edges exposed from the upper side, a flexible pouch having a transparent portion through which said slices are visible enclosing the same, said pouch being sealed, and the walls of the pouch fitting closely about the corners of the slices to form stiffening ribs extending across the package and locking the slices against lateral displacement.

5. In a method of the character set forth for packaging sliced bacon, the steps of arranging the bacon slices in edge-overlapping relation, introducing the slices, so arranged, into a flexible pouch open at one end, evacuating the pouch, and sealing the pouch while the same is in evacuated condition.

6. A method of packaging sliced bacon, comprising arranging the bacon slices in edge-overlapping relation, introducing the slices, so arranged, into a flexible transparent pouch open at least at one end, evacuating the pouch, and sealing the pouch to render it airtight while the same is in evacuated condition, and in which the pouch walls form elongated reinforcing ribs about the bacon strip edges.

7. In a method of the character set forth for packaging sliced bacon, the steps of arranging the bacon slices in edge-overlapping formation, introducing the slices, so arranged, into a relatively flat flexible pouch open at one end and having a transparent wall portion, evacuating the pouch, and sealing the pouch in evacuated condition to draw the pouch walls tightly around the edges of the bacon slices.

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