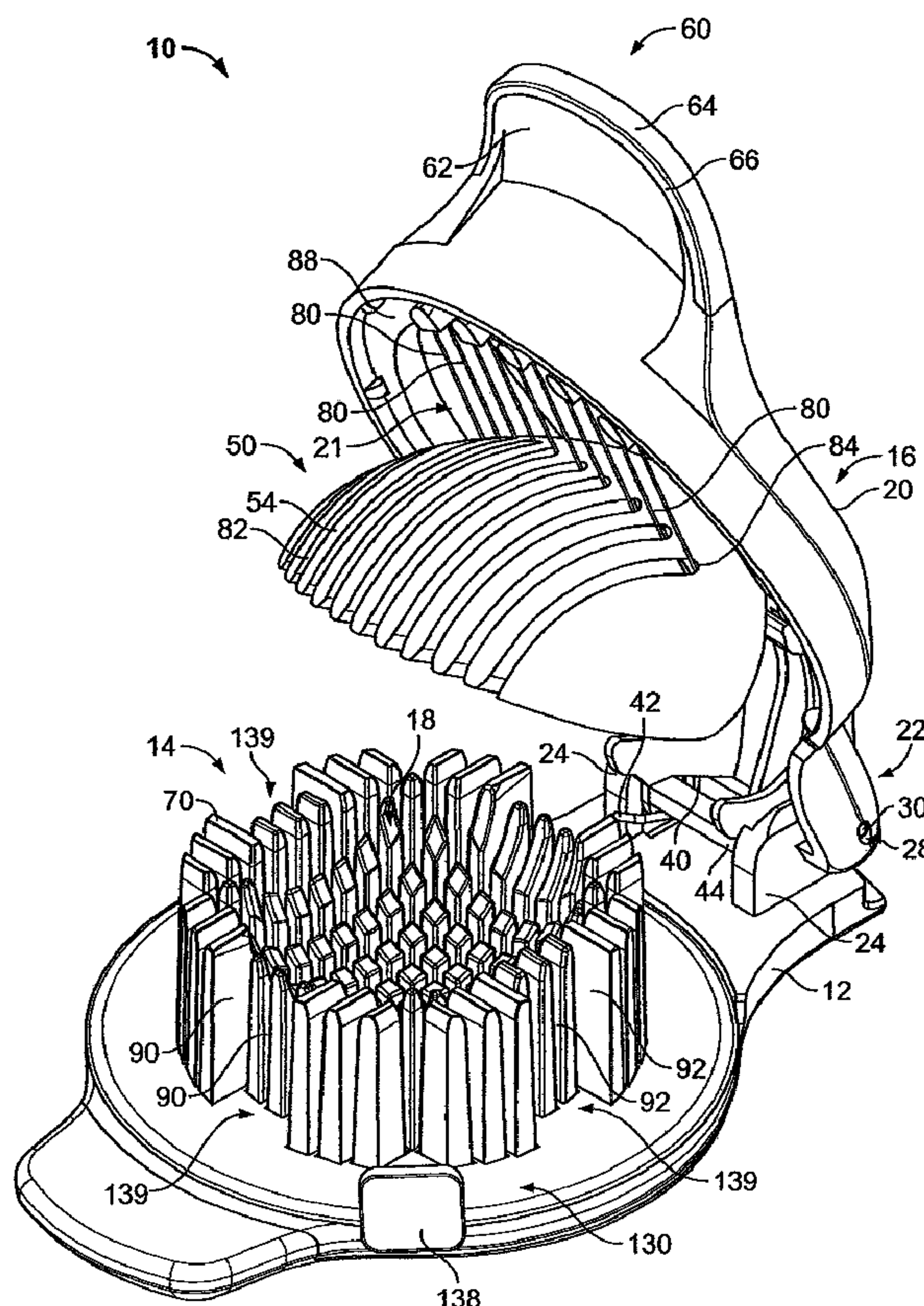




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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

An apparatus for partitioning a food mass, such as a solidified egg, is disclosed including a base, a holder for supporting the food mass, and a plurality of cutting members for partitioning the food mass, wherein the holder is rotatable to permit the cutting

(57) **Abrégé(suite)/Abstract(continued):**

members to partition the food mass in a first orientation and in a second orientation. The apparatus further includes a retainer positionable on a top surface of the food mass having passageways permitting the cutting members to pass through a portion thereof. The apparatus may include a cleaning plate receivable by portions of the holder in a position below the food mass, the cleaning plate being removable from the holder to remove food matter from between the support portions. The apparatus may include a lock for securing apparatus in a closed or lowest position for storage.

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EGG SLICER

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a device for slicing food and, in particular, to a device for cubing a solidified egg having a cleaning plate and a holder for restraining the
5 cut egg portions.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Currently, a variety of devices are known for cutting a solidified egg. As used herein, a solidified egg is an egg that has been heated so that the yolk and white have become a solidified mass and that has had the shell removed. Typically, a
10 solidified egg is an egg that has been hard-boiled and then de-shelled so that the white, and yolk therein, can be handled as a mass. Devices for slicing the solidified egg, referred to as egg slicers, are used to divide the solidified egg so that egg portions may be used in recipes or salads. An egg slicer may be preferred to hand-cutting the egg as a cleaner and simpler method with greater precision. As a convention used herein, the
15 term egg mass refers to the entire solidified egg without the shell, and egg portion refers to a cut or sliced piece of the solidified egg.

[0003] There are numerous configurations for egg slicers. Some of these egg slicers provide a first set of cutting members, either blades or wires, that are pivotally attached to a base holder on which the egg mass rests. This allows the egg mass to be cut into
20 strips or sections along one axis of the egg. In order to provide a cubing feature, some egg slicers further include a second set of cutting members, also pivotally attached to the

base holder. After the first set of cutting members passes through the egg mass, the second set is then used to cut the strips into egg cubes. It should be noted that the term cube as used herein is imprecise as the two sets of cutting members make orthogonal cuts in a substantially vertical direction, though no cutting members are employed to make a third cut in the horizontal direction. One problem with these devices is that two sets of blades or cutting members are required, which makes the egg slicer more expensive to manufacture and increases the amount of labor in cleaning the device.

[0004] One alternative to the paired sets of cutting members is to have a single set of cutting members with orthogonally arranged blades. In essence, the two cutting members of the other cubing egg slicers combined into a single set. In one pass, the egg mass is cut lengthwise and widthwise to form the cubes. However, this forces a user to cube the egg and prevents the user from selecting egg slices.

[0005] An issue common to each of the cubing egg slicers is that there is no structure to restrain the egg slices after the first cut has been made. Thus, after the first cut is made, the egg portions tend to fall or list away from each other. A user may have to collect these after the cutting. Additionally, when transporting the egg portions from the slicer to a serving dish, for instance, one must be careful when grasping multiple egg portions at a time, which are fragile and the yolk portion may fall away from the white portion if not properly supported. Furthermore, slicers employing a pair of sets of cutting members may require a user to manually hold the egg slices upward while the other set of cutting members is brought into contact with the egg portions.

[0006] It is common for the base holder, the portion that supports the food or egg mass, to have recesses or slots for receiving the cutting members. This allows the cutting member, whether it be a wire or a blade, to pass all the way through the egg or food mass.

However, it is equally as common for some of the egg mass to be separated from the egg portions and driven into the holder slots. This can make clean up difficult as the egg may become pressed into the slot.

[0007] Accordingly, there has been a need for an improved device or apparatus for partitioning an egg or other food mass, such as an egg slicer.

SUMMARY

10 [0008] In accordance with an aspect, an apparatus for partitioning a food mass, such as a solidified egg, is disclosed including a base, a holder for supporting the food mass on the base, the holder being connected to the base, and a plurality of cutting members movable relative to the holder for partitioning the food mass, wherein the holder is rotatable to and between at least a first position and a second position relative to the

15 cutting members, the first position permitting the cutting members to partition the food mass in a first orientation and the second position permitting the cutting members to partition the food mass in a second orientation different from the first orientation.

[0009] In one form, the apparatus includes a cutting frame pivotally connected to the base, wherein the cutting members are substantially elongated in a parallel relationship

20 and supported by the cutting frame. The first position may be a predetermined position, and the second position may be a predetermined position. The holder may include a first

set of recesses or channels permitting the cutting members to be received therein with the holder in the first position, and a second set of recess channels permitting the cutting members to be received therein with the holder in the second position. The holder may have a top surface contoured for receiving the food mass, and the top surface may
5 provide a specific orientation for the food mass relative to the holder.

[0010] The apparatus may further include a retainer positionable on a top surface of the food mass supported by the holder. The retainer may include recesses or passageways permitting the cutting members to pass through a portion thereof.

[0011] The apparatus may further include a cleaning member or plate. To
10 accommodate the cleaning plate, the holder may include a plurality of support portions extending upwardly to support the food mass thereon, the cleaning member being receivable between the support portions in a position below the food mass, and the cleaning member being removable from the holder to remove food matter from between the support portions.

15 [0012] In another aspect of the invention, an apparatus for partitioning a food mass is disclosed including a base, a holder for supporting the food mass on the base, the holder being connected to the base, a plurality of cutting members movable relative to the holder for partitioning the food mass, and a retainer movable relative to the holder, the retainer positionable on a top surface of the food mass supported by the holder.

20 [0013] The apparatus may further include a cutting frame, wherein the cutting members are substantially elongated in a parallel relationship and supported by the

cutting frame, and the retainer and cutting frame are pivotally connected to the base. The retainer and cutting frame may rotate relative to the holder and around a common axis or axle. The retainer and the cutting frame may be pivotally movable relative to each other between a normal rest condition and a cutting condition. The apparatus may also include
5 bias structure resiliently urging the retainer and the cutting frame to their normal rest condition.

[0014] The retainer may include retainer recesses or passages permitting the cutting members to pass through a portion thereof. The retainer recesses may be elongated slots or passageways, and the cutting members are biased into the slots and movable from the
10 slots for partitioning the food mass supported by the holder.

[0015] In a further aspect, an apparatus including a lock for securing the retainer against the holder and for securing the cutting frame relative to the retainer is disclosed.

[0016] In another aspect, an apparatus for partitioning a food mass is disclosed including a base, a holder for supporting the food mass on the base, the holder being
15 connected to the base, a plurality of cutting members movable relative to the holder for partitioning the food mass, and a cleaning member or plate, wherein the holder includes a plurality of support portions extending upwardly to support the food mass thereon, the cleaning member being receivable between the support portions in a position below the food mass, and the cleaning member being removable from the holder to remove food
20 matter from between the support portions.

[0024] Fig. 7 is a perspective view of the bottom side of the holder;

[0025] Fig. 8 is a perspective view of a top side of a base of the egg slicer of Fig. 1;

[0026] Fig. 9 is a top plan view of the base of Fig. 8;

[0027] Fig. 10 is a bottom plan view of a frame of a slicing mechanism of the egg
5 slicer of Fig. 1;

[0028] Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a cleaning plate of the egg slicer of Fig. 1;

[0029] Fig. 12 is an enlarged plan view of the cleaning plate of Fig. 11;

[0030] Fig. 13 is a perspective view of a retainer of the egg slicer of Fig. 1;

[0031] Fig. 14 is a cross-sectional side view of the egg slicer in the open position of
10 Fig. 1;

[0032] Fig. 15 is a view in cross-section taken from a first side of the egg slicer in the
lowest position of Fig. 3;

[0033] Fig. 16 is a view in cross-section similar to Fig. 15 and taken from a second
side of the egg slicer in the lowest position;

15 [0034] Fig. 17 is a side elevation view of a locking member of the egg slicer of Fig.
1;

[0035] Fig. 18 is a perspective view of a second form of an egg slicer of the present
invention in a closed or lowest position;

described systems and techniques that fall within the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

