

March 28, 1967

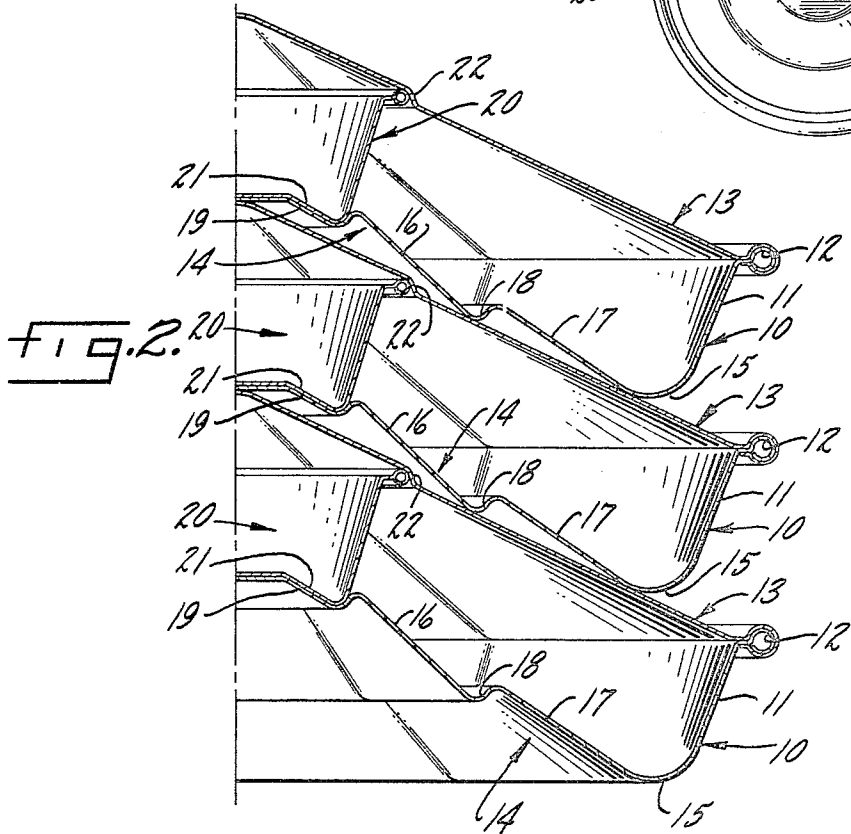
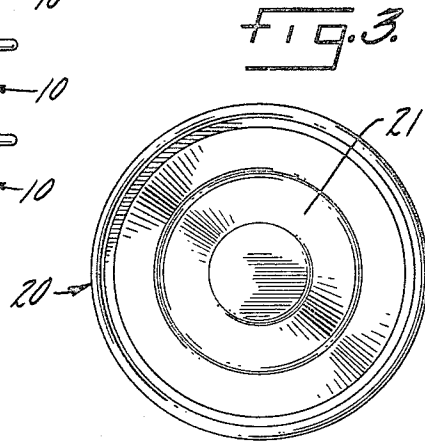
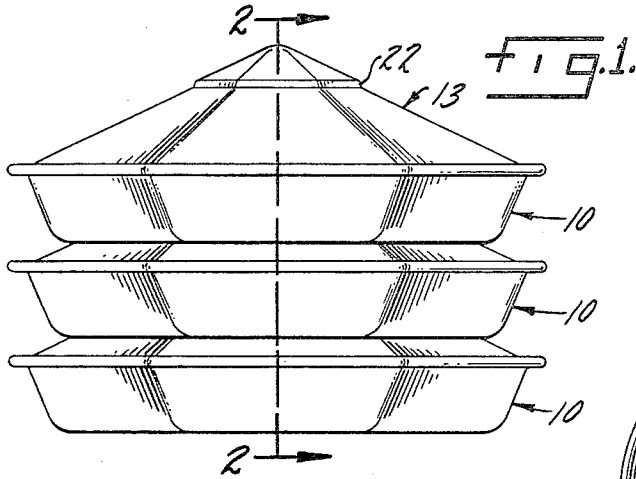
R. L. CRAIG

3,311,258

NESTABLE CONTAINER

Filed Dec. 18, 1964

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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fig. 4.

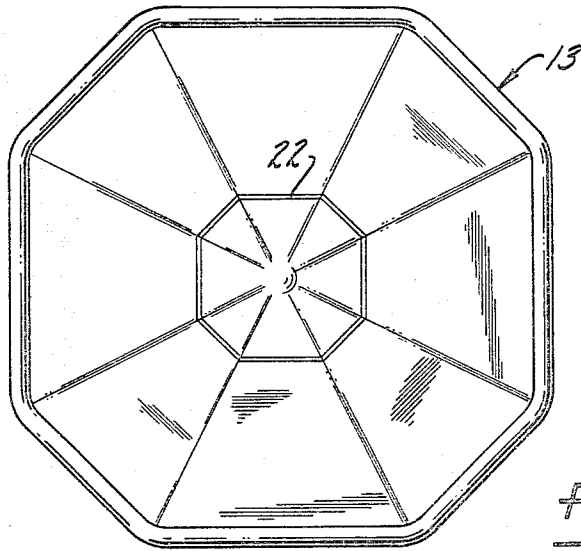
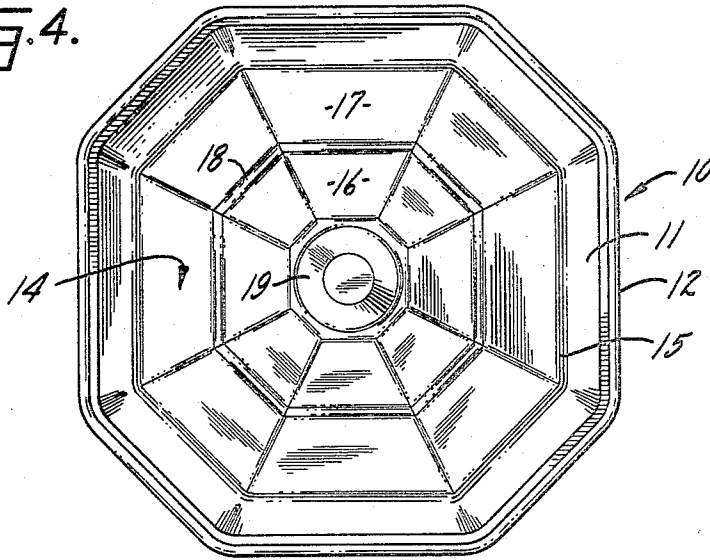


fig. 5.

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3,311,258

**NESTABLE CONTAINER**

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**3 Claims. (Cl. 220-97)**

This invention relates to a package for foods and the like and more particularly to a novel nestable container comprising a cover, dish and cup which may be optionally enclosed for packaging, displaying and serving a multiple ingredient or combination food.

With increasing consumer demand for convenience foods, there is a demand on the part of food processors for enticing, convenient and economical packages therefore.

Many foods, and particularly gourmet and party snacks, which are suitably pre-processed for convenient home use are packaged in cartons which are somewhat unhandy to open; which require removal of the contents and transfer to a suitable utensil for heating, or other preparation; and which must then be removed to still another plate or bowl for serving. Thus, some of the advantage (to the consumer) normally expected in purchasing of pre-processed convenience foods is lost when the packaging is unattractive and inconvenient.

Some pre-processed foods such as hors d'oeuvres, casserole-type products, and complete dinners are now packaged in metal foil or other heat-resistant containers which can be heated in the oven, but such containers are generally not attractive enough for use on a buffet, or serving tray. Moreover, where the food product is one which is to be served with a sauce, gravy or dip of some sort, it is the common practice to enclose the ingredients in separate packages, to be kept separate until served.

In attempting to meet the diverse packaging requirements of food processors, it is necessary to bear in mind the importance of how the packages will be handled, and displayed so as to insure maximum visual appeal to customers. It is an advantage in this regard that the packages be suitable for vertical stacking wherever a store may elect to stock them.

It is a principal object of my invention to provide an eye appealing food package which may be heated or otherwise handled in the home kitchen without removing the contents, which permits enclosing a sauce, gravy or dip (in whole or concentrated form) in the same package without risk, during handling or heating, of spillage or inadvertent inter-mixing, and which is sufficiently appealing and attractive to permit the consumer to feel secure in serving the contents directly from the original container, even to the most discriminating guest.

It is another object of my invention to provide a package meeting these requirements and which can be vertically stacked and thus displayed advantageously in any of the display cabinets and freezers commonly used in grocery stores and super markets, such as vertical cabinets and deep well freezers.

It is a further object of my invention, related to the foregoing, to provide a container of this type which can be nestably stacked with similar containers to a considerable height without risk of lateral displacement and which has sufficient inherent strength to resist deformation or crushing.

It is a still further object of my invention to offer a package which is distinguished by its unusual and attractive appearance; which has large areas for graphic advertising and product identification and which is shaped to permit maximum label visibility when viewed either from above, such as when it is stored in a deep well freezer, or

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from the side, such as when it is stored on a shelf in a vertical display cabinet.

The foregoing and other objects are accomplished as hereinafter described, reference being had to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a side view of three exemplary crown-shaped containers embodying my invention as shown in vertically stacked relation;

FIGURE 2 is a view on the line 2-2 of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is a top view of the separate enclosable cup feature of my exemplary container;

FIGURE 4 is a plan view of the bottom portion of my exemplary container; and

FIGURE 5 is a plan view of the cover portion of said container.

Referring now to the drawings, the bottom portion or dish of my container is designated generally by the reference numeral 10. The bottom portion 10 is formed of a suitable metal foil, plastic or other heat resistant material. In the preferred embodiment shown in FIGURE 1, it is substantially octagonal, although I anticipate that it may be formed in a variety of round or geometric designs, without departing from the spirit and scope of my invention.

In the disclosed embodiment, the bottom 10 is conveniently of a unitary construction having an upturned outer wall 11 which rises upwardly, slanting outwardly (from the bottom wall thereof), terminating at its top edge, preferably in an outward curl defining a rim 12. The rim 12 surrounds the side wall portion 10 and provides reinforcing to preserve the shape of the container, while serving as a decorative edge, and as an extension to which the cover 13 can be readily secured.

A floor or bottom wall designated 14 of the bottom portion 10 is conveniently joined peripherally to the outer wall 11 by means of softly rounded foot portions 15. The floor 14, in the embodiment shown, is recessed upwardly and inwardly in a generally truncated pyramidal form with an upper octagonal tier 16 and a lower octagonal tier 17, each composed of polygonal panels, the respective tiers 16 and 17 being suitably joined by a more sharply rounded foot or step 18.

In keeping with one aspect of the invention, a seat 19 having a frusto-conical cross section is provided at the top of the pyramidal floor 14, for the purpose of receiving a separate cup member, where desired. In this instance, a circular cup 20 is shown. The cup is provided with a complementary frusto-conical bottom 21 so that it will nest securely on the seat and resist displacement therefrom. The cup is a convenient receptacle for a dip, sauce or other ingredient complementing the main course contained in the main container portion. Where the cup is to be omitted, the seat 19 may also be omitted, and the floor 14 would thus rise to an apex.

Further in keeping with the invention, a novel, yet utilitarian cover 13 is provided. The cover 13 is preferably of metal foil material although it may, of course, be made of other sheet material suited to the particular requirements of the product packaged in this container. For example, this container is suitable for use with food products which require heating in the container before serving. If the cover 13 is to remain in place during heating, it should therefore be of material which can be heated. If the contents are to be heated after opening, a heavy paper or other sheet material could be used.

Preferably, the cover 13 is formed to conform generally to the configuration of the bottom of the dish portion 10.

Thus, an eight-sided generally pyramidal form is provided as shown in FIGURES 1 and 5. The apex of the pyramidal cover 13 is slightly elevated with a somewhat annular offset 22 which is of approximately the same

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dimension as the top of the cup 20 and engages same when the cover 13 is in place on the bottom 10. The cover has a peripheral sealing portion which is engaged with the curled rim 12 as shown in FIGURE 2 by being wrapped therearound in sealed relation.

The relatively shallow, octagonal-shaped pyramidal cover 13 has, in the exemplary form shown, eight triangular panels which are well-suited to being pre-printed with graphics featuring the brand name and advertising the product. A decorative design having no apparent advertising function might also be used.

Further in keeping with the invention, the cup is capped by the cover 13. Referring to FIGURE 2, the rim of the cup engages the offset 22 of the cover, thereby isolating the contents of the cup from the remainder of the container. The package may be tipped or turned, therefore, without inter-mixing of the separate contents.

The corresponding shape of the cover 13 and bottom 10 permits convenient stacking of one crown-shaped container in nested relation with another. The foot 18 would rest, as seen in FIGURE 2, on the cover just below the edge of the annular offset 22. The presence of the rim of the cup at this point adds additional rigidity to the cover. Likewise, the foot 15 rests on the cover of the container below it for added support.

If the stacks of such packages are stored at the grocery in a deep well cabinet, shoppers can view them readily from above. Such packages present an unusually distinctive and attractive physical appearance and offer unusually broad opportunity for imaginative promotional printing on the cover. The exemplary container shown, e.g., resembles an oriental pagoda. If stacked on shelves in a vertical freezer, such containers are more readily recognized and read than flat top containers, particularly if the stacks are at or near eye level.

Successive layers of crown-shaped containers resist accidental displacement because of this nesting relationship as shown in FIGURE 2. Unlike flat containers which may slide and turn laterally in a display cabinet, the crown-shaped containers maintain a neat, presentable stacked appearance because of concave container bottoms resting on complementary convex covers. The polygonal shape of the complementary bottoms and covers helps resist turning of one package with respect to another.

The contact points for the exemplary containers shown in the preferred embodiment are at the apex and at two concentric and substantially annular locations where the base 15 and the step 18 rest on the cover 13 of the next lower package. The limited contact resists any tendency of the packages to stick together.

The rounded bottom feature of this container facilitates handling both in the store and in the home since the fingers fit naturally into the rounded area and permit a firm grip in combination with the thumb.

While I have shown and described my crown-shaped container in a preferred octagonal form, I have in mind that it lends itself to a variety of modified crown shapes utilizing other polygonal and geometric patterns, the scope of this invention being determined by the appended claims.

I claim as my invention:

1. A polygonal shaped nestable container comprising,

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in combination, a dish portion formed with a bottom wall having an obliquely extending side wall thereabout, said bottom wall being recessed inwardly in steps, the inner one of which terminates in a relatively shallow central portion, a cover portion having a peripheral edge adapted to be sealingly engaged with said dish portion and extending upwardly from said peripheral edge in tiered fashion, terminating at an apex, said cover being so constructed as to nest within the recess formed in the dish portion so as to permit nesting stacking of successive sealed containers, and a smaller, inner cup having a bottom portion adapted to rest within said receptacle upon said shallow central portion, and having side walls extending upwardly so as to engage the inner peripheral edge of the upper tier of said cover, whereby said cup is held securely within said nestable container when said cover is in place, the contents thereof being sealed within said cup by said cover.

2. A generally octagonally shaped nestable container comprising, in combination, a dish portion formed with a bottom wall having a softly rounded peripheral edge terminating in an obliquely upwardly extending side wall, said bottom wall being recessed inwardly in a series of stepped tiers, the inner tier being of a generally truncated conical configuration; a cover portion having a peripheral edge adapted to be sealingly engaged with the edge of said side wall of said dish portion and extending upwardly and inwardly from said peripheral edge in tiered fashion, terminating at an apex, said cover being formed to complement said recessed bottom wall so as to be nestable within said recess, thereby permitting nesting stacking of successive containers, and a separable, generally circular, cup having a bottom portion adapted to rest within said containers upon said inner tier of said recessed bottom portion, said cup having side walls extending upwardly so as to sealingly engage the inner peripheral edge of the upper tier of said cover, whereby said container is held securely within said nestable container when said cover is in place.

3. A generally octagonally shaped nestable container comprising in combination, a dish portion formed with a bottom wall having a softly rounded peripheral edge terminating in an obliquely upwardly extending side wall, said bottom wall being recessed inwardly in a series of stepped tiers, the inner tier being of a generally truncated conical configuration; a cover portion having a peripheral edge adapted to be sealingly engaged with the edge of said side wall of said dish portion and extending upwardly and inwardly from said peripheral edge in tiered fashion, terminating at an apex, said cover being formed to complement said recessed bottom wall so as to be nestable within said recess, thereby permitting nesting stacking of successive containers.

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