INTRODUCED IN SANDWICH PACKING

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ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to improvements related to sandwich packing to reduce costs and to make more practical and hygienic the consumption of food. The packing has a superior housing (2) and an inferior housing (3) coupled together by an inferior male lip (4) and a superior female lip (5) which are interrupted, but joined together, by a flexible fold (6). The inferior part (3) has a cut line (7) to allow its division in two parts (3A and 3B). When joined, the superior and inferior housings form a similar contour of a sandwich.
INTRODUCED IN SANDWICH PACKING
CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS


FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to improvements in the packing industry. Specifically, the invention concerns improvements in food packaging which reduces costs and makes the consumption food a more practical and hygienic process for the user.


[0004] The food packaging industry is concerned with the packaging of food products in a manner which permits food to be isolated from the environment prior to consumption. Additionally, food products must be maintained in a package which can be easily opened prior to consumption. Still further, there has been a long held concern as to the use of a food package which maintains the food in a somewhat sanitary environment while the food is being consumed. Specifically, the present invention discloses a sandwich packing that can easily be transported while preserving the integrity of the sandwich. Additionally, the present invention obviates the need for a napkin to hold the sandwich as it is consumed.

[0005] The present invention discloses a special packing made from a low density polyethylene, and inert and recyclable material used in food packaging, that is formed in substantially the same external shape as the sandwich being packaged. The sandwich packaging of the present invention is made of two housings joined to each other by a flexible fold. Each of the two housings are snapfitted together by complimentary fittings. The lower housing contains a single perforated cut line to allow for the division of the lower housing of the packaging into two parts as the food product contained therein is consumed.

[0006] In this way, the consumer can eat the sandwich in a controlled manner by removing the superior housing from the lower housing, holding the lower housing, and removing part of the lower housing in a piece-meal fashion as the food product is consumed. Such a configuration has the benefit of keeping the consumer from making direct hand to sandwich contact as the food product is consumed.

[0007] 2. Prior Art

[0008] As is currently with the conventional sandwich packaging, the sandwich, or food product, is typically packaged in a standard box, such as a tongue and groove box, for transport of the food product from the food counter to the consumer's table. While the typical sandwich box is generally suitable for transportation purposes, the typical sandwich box has a restricted usefulness insomuch as the standard box does nothing to improve the hygienic problems associated with food consumption. Moreover, the typical sandwich box has no other function other than to cover a food product in transit. Once a sandwich is removed from the standard box, the box has completed its function and actually becomes a detriment to the consumer of the food product since the standard box takes up space on the consumer's table.

[0009] When a consumer removes a sandwich from the standard sandwich box, the consumer will sometimes want to hold the sandwich with a napkin. This practice is generally invoked to keep the consumer's hands clean and to keep the consumer from directly contacting the food product to be consumed. More often than not, a consumer will experience some difficulty in maintaining the integrity of the sandwich while simultaneously attempting to grasp the sandwich from the typical sandwich box with a napkin without touching the food product directly. As a consequence of this situation, the consumer will inevitably have to use his or her hands to keep the sandwich from falling apart.

[0010] In many cases, the consumer will simply remove the sandwich from the typical sandwich box with his or her hands and then hold it with a napkin. This practice is unsanitary and defeats the purpose of holding the food product with a napkin. This is especially true if the consumer failed to wash his or her hands prior to eating the sandwich. Not only does the typical sandwich box fail to make food consumption more sanitary, it fails to prevent the sandwich from falling apart in the consumer's hands and does nothing to prevent the consumer from coming in contact with sauces and greases which can leak from a food product.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] It is an object of the invention to provide a sanitary packaging for food products prior to and during the consumption of the food product.

[0012] It is another object of the invention to provide a food packaging which contains the food product and permits the user to easily remove a section of the housing of the food packaging to expose a further section of the food wherein the user can hold a portion of the housing and consume the exposed portion of the food product.

[0013] It is another object of the invention to provide a food packaging having an internal contour adapted to match the shape of the food product.

[0014] It is another object of the invention to produce a food packaging container having a superior and inferior housing which may be removed each from the other.

[0015] It is another object of the invention to provide a inferior housing having a single perforated cut line which divides the inferior housing into two parts to allow the user to grasp one division part and consume an exposed portion of the food product contained within the container.

[0016] It is still another object of the invention to provide a food packaging which has a truncated contour providing a flat base to permit the container to be positioned in an upright manner.

[0017] It is another object of the invention to provide a food packaging which has a lip on the superior and inferior housings to allow for the removable opening and closing of the food packaging.

[0018] It is still another object of the invention to provide a notch in the inferior housing to permit easy tearing of the single perforated cut line.

[0019] In order to provide these objectives, the sandwich packaging for containing a food product has a superior housing defining a superior chamber adapted for at least partial enclosure of a food product. An inferior housing defines an inferior chamber adapted for at least partial enclosure of a food product, wherein the superior chamber and the inferior chamber are contoured to matingly engage each other and the food product. The superior housing has a superior female lip and the inferior housing has an inferior male lip, with the superior female lip, formed for matingly engaging the inferior male lip, is at a fitting section of the superior and inferior housings. The inferior housing has a single perforated line.
intersecting the inferior male lip and passing through a sidewall of the inferior housing for releasing a first section of the sidewall to expose at least a portion of the food product contained therein when the inferior housing is separated from the superior housing.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

[0028] Referring now to FIG. 1, there is shown the schematic representation of sandwich package 1 shown in separate parts as defined by superior housing 2 and inferior housing 3. As is seen in FIG. 1, a food product 20, such as a hamburger, may be inserted within inferior housing 3. As is shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, inferior housing 3 is mounted in fixed relation to superior housing 2 to form a complete enclosure for food product 20 prior to a user ingesting or using sandwich package 1.

[0029] As is further seen in FIG. 1, superior housing 2 defines a superior chamber 28 within which food product 20 may be inserted. Inferior housing 3 correspondingly provides for an inferior chamber 26 which is adapted to at least partially enclosed food product 20 when superior housing 2 and inferior housing 3 are mounted in fixed relation, each to the other, and enclosing food product 20.

[0030] Superior chamber 28 and inferior chamber 26 are contoured to matingly engage each other and food product 20. When superior housing 2 and inferior housing 3 are engaged, they form a complete enclosure over food product 20, which may be a hamburger, having a substantially cylindrical contour.

[0031] As further can be seen in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4, inferior housing 3 takes the form of a semicircular cross-sectional contour having an arcutely contoured outer wall 30. Similarly, superior housing 2 includes a substantially semicircular cross-sectionally contoured outer wall 32 to form a substantially rectangular contoured cross-sectional design in a vertical direction. In this manner, food product 20 may be inserted into sandwich package 1 and provide a nested enclosure area prior to the removal of inferior housing 3 from superior housing 2.

[0032] Additionally, inferior housing 3 includes a base surface 8 and superior housing 2 includes a similarly formed flat base surface 8′ to permit sandwich package 1 to be placed on a flat surface without the probability of the sandwich package 1 rolling on a base surface.

[0033] As can be seen in FIGS. 1, 3 and 4, inferior housing 3 includes a single perforated cutline 7 passing through a side wall of the inferior housing 3. Tearing of the single perforated cutline 7 provides for an inferior division part 3A and an inferior division part 3B. The single perforated cut line 7 allows a user to tear along the single perforated cutline 7 of the inferior housing 3 to expose a portion of food product 20 while a food product 20 is being consumed.

[0034] FIG. 2 clearly shows a user’s hand 34 holding a torn portion of inferior housing 3 subsequent to the removal of inferior division part 3B from inferior division part 3A. In this manner, a user may initially maintain inferior housing 3 in a one-piece integral portion while eating the top half of the food product 20 and then tear inferior division part 3B from inferior division part 3A to expose a further portion of food product for subsequent ingestion.

[0035] In this manner, a user may substantially ingest all of food product 20 without, in fact, touching, and therefore, contaminating food product 20 with the user's hand 34.

[0036] Inferior housing 3 includes inferior male lip 4 which extends entirely around the perimeter of inferior housing 3 as is seen in FIGS. 1, 3, 4 and 6.

[0037] Inferior male lip 4 includes a notch section 22 formed substantially central to the transverse dimensions of inferior housing 3. Notch 22 as shown in FIGS. 1 and 3, is aligned in the vertical direction with single perforated cutline 7. In this manner, notch 22 may be used by the user to easily insert the user's finger to aid in tearing along the single perforated cutline 7 to expose a quadrant of food product 20 which has not yet been consumed as is further seen in FIG. 2.

[0038] Superior housing 2 has a protrusion 24 which is mounted over inferior male lip 4 and includes the superior female lip 5 extending around the perimeter of superior housing 2.

[0039] The protrusion 24 is clearly seen in schematic FIG. 1, as well as FIGS. 3 and 4. When mounted each to the other, inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2 are located at a fitting level location 9 forming sandwich package 1 into a unitary enclosure.

[0040] Superior female lip 5 is inserted into inferior male lip 4, as can clearly be seen in FIG. 7, when inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2 are joined each to the other to form an enclosure for food product 20. In particular, the fitting level 9 is shown in FIG. 8 where the superior female lip 5 has inserted therein a portion of the inferior male lip 4. In this manner, inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2 may be snapingly connected each to the other.

[0041] As is clearly seen in FIGS. 4 and 6, sandwich package 1 may have a connecting tab 6 which joins inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2 at a peripheral location as shown in FIG. 3 and FIG. 6. Opposing ends of connecting tab 6 are respectively attached to superior housing 2 and inferior housing 3 to maintain the internal inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2 in a one-piece formation.

[0042] In order to permit the snapping engagement of inferior male lip 4 and superior female lip 5 into nesting relation each with respect to the other, sandwich package 1 may be formed of a flexible composition such as polypropylene.

[0043] In overall concept, sandwich package 1 includes superior housing 2 and inferior housing 3 which may be removably connected each to the other in order to form a complete enclosure for a food product 20 which is generally contoured to interior walls of the inferior housing 3 and superior housing 2. The sandwich package 1 of the present
invention permits a sanitary packaging for food product 20 prior to use by a user. Further, sandwich package 1 allows for the user to initially consume a portion of food product 20 subsequent to the removal of inferior housing 3 from superior housing 2. Once the superior housing 2 has been removed from inferior housing 3, a portion of the food product 20 is exposed for consumption by the user while the user grasps the inferior housing 3. Once the exposed portion of the food product 20 has been consumed, the user, in an easy and simple manner, may remove an inferior division part 3B from an inferior division part 3A while still grasping a portion of the inferior housing 3 and simultaneously exposing a further portion of food product 20 for consumption. In this manner, the user does not have to touch, or otherwise interface, with the food product 20 in a non-sanitary mode of operation.

Although this invention has been described in connection with specific forms and embodiments thereof, it will be appreciated that various modifications other than those discussed above may be resorted to without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention. For example, functionally equivalent elements may be substituted for those specifically shown and described, proportional quantities of the elements shown and described may be varied, and in the formation method steps described, particular steps may be reversed or interposed, all without departing from the spirit or scope of the invention as defined in the appended Claims.

What is claimed:

1. A sandwich packaging for containing a food product comprising:
   a superior housing defining a superior chamber adapted for at least partial enclosure of a food product;
   an inferior housing defining an inferior chamber adapted for at least partial enclosure of a food product;
   said superior chamber and said inferior chamber being contoured to matingly engage each other and said food product, said superior housing having a superior female lip and said inferior housing having an inferior male lip, said superior female lip formed for matingly engaging said inferior male lip at a fitting section of said superior and inferior housings, said inferior housing having a single perforated line intersecting said inferior male lip and passing through a sidewall of said inferior housing for releasing a first section of said sidewall to expose at least a portion of said food product contained therein when said inferior housing is separated from said superior housing.

2. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said superior housing and said inferior housing form a substantially semi-circular cross-sectional contour.

3. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 2, wherein said substantially semi-circular cross-sectional inferior housing is truncated forming a flat inferior base member.

4. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 2, wherein said substantially semi-circular cross-sectional superior housing is truncated forming a flat superior base member.

5. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said single perforated line is substantially located central to opposing ends of said inferior housing.

6. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 5, wherein when said inferior housing is severed along said single perforated line, said inferior housing is broken into a pair of substantially equally contoured inferior division portions.

7. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said single perforated line extends longitudinally around the entirety of said inferior housing.

8. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said superior lip portion snapingly engages with said inferior lip portion.

9. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said superior female lip and said inferior male lip are being formed substantially around the periphery of said superior housing and said inferior housing.

10. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said inferior male lip has a notch intersecting with said single perforated line for ease of tearing along said perforated line.

11. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said superior female lip has a protrusion.

12. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 11, wherein said protrusion of said superior female lip overlaps said notch of said inferior male lip.

13. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said sandwich packaging has a tab having opposing ends respectively attached to said superior and inferior housings.

14. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 13, wherein said tab couples said superior housing and said inferior housing to each other at said fitting section.

15. The sandwich packaging for containing a food product as claimed in claim 1, wherein said sandwich packaging is formed of a low density polypropylene material.

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