DISPOSABLE POTS AND PANS

Inventor: John Maruhnich, Falls, PA (US)

Correspondence Address:
JAMES RAY & ASSOCIATES
2640 PITCAIRN ROAD
MONROEVILLE, PA 15146

Appl. No.: 11/453,663
Filed: Jun. 15, 2006

ABSTRACT

A removable cooking container for use with one of a pot and pan to eliminate time-consuming task of cleaning such pots and/or pans is provided. The cooking container comprises a reusable holder having a first portion capable of fitting within at least one of the pot and/or pan and a second portion capable of extending out from the pot and/or pan. A preformed heavy-duty aluminum disposable insert is provided which is capable of being positioned within and held by the holder. The insert is capable of holding food for cooking within the pot and/or pan. A handle is attached to the second portion of the holder for removing the holder and the insert from the pot and/or pan. Upon completion of cooking, the food is removed from the cooking container and the insert is simply removed from the holder and disposed of, significantly reducing the time needed for cleaning messy pots and/or pans and eliminating the chance of scratching and/or marring the surface of such pots and/or pans due to scrubbing.
DISPOSABLE POTS AND PANS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates, in general, to a cooking container and, more particularly, to a removable cooking container having a holder and a disposable insert which may be positioned within one of a pot and pan to eliminate the tedious and time-consuming task of cleaning pots and pans after cooking.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Washing pots and pans can be a tedious and time-consuming task. Unless good quality pots and pans are purchased, the surfaces can quickly become scratched and ruined by constant scrubbing. Replacement of pots and pans can be quite expensive. The use of Teflon® coated pans has been a known means for easing clean-up, however the use of these types of pans requires the use of special tools and cleaning devices as they are especially susceptible to scratching. Also, upon continued use, the Teflon® coating can chip off the pan surface and into the food.

[0003] The use of disposable liners for slow cookers, baking pans and certain types of pans are also known. These liners are discussed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,313,446; 5,613,427; 4,184,421; and 4,320,699. While these liners protect the surface being cooked, due to their flexible nature, they are often difficult to remove without preventing spillage of any cooking juices. Also, it is difficult to use these liners for cooking fluid-based items. In order to remove the fluid-based item, one is limited to ladling the contents from the cooking device or manually lifting the device to pour the contents therefrom. Another disadvantage of these liners is that they often tear, causing the cooking fluids to contact the pan surface and cook thereon, making clean-up difficult.

[0004] There is a need in the art for an inexpensive cooking container that can be inserted into a pot or pan for cooking any type of item. There is a further need in the art for a cooking container that can be easily removed from the pot and/or pan and subsequently disposed of after use, making clean-up quick and simple and eliminating any possible damage to the pot and/or pan.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It is therefore an object of the invention to provide an inexpensive cooking container that can be inserted into a pot or pan for cooking any type of food item.

[0006] It is a further object of the invention to provide a cooking container that includes a disposable cooking insert that can be thrown away after use to eliminate messy and time-consuming clean-up.

[0007] It is yet another object of the invention to provide a cooking container that prevents the need for scrubbing of pots and pans, which can damage the pot and/or pan surface.

[0008] It is still yet another object of the invention to provide a cooking container that is easy to handle and can be easily removed from the pot and/or pan without spillage of the contents.

[0009] In addition to the various objects and advantages of the invention which have been described in some specific detail above it should be noted that various other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent to those persons who are skilled in the relevant art from the following more detailed description, particularly, when such description is taken in conjunction with the attached drawing Figures and with the appended claims.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] Briefly, and in accordance with the foregoing objectives, the invention comprises a removable cooking container for use with one of a pot and pan. The cooking container comprises a reusable holder having a first predetermined size and shape. The holder has a first portion capable of fitting within at least one of the pot and/or pan and a second portion capable of extending out from at least one of the pot and/or pan. A disposable insert having a second predetermined size and shape is provided. This insert is capable of being positioned within and held by the holder. The insert is capable of holding food for cooking within at least one of the pot and/or pan. A handle is attached to the second portion of the holder for removing the holder and the insert from at least one the pot and/or pan. Upon completion of cooking, the food is removed from the cooking container and the insert is removed from the holder and disposed of, eliminating tedious and time consuming clean up of the pots and/or pans.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of the cooking container of the invention.

[0012] FIG. 2 shows a top view of the reusable holder of the cooking container shown in FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 3 shows a side view of the reusable holder shown in FIG. 2.

[0014] FIG. 4 shows a side view of the disposable insert of the cooking container shown in FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] Prior to proceeding to a more detailed description of the invention, it should be noted that identical components having identical functions have been designated with identical reference numerals for the sake of clarity.

[0016] Referring now to the Figures, there is shown the removable cooking container, generally indicated as 10, for use with one of a cooking pot and frying pan (not shown). The cooking container comprises a reusable holder, generally indicated as 12, having a first predetermined size and shape. The holder 12 has a first portion 14 capable of fitting within at least one of such pot and pan and a second portion 16 capable of extending out from at least one of such pot and pan. A disposable insert, generally indicated as 20, having a second predetermined size and shape, is provided which is capable of being positioned within and held by the holder 12. The insert 20 is capable of holding food for cooking within at least one of such pot and pan. A handle 22 is provided. The handle 22 is attached to the second portion 16 of the holder 12 for removing the holder 12 and the insert 20 from at least one of such pot and pan upon completion of cooking.

[0017] The first predetermined size and shape of the holder 12 comprises a ring member 24 capable of fitting within an inner side portion of at least one of such pot and pan and a cup shaped portion 26 extending from the ring member 24 and capable of extending down into one of such pot and pan. The cup shaped portion 26 comprises a bottom portion 28 and upwardly extending sidewall portions 30.
This bottom portion 28 is capable of being positioned adjacent and/or above an inside bottom portion of at least one of such pot and pan. The upwardly extending sidewall portions 30 of cup shaped container 26 are capable of being positioned substantially parallel to the inner side portion of at least one of such pot and pan and having end portions 32 attached to the ring member 24. These end portions 32 may be attached to the ring member 24 by any well known means such as welding, brazing, folding, crimping, and the like.

[0018] Preferably, the cup shaped portion 26 of the holder 12 comprises a flat crosspiece forming bottom portion 28 of holder 12 which is bent in an upwardly direction to form upwardly extending sidewall portions 30 which are attached at 32 to the ring member 24 to form a basket capable of holding the disposable insert 20 therein. This flat crosspiece can comprises a pair of flat shaped strips positioned at a substantially 90° angle with respect to each other and attached at their cross point by any well known means such as spot welding, brazing and the like.

[0019] The holder 12 is formed from a heat conductive, rigid material such as steel or any other well-known conductive material. The disposable insert 20 is also formed from a heat conductive material. However, the material for the insert 20 is formed from a lightweight less expensive material than the holder 12 as its intended purpose is for a single-time use. Preferably, the insert 20 is formed from a heavy-duty aluminum material, however, any other well-known inexpensive heat conductive material may be used.

[0020] As illustrated in FIG. 4, the second predetermined size and shape of the disposable insert 20 includes a lip member 36 and a bowl shaped portion 38. The lip member 36 is capable of fitting about the ring member 24 of the holder 12 and the bowl shaped portion 38 is capable of fitting within the cup shaped portion 26 of the holder 12. Preferably, the disposable insert 20 is preformed in its second predetermined size and shape and these inserts can be purchased in packages to ensure that the adequately fit within the holder 12 to avoid any spillage of the food product during cooking and handling.

[0021] The handle 22, which is attached to the second portion 16 of the holder 12, is preferably formed from a nonconductive material to avoid burning of the user during cooking and handling. This handle may be formed from plastic or any other nonconductive material.

[0022] The cooking container of the invention can be made in a variety of sizes and shapes to fit within any stovetop cooking device. For example, a holder for a 7-inch pot can have a depth of approximately 4 inches whereas a holder for a 10-inch frying pan may have a depth of approximately 2 inches. The preformed insert would have a depth which is slightly less than its intended holder and include a ½” lip that attaches onto the ring portion of the holder.

[0023] The cooking container of the present invention makes cooking and cleanup a snap for serious cooks or people on-the-go that simply want to cook a home-prepared meal without the hassle of cleaning up. The cooking container of the present invention also makes cooking outdoors or on campouts a breeze where hot water and sinks are in short supply. When finished cooking, one simply disposes of the inexpensive insert. The pot or pan, along with the holder, is ready for the next time.

[0024] The invention has been described in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms so as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains to make and use the same. It should be understood that variations, modifications, equivalents and substitutions for components of the specifically described embodiments of the invention may be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims. Persons who possess such skill will also recognize that the foregoing description is merely illustrative and not intended to limit any of the ensuing claims to any particular narrow interpretation.

1. A removable cooking container for use with one of a pot and pan, said cooking container comprising:
   (a) a reusable holder having a first predetermined size and shape, said holder having a first portion capable of fitting within at least one of such pot and pan and a second portion capable of extending out from at least one of such pot and pan;
   (b) a disposable insert having a second predetermined size and shape, said insert capable of being positioned within and held by said holder, said insert capable of holding food for cooking within at least one of such pot and pan; and
   (c) a handle attached to said second portion of said holder for removing said holder and said insert from at least one of such pot and pan.
2. A cooking container as recited in claim 1 wherein said first predetermined size and shape of said holder comprises a ring member capable of fitting within an inner side portion of at least one of such pot and pan and a cup shaped portion extending from said ring member and capable of extending down into one of such pot and pan.
3. A cooking container as recited in claim 2 wherein said cup shaped portion comprises a bottom portion and upwardly extending sidewall portions and wherein said bottom portion is capable of being positioned adjacent an inside bottom portion of at least one of such pot and pan.
4. A cooking container as recited in claim 3 wherein said upwardly extending sidewall portions of said cup shaped container are capable of being positioned substantially parallel to such inner side portion of at least one of such pot and pan and having end portions attached to said ring member.
5. A cooking container as recited in claim 4 wherein said end portions of said upwardly extending sidewall portion of said cup shaped container are attached to said ring member by one of welding, brazing, folding and crimping.
6. A cooking container as recited in claim 2 wherein said cup shaped portion of said holder comprises a flat crosspiece bent in an upwardly direction and attached to said ring member to form a basket capable of holding said insert therein.
7. A cooking container as recited in claim 6 wherein said flat crosspiece comprises a pair of flat shaped strips positioned at a substantially 90° angle with respect to each other.
8. A cooking container as recited in claim 7 wherein said pair of flat shaped strips is attached to one another by one of spot welding and brazing.
9. A cooking container as recited in claim 1 wherein said holder is formed from a heat conductive material.
10. A cooking container as recited in claim 9 wherein said holder is formed from a stainless steel material.
11. A cooking container as recited in claim 1 wherein said disposable insert is formed from a heat conductive material.
12. A cooking container as recited in claim 11 wherein said disposable insert is formed from a heavy-duty aluminum material.

13. A cooking container as recited in claim 2 wherein said second predetermined size and shape of said disposable insert includes a lip member and a bowl shaped portion, said lip member capable of fitting about said ring member of said holder and said bowl shaped portion capable of fitting within said cup shaped portion of said holder.

14. A cooking container as recited in claim 13 wherein said disposable insert is preformed in said second predetermined size and shape so as to be held by said holder.

15. A cooking container as recited in claim 1 wherein said handle is formed from a nonconductive material.

16. A cooking container as recited in claim 15 wherein said handle is formed from a plastic material.

* * * * *