

[54] **ADJUSTABLE SOUP LADLE**

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[22] Filed: **Nov. 7, 1972**

[21] Appl. No.: **304,326**

[52] U.S. Cl. **210/465, 210/469, 210/470**

[51] Int. Cl. **B01d 35/28**

[58] Field of Search **210/465, 469, 470**

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

1,677,120 7/1928 Rudin 210/469

2,537,848 1/1951 Novion 210/470

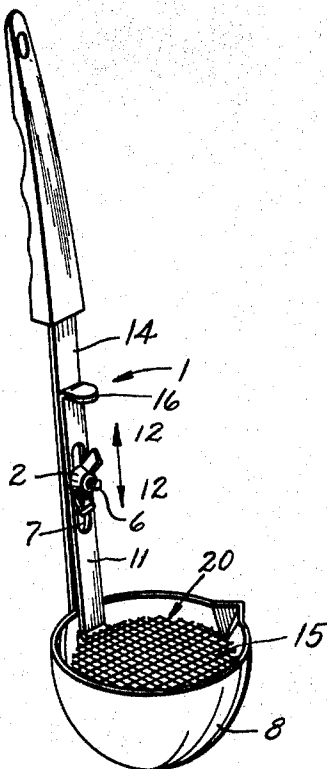
Primary Examiner—Charles N. Hart

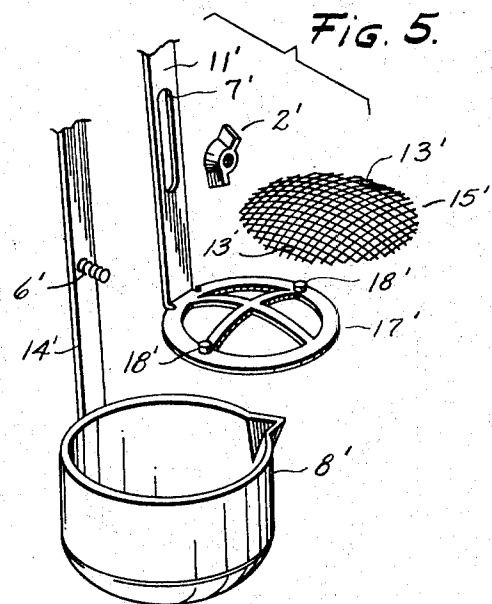
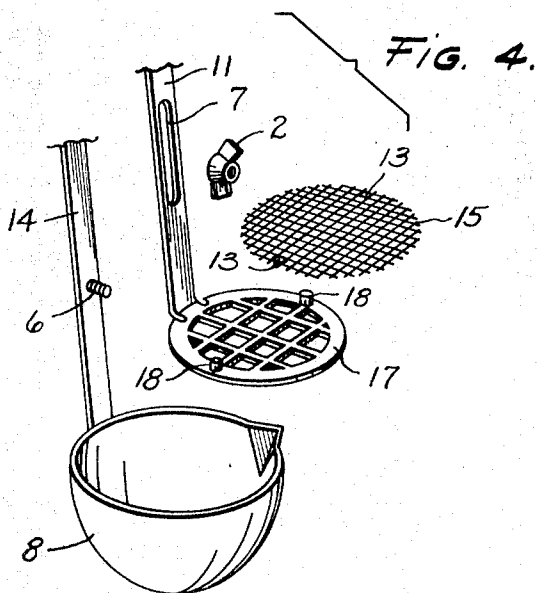
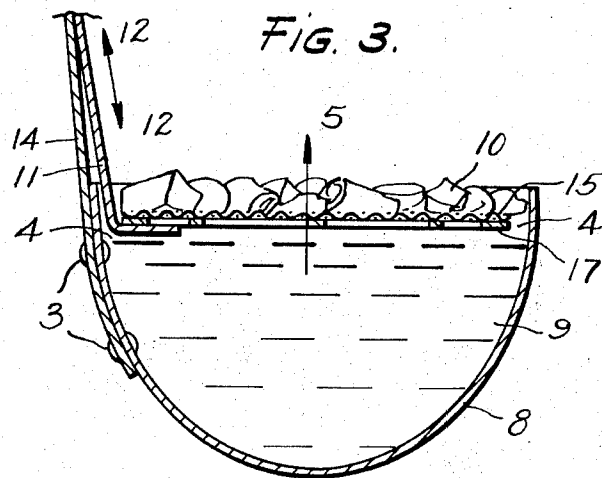
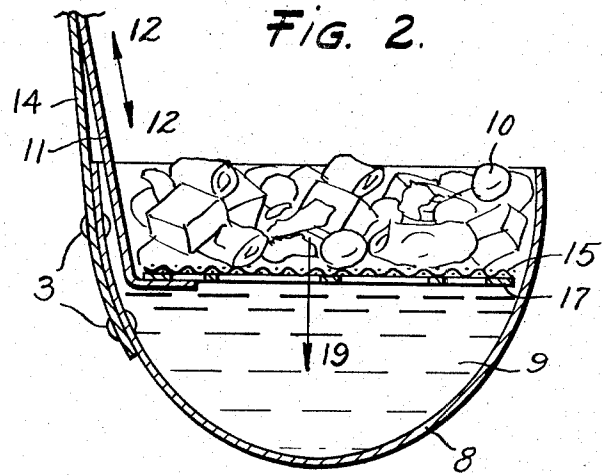
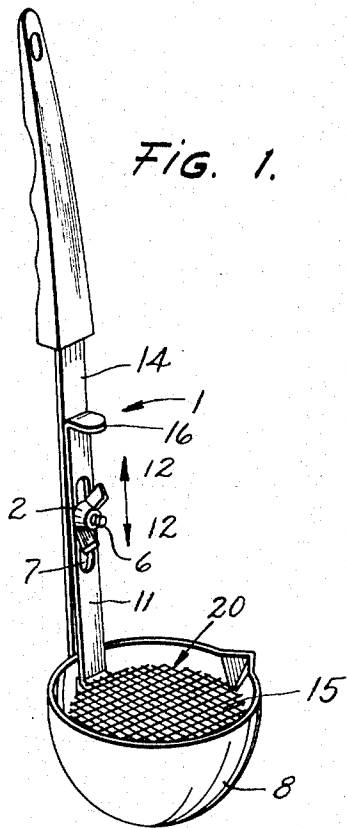
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A soup ladle for controlling the ratio of soup solids to soup liquids spooned from the soup mixture. The ladle comprises a bowl and handle, and means for straining the soup as it is scooped into the bowl. The straining portion of the ladle is made to have a variable position with respect to the bowl, so that different quantities of solids are entrained by the straining element. The strainer position is easily settable by a slot-pin-fastener arrangement.

5 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures





ADJUSTABLE SOUP LADLE

The invention relates to ladles and more particularly to a soup ladle of improved construction for use in the catering industry.

Heretofore, the serving of soup having solids at a catered affair presented a problem to the waiter. When the waiter scooped the first several portions of soup from the pot, he would often entrain too many solids, so that succeeding portions of soup tended to contain less and less solids. If the waiter took time to more carefully measure the solids, his service became painfully slow. No matter how careful or how fast a particular waiter would be, no soup portion could be properly served or portioned with solids.

Therefore, there existed a need for a ladle that could properly spoon a given amount of solids in the soup every time. In other words, a ladle that could control the liquid to solids ratio of the soup mixture.

The present invention is constructed to give exacting portions of soup solids with every serving. Furthermore, the present inventive ladle can easily adjust the proportion of solids to liquid as desired.

Two prior patents to Cumming, Jr., U.S. Pat. No. 19,419; and Rudin, U.S. Pat. No. 1,677,120 depict ladles with straining devices in combination.

However, none of these patents show or teach how to accurately measure and spoon a given amount of solids in a soup mixture as does this invention. Neither does any of the aforementioned devices show how the ratio of solids to liquid may be easily varied or adjusted to suit the desires of the server.

It is an object of this invention to provide an improvement in ladles.

It is another object of this invention to provide a ladle which will give a fixed portion of solids and liquid each and every time when serving a mixture containing solids and liquid.

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a ladle which can control the ratio of liquid to solids dished from a mixture containing liquid and solids.

It is still another object of this invention to provide a soup ladle that can be easily adjusted to change the liquid to solids ratio of the soup being dished from the pot.

These and other objects of this invention will become more apparent and will be better understood with reference to the detailed description of which the following figures are a part thereof;

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of the ladle of this invention.

FIG. 2 is a sectional side view of the bowl structure of the ladle of FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a view of the bowl structure of FIG. 2 with the strainer element shown in a different position within the bowl.

FIG. 4 is an exploded isometric view of the bowl and strainer elements of FIGS. 2 and 3; and

FIG. 5 is an exploded isometric view of an alternate embodiment of the bowl and strainer elements of FIG. 4.

Generally speaking the invention is for a ladle that can control the ratio of liquid to solids dished from a mixture containing liquid and solids. The ladle is comprised of a bowl-like structure to form a ladle-like fixture. Means are supported by the ladle fixture for separating the solids in the mixture from the liquid in the controlled ratio.

rating the solids in the mixture from the liquid in the controlled ratio.

Now referring to FIG. 1 an isometric view of the invention ladle 1 is shown. The ladle 1 consists of three basic sections: A handle 14, a bowl 8, and a movable straining section 20.

The handle 14 and the bowl 8 are attached to each other by any convenient means such as rivets 3 as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3.

The purpose of the movable straining section is to control the ratio of liquid to solids as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3. When the bowl of the ladle is immersed in a mixture containing both liquid and solids, the strainer 15 of the straining section 20 traps the solids 10 in the mixture while allowing the liquid 9 to pass through into the bottom portion of the bowl 8. When the ladle 1 is dished from the mixture, a given portion of the solids 10 is entrained upon the strainer, while a given amount of liquid 9 is held in the bowl 8. By moving the strainer 15 downward within the bowl as shown by arrow 19 in FIG. 2, a greater portion of solids 10 is obtained during the dishing operation. Thus, a greater solids to liquid ratio is obtained when the mixture is served.

If, however, the strainer 15 is moved upward in the bowl as shown by arrow 5, a lesser solids to liquid ratio is obtained when the mixture is served. Thus by controlling the height of the strainer within the bowl, different liquid to solids ratios may be had.

The strainer 15 is supported within the bowl 8 by platform 17 (FIGS. 2 through 4). The strainer 15 can be made integral with platform 17, but it is more desirable to make these elements as two separate pieces so that the strainer may be removed for cleaning or replacement purposes.

To prevent the strainer 15 from falling off the platform 17 when the bowl is turned upside down as when serving the liquid, the strainer 15 is fitted upon pins 18, which fit through holes 13 of the strainer as depicted in FIG. 4. Holes 13 are made slightly smaller than the pins 18, so that the strainer is force-fitted upon the platform 17 and will not pull off in use. Of course, other means can be used to accomplish the above purpose, and pins 18 and holes 13 are merely illustrated herein by way of example only.

Platform 17 and strainer 15 are raised and lowered by means of rod 11 which is attached at one end to said platform 17 and is made to slide upon handle 14 at its other end. The rod 11 slides up and down on the handle 14 as shown by arrows 12 (FIGS. 1 through 3).

The rod 11, and hence the strainer 15 is retained in any given position by means of a slot-pin-fastener arrangement. The rod 11 has a slot 7 in which pin 6 is attached to the handle 14 and slides in the slot 7 whenever rod 11 is raised or lowered. Wing-nut 2 screws onto pin 6, thus tightening rod 11 against handle 14, securing any given position of the rod and handle with respect to each other. Of course other slot-pin fastener arrangements are possible, but the above arrangement has been found to be easily operative: for example, the slot 7 may be replaced with a series of holes; the pin 6 fitting into each hole and thereby varying the position of the rod at each hole position.

The rod 11 may have a tab 16 on its upper end (FIG. 1) to facilitate moving the rod up and down.

The strainer and platform must be made slightly smaller than the bowl diameter to provide a slight

clearance space 4 therebetween. This clearance allows the straining section to move easily within the bowl.

The strainer may be made fine or coarse depending upon the nature of the mixture, and the absence or presence of variously sized particles therein. Thus, the strainer may also be used to maintain control of the liquid and solids ratio.

Now referring to FIG. 5, an alternate embodiment of the bowl and strainer portion of the ladle is shown. All the elements of FIG. 5 are designated by corresponding like numbers with those elements of FIG. 4, and are given the prime designation to depict the fact that these elements are of a slightly different design.

Bowl 8' is shown to be deeper, less round, and more oblong. The walls of the bowl 8' are straight, so that the strainer elements 15' and 17' move evenly up and down with respect to the walls, i.e., the space 4 (FIG. 3) does not vary as the straining elements 15' and 17' are raised or lowered. This design has the advantage that the ratio of liquid to solids has a greater range of adjustment. In other words, the strainer can be lowered farther into the bowl. Also, there is less tendency for solids to slip past the edge of the strainer into the bottom of the bowl, when the strainer is in its highest position, which corresponds to the widest position for gap 4.

Strainer elements 15' and 17' are now shown having a convex surface instead of being flat (FIG. 4). These elements can be made curved to facilitate the removal of the solids, when the bowl is tilted to pour the soup.

Platform 17' is also depicted as having only one cross-bar, this design facilitates cleaning, and allows the liquid to pour easier from the bowl.

Changes and modifications will naturally occur to the skilled practitioner. All changes which so occur are deemed obvious and are meant to be encompassed by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A ladle for controlling the ratio of liquid to solids

dished from a mixture consisting of said liquid and solids said ladle comprising:

a bowl-like member for dishing into said mixture;
A handle supporting said bowl-like member, and forming with said bowl-like member a ladle-like structure;

Separating means supported by said ladle-like structure for separating the solids in said mixture from said liquid in a controlled ratio; said separating means comprises a strainer-like element disposed within said bowl-like member for allowing the liquid of said mixture to pass therethrough into a bottom portion of said bowl-like member while retaining the solids in an upper portion of said bowl-like member; and said separating means further comprises means for adjusting the strainer-like element with respect to said bowl-like member and thereby varying its position within the bowl-like member whereby the ratio of liquid to solids may be variably controlled when dishing said bowl-like member into said mixture.

2. The ladle of claim 1, wherein said means for moving the strainer-like element comprises a rod member attached at one end thereof to said strainer-like element, and movably supported upon said ladle like structure at another end thereof.

3. The ladle of claim 2, wherein said rod member is movably disposed upon the handle of said ladle-like structure by means of a pin supported by said handle which passes through an elongated slot disposed in said rod member, said rod member being movable with respect to said handle by sliding the pin within said slot to different positions therein.

4. The ladle of claim 3, wherein said pin is affixed within different positions of said slot by fastener means.

5. The ladle of claim 4, wherein said fastener means is a wing-nut which screws onto said pin and thus affixes the slot position of said pin.

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